CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at Admiralty House, S.W. 1., on Tuesday, 17th April, 1962, at 11 a.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department
(in the Chair)
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT KILMUIR, Lord Chancellor
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HAILSHAM, Q.C., Lord President of the Council and Minister for Science
The Right Hon. JOHN MACLAY, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland
The Right Hon. IAIN MACLEOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
The Right Hon. SIR DAVID ECCLES, M.P., Minister of Education
The Right Hon. LORD MILLS, Minister without Portfolio
The Right Hon. JOHN HARE, M.P., Minister of Labour
Dr. The Right Hon. CHARLES HILL, M.P., Minister of Health
The Right Hon. CHRISTOPHER SOAMES, M.P., Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. LORD CARRINGTON, First Lord of the Admiralty (Item 5)
The Right Hon. JULIAN AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for Air (Items 5-6)
The Right Hon. MARTIN REDMAYNE, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

Secretariat:
The Right Hon. Sir NORMAN BROOK
MT. A. L. M. CARY

Copy No. 40

C.C. (62) 28th Conclusions

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1. The Cabinet were informed that at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament the representatives of eight neutral countries had submitted proposals for an international system of detecting nuclear tests which contained some provision for verification. This would not, as it stood, be fully effective; for it provided for inspection only at the invitation of the Government of a country in which a doubtful event had taken place. It was not therefore likely to be acceptable to the United States Government; and there was some risk that detailed discussion of it might reveal the existing differences of view between British and United States scientists on the extent to which on-site inspection would be required for purposes of verification.

In discussion the point was made that, if this proposal had to be rejected, there would be tactical advantages in allowing the Soviet Government to assume the responsibility for its rejection.

The Cabinet were informed that the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Rusk, had on the previous day resumed his discussions on Berlin with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington. In view however of the attitude of the French and German Governments, he had not felt able to outline in this talk the new proposals which he had formulated. He now intended to pursue these with Foreign Ministers at the forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Athens.

The Cabinet were informed that the United Nations representative in Leopoldville had put forward for consideration compromise proposals for an agreement between the Government of Katanga and the Central Congo Government. These proposals were now being considered by the Prime Ministers of the two Governments.

2. The Lord Privy Seal said that in his speech to the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union (W.E.U.) on 10th April he had taken the opportunity of outlining the attitude which the United Kingdom Government would take towards political co-operation in Europe if they entered the European Economic Community. This statement of policy had been approved by the Common Market Negotiations Committee, and the text had been circulated to members of the Cabinet. The statement had been well received by the W.E.U. Council, and the Governments of the Six were now examining how the United Kingdom could best be associated with their further consideration of the problem of political co-operation.

The Cabinet considered whether it would be useful at this stage of the negotiations if, in Ministerial speeches, more emphasis were laid on the advantages which the United Kingdom would derive from membership of the Community. There was some risk that, unless Ministers began to take the initiative on this, public opinion would be unduly influenced by the arguments which continued to be deployed on the other side. There was general agreement that it would be useful if Ministers could take a more definite line on this question in their speeches over the coming months.

The Cabinet—

Invited the Lord Privy Seal to arrange for guidance to be circulated to Ministers on the points relating to the Common Market negotiations which could usefully be emphasised in Ministerial speeches in the coming months.
3. The Cabinet were informed of the business to be taken in the House of Commons in the week following the end of the Easter recess.

4. The Home Secretary said that the Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Sir Roy Welensky, had at first reacted favourably to the suggestion, approved by the Cabinet at their meeting on 5th April, that a small mission of special advisers should consider with the Government of Nyasaland the consequences which would flow from Nyasaland's secession from the Federation and the possibility of other forms of association, and should consider with the four Governments in the Federation the parallel question of the future relations of Northern and Southern Rhodesia with Nyasaland and with each other. The Federal Government had, however, felt that it would be inappropriate that any announcement should be made about the mission until the Federal elections were concluded on 27th April. The Home Secretary said that he had it in mind to make a statement in the House of Commons on 8th May in which he would explain the nature of the new initiative which was being taken by the United Kingdom Government in Central Africa. He also proposed to make a short visit to the Federation later in May.

The situation in Nyasaland gave much cause for uneasiness, not least because the economy of the country was so heavily dependent on assistance from the Federation and from the United Kingdom. But it was encouraging, in view of the known attitude of the Malawi Congress Party, that its leader, Dr. Banda, had accepted the plan for the inquiry and had nominated a representative to assist in the work of the mission. Moreover, Dr. Banda had, for the time being at least, abandoned his intention of coming to this country and seemed disposed to acquiesce in deferment of a settlement on the secession of Nyasaland until the inquiry had been completed. A statement in the House of Commons on 8th May would be welcomed by Dr. Banda, and it was to be hoped that by that time further progress would have been made with arrangements for those aspects of the inquiry which directly affected Northern Rhodesia.

The Cabinet—

Took note of this statement by the Home Secretary.

5. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Defence (C. (62) 64) proposing increased rates of pay for Service doctors and dentists. These rates had been framed on the basis of a 16 per cent. lead over the emoluments of comparable posts in the National Health Service and were estimated to cost an extra £575,000 in the financial year 1962-63.

The Minister of Defence said that the British Medical Association had reaffirmed their advice that the Services would not be able to recruit doctors and dentists in anything like the numbers required unless they could offer rates of pay which provided a substantial lead over salaries in the National Health Service. Their own estimate of the lead required had been set at 30 per cent.; by setting it as low as the 16 per cent. on which his present proposals had been based he was taking a calculated risk. The urgency of the recruiting situation could not be over-emphasised; the Army had recruited only six doctors last year against a requirement of 125 by 1963. Unless there was a very substantial improvement it would be necessary to consider bringing married families home from overseas. He had been asked to consider whether the total cost of the increases could
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not be kept within a figure of £500,000, but this had proved impracticable; it was necessary to improve substantially the pay of the younger doctors who were needed to meet active Service conditions but could not in many cases be offered a full career. A figure of £500,000 would have meant that, after allowing for the increases for the younger doctors, there would have been little or nothing left to provide increases for the more senior ranks. Even on a basis of £575,000 the increases for senior ranks would be modest. This sum could be reasonably held to be available to the Services as the result of the recent biennial pay review. It represented the difference between the award actually made and the cost of the award which would have been necessary if the increases justified by statistical calculations of movements in outside earnings over the two-year period had been paid in full.

The Minister of Defence said that the British Medical Association had assured him that any award now made to Service doctors would not be used as an argument to justify further increases for civilian doctors whose salaries would shortly be coming under review. If the Cabinet accepted his proposals it was intended that they should be announced together with other changes and improvements in the organisation of the Services Medical Corps by the Secretary of State for War when he met leading representatives of the medical profession later in the day. He would himself propose to make a short statement in Parliament on 18th April.

The Chief Secretary, Treasury, said that he was prepared to accept this settlement as the best compromise solution to an admittedly difficult problem. He had been satisfied on re-examination that a figure of £575,000 could reasonably be held to be available as the result of the recent Service pay settlement. The presentation of the increases for Service doctors would however need careful thought and he would wish to be consulted about the terms of the statements to be made by the Secretary of State for War and the Minister of Defence.

In discussion the following points were made:

(a) The main danger of so substantial an increase for certain categories of Service doctor was that it would be used as a precedent for similar increases elsewhere. It was likely to have a particularly unfortunate reaction on the position of the nurses, for whose claim there was a wide measure of public support. It was, therefore, of great importance to emphasise the fact that the increases for Service doctors had been calculated on the basis of a special supplement to the normal National Health Service salaries; it should not, however, be presented as a percentage lead over the National Health Service, still less as a percentage increase over the present rates of pay in the Services.

(b) Stress should also be laid on the need to deal with the situation created by the ending of National Service. In the same context, it could be emphasised that Service pay had traditionally been regarded as posing special problems of its own, which set it apart from normal civilian criteria and demanded quite different solutions. There had been no evidence that the recent pay increases for the Services had had any repercussions on outstanding civilian wage claims; indeed, the main weight of criticism had been that the Government had failed to meet their obligations to the Services, rather than that they had been over-generous.

(c) Pay was only one aspect of the problem of recruiting Service doctors. Radical improvements were being made in other aspects of the Service doctor's career; greater opportunities would be provided for obtaining a full range of clinical experience by organising doctors on an area, rather than a unit, basis and the provision of suitable quarters would be guaranteed. Many of these
changes had already been announced, but they would be re-emphasised.

The Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that the rates of pay of Service doctors and dentists should be increased on the basis proposed by the Minister of Defence.

(2) Invited the Minister of Defence to agree with the Chief Secretary, Treasury, the terms in which these increases should be announced by the Secretary of State for War and by himself.

6. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary (C. (62) 60) on the commitments of the United Kingdom to assist in the defence of the Portuguese colonies.

The Lord Privy Seal said that the Government were committed by several of the treaties comprising the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance to defend the Portuguese colonies. For both military and political reasons this commitment could no longer be honoured; and at the time of the Indian attack on Goa this had been a source of acute embarrassment. In view of the difference in the Colonial policies of the two countries, it was hardly conceivable that the obligation could be honoured unless issues were at stake which involved not merely the Anglo-Portuguese association but the partnership of the two countries in the North Atlantic Alliance. Anglo-Portuguese relations would remain unsatisfactory so long as the Portuguese believed that they could expect from us assistance which, in fact, we were not in a position to give. The treaties contained, however, no provision for termination and it did not seem probable that the Prime Minister of Portugal would himself denounce them. In any discussions which might take place with the Portuguese it would be necessary to keep it in mind that in the event of trouble in a Portuguese territory we were as likely to be called upon to provide transit facilities as direct military aid, and that refusal of such facilities would be just as difficult and embarrassing. On the other hand, we were ourselves dependent on transit facilities in various Portuguese territories, particularly the Cape Verde Islands.

In the light of these considerations it would be impolitic to propose a complete renegotiation of the alliance. But it would be possible to take the opportunity of the forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Athens to discuss informally with the Portuguese Foreign Minister how best to remove the embarrassment in current relations.

In discussion the following points were raised:

(a) The present régime in Portugal might not survive for long and any attempt to alter the basis of the relationship now would give rise to complex problems and arouse strong feelings on the part of British residents in Portugal. In these circumstances it might be expedient to defer action for a time. On the other hand, there might at any time be occasion for the Portuguese to invoke our aid in some part of the world where our obligations of the Commonwealth could not, as in the case of Goa, be regarded as of overriding importance; and we might ourselves at short notice have need of facilities in Portuguese territories which, in the absence of some better understanding, could be withheld to our disadvantage. If any such occasion arose, it would be difficult to explain why in the interval after the attack on Goa nothing had been done to put our relations with Portugal on a more realistic basis. The suggested discussions in Athens would not be in the nature of negotiations; if there were to be any negotiations they would have to be preceded by careful diplomatic preparation in Lisbon.
The Cabinet—

(1) Invited the Foreign Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Air, to make an assessment of the staging and over-flying requirements of the Royal Air Force in Portuguese territories and of the extent to which similar facilities could be made available to Portugal in British territories.

(2) Authorised the Foreign Secretary to raise informally with the Portuguese Foreign Minister at the forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council the possibility of securing some improvement in Anglo-Portuguese relations.

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Defence (C. (62) 63) proposing the delegation of authority to the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, under certain stated conditions, to carry out attacks on Iraqi airfields in the Basra/Shaiba area in order to ensure a favourable air situation over Kuwait in the early stages of an Iraqi aggression.

The Minister of Defence said that plans for rapid reinforcement of Kuwait in an emergency depended on the use of airborne troops. These troops could not be landed without unacceptable risk unless we first secured a favourable air situation over Kuwait itself. With the introduction of modern types of Russian fighter into service with the Iraqi Air Force, air superiority could not be guaranteed without bombing the airfields in the Basra/Shaiba area from which the Iraqi fighter aircraft would operate. In the normal course, the Commander-in-Chief would request specific authority from London before any operations of this kind were undertaken. There were, however, periods of the year when communications with London were liable to interruption; and, in order to provide for the possibility that an Iraqi aggression might occur at a time when communication with London was impossible, he proposed that the Commander-in-Chief should be authorised to bomb Iraqi airfields on his own responsibility provided that he had received a formal request for assistance from the Amir of Kuwait, that the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, had agreed to the action proposed, and that the Commander-in-Chief had tried but failed to establish communication with London.

In discussion the following points were made:

(a) In view of the United Nations interest in Kuwait and the presence there of representative Arab military forces, it would be necessary to establish conclusively that a serious Iraqi aggression had occurred before taking counter action against the Iraqi Air Force. Every attempt would be made to argue after the event that British forces had committed the initial act of aggression and had misinterpreted Iraqi movements or manœuvres. For this reason it
was desirable that, within the limits set by operational necessity, as much time as possible should be left for an Iraqi attack to develop and to make its nature manifest.

(b) The directive to the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, should make it clear that, before exercising the authority delegated to him under these proposals, he should have made every attempt to establish communication with London. It should also be made clear that the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, could not be expected to assume any responsibility for advising on specific military operations; he could not do more than give his agreement to the taking of military action as such in order to meet a specific request from the Amir for assistance.

(c) It was important that British intervention, once it had been decided upon, should be effective. The availability and the readiness of our forces to deal with an Iraqi attack on Kuwait should be kept under close review.

The Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that authority should be delegated to the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, to attack Iraqi airfields in the Basra/Shaiba area provided that the Amir of Kuwait had asked for assistance, that the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, had given his agreement and that it had proved impossible to establish communication with London.

(2) Invited the Minister of Defence, in consultation with the Lord Privy Seal, to revise the directive to the Commander-in-Chief accordingly, taking account of the views expressed in the Cabinet's discussion.

Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,
17th April, 1962.