CABINET 48 (27).

Meeting of the Cabinet to be held in the Secretary of State's Room, Foreign Office, S.W.1., on THURSDAY, 4th August, 1927, at 12 noon.


AGENDUM.

FURTHER LIMITATION OF NAVAL ARMAMENTS - THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

Draft Telegram to Geneva.
{C.P. 217 (27) - circulated herewith).

(Signed) M.P.A. HANKEY,
Secretary, Cabinet.

Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1.

3rd August, 1927.
CONCLUSIONS of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Room of the Secretary of State, Foreign Office, on THURSDAY, 4th August, 1927, at 12 noon.

PRESENT:-

The Right Hon.
Sir Austen Chamberlain, K.G., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (In the Chair).

The Right Hon.
The Earl of Balfour, K.G., G.C.M.G., Lord President of the Council.

The Right Hon.

The Right Hon.
Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Bt., G.B.E., M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon.
Sir Samuel Hoare, Bt., G.B.E., C.M.G., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon.
Neville Chamberlain, M.P., Minister of Health.

The Right Hon.
Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, Bt., M.P., Minister of Labour.

The Right Hon.

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT:-

Admiral of the Fleet

Sir W.P.A. Hankey, G.C.B. Secretary.
1. The Cabinet had before them a draft telegram to Geneva (Paper C.P.-219 (27)) circulated as the result of the Meetings on the previous day, and on which the First Sea Lord had been asked to hold himself in readiness to express the Admiralty views.

Shortly before the Meeting, however, a telegram had been received from the British Delegation at Geneva (No. 228, of August 4th) which made it clear that the United States Delegation had rejected the latest Japanese proposal. It was, therefore, unnecessary to pursue consideration of Paper C.P.-219 (27) in detail. The Cabinet, however, felt that the Admiralty's views on the Japanese proposal as amended at the meeting on the previous day (Cabinet 47 (27), Appendix III) ought to be placed on record. A copy of Sir Charles Madden's Memorandum on the amended proposal is attached in Appendix I. It was not discussed, for the reason above stated.

The First Sea Lord also communicated the following telegram, dated August 4th, which he had received that morning from Admiral Pound:

"Your telegram No. 48. Meeting of the delegates was held at 2200 Wednesday and Americans then made it clear that they could not entertain Japanese proposals unless we accept limitation of 400 thousand tons repeat 400 thousand tons for cruisers. Americans were informed that we could not agree to this. One of two things must now result. A. Inclusion in treaty of points tentatively agreed upon by Technical Committee. B. No treaty. It is most unlikely America will agree to A."

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs read to the Cabinet Washington Telegram No. 372.
which he had just received, which indicated, inter alia, that the British Ambassador, in an interview with the American Secretary of State, had made effective use of the material sent to him, and contained a hint that the United States of America would be willing to continue negotiations after the Plenary Meeting at Geneva if the British Delegation should so desire.

Sir Austen Chamberlain also read a telegram he had sent to the Prime Minister (who was about to meet the American General Dawes in Canada) and to the Dominions to keep them abreast of the latest developments.

Consideration was given to the question as to whether an announcement should be made to the effect that we have no intention of increasing our programme of naval construction owing to the breakdown of the Conference.

The following formula was suggested for use by Ministers speaking on the subject on public platforms:

"Notwithstanding the failure of Geneva Conference we still desire to study a policy of moderation in naval construction".

Some discussion followed as to our future programme of naval construction. The suggestion was made that, in the event of America entering on a large programme of cruiser construction, it might be advisable for us (in order to allay the idea of a building race) to cease laying down any new cruisers for a year or two, while America was reducing our existing lead in this type of vessel. The whole question was felt to require further investigation.
As the result of these discussions the Cabinet decided --

(a) That no further instructions should be sent to the British Delegation at Geneva:

(b) That the Lord President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had arranged to make public speeches in the immediate future, should have authority, while expressing deep regret at the failure of the Conference, to indicate in discreet language that no-one ought to suppose that it must lead to a competition in naval construction, which was the last thing that the Government desired:

(c) That the Admiralty and Treasury should prepare material for a Cabinet Inquiry in the Autumn into the question of the future programme of naval construction, in the light of the programmes of foreign Powers and other relevant circumstances arising out of the Geneva Conference.
2. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs asked permission to mention a point which he had overlooked when the draft Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance and Friendship was brought before the Cabinet. In Article 5 of the draft Treaty provision was made that, after a period of ten years from the coming into force of the Treaty, the contracting parties should re-consider the question of the localities in which the British forces are to be stationed. This had been in accordance with the recommendations of the Cabinet Committee, but the Committee had also agreed that the Secretary of State should be authorised to reduce the period to seven years, on the understanding that he put up a strong fight before making this concession, in the last resort. Sir Austen Chamberlain asked the Cabinet to confirm this recommendation of the Cabinet Committee.

The Cabinet approved the above recommendation.
3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs raised as a matter of urgency the question of the reduction of the British Forces in China, and the connected question of the circumstances in which the use of force in China would be justified.

Sir Austen Chamberlain informed the Cabinet that he had received from the Secretary of State for War a proposal that two Battalions and one Battery should be withdrawn, the first moves taking place within 16 days of the order being given, provided (as the Secretary of State for War explained to the Cabinet) that the S.S. HERMINIUS was available.

It was pointed out that this possible early withdrawal of troops was not consistent with the information given to the Cabinet when the question was last discussed, namely, that no shipping transport would be available for 2 - 2½ months.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated that he had not yet received from the Secretary of State for War and the President of the Board of Trade the details as to proposed dates of withdrawal, etc., which he required as the basis of his telegram to Sir Miles Lampson (See the Conclusions referred to in the margin). In the meantime, as Sir Miles Lampson in recent telegrams had more than once referred to the possible use of force, he proposed to send him an instruction in regard to the circumstances in which the employment of force in China could be contemplated. Sir Austen then read a draft of these instructions, which met with general approval.
The Cabinet agreed —

(a) To approve the instructions read to them by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, notifying to Sir Miles Lampson the circumstances and limiting conditions in which the use of armed forces in China might be contemplated (Appendix II):

(b) That the Secretary of State for War, in consultation as necessary with the President of the Board of Trade, should hasten the supply to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of information on which Sir Austen Chamberlain would base his telegram to the British Minister at Peking consulting him as to the withdrawal of troops. The Secretary of State for War was asked to furnish full particulars as to the units it was proposed to move, the dates at which movements would begin, the ships in which they would be transported, and the military reasons (including considerations as to the moral of the troops, etc.) in support of their withdrawal.

2, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1,
August 4, 1927.
APPENDIX I.

Memorandum by First Sea Lord presented to Cabinet 4th August, 1927.

ANALYSIS OF THE JAPANESE PROPOSALS.

GENEVA CONFERENCE.

The Japanese proposals, (Geneva telegram No. 226), as amended by the Cabinet, definitely commit us to a programme of 8" gun ships and do, I consider, involve the abandonment of the 6" gun, they show a situation in 1931, 1936 and 1940 wholly favourable to the U.S.A., who, with a moderate Cruiser building programme, can equal our number of 8 inch gun Cruisers in 1931, or at any subsequent date desired by them, so they secure parity in 1931 or later with little effort.

2. The U.S.A. further seek to impose on us a total Cruiser limit of 400,000 tons (see Admiral Pound’s telegram No. 61 of 4.8.27), and this is the only condition on which they will consider the Japanese plan.

With this tonnage we can build twelve 10,000 ton and thirty-five 8,000 ton Cruisers, a total of 47 ships instead of the 70 required.

3. The acceptance of the Japanese plan carries out exactly the wishes of the U.S.A. Delegates, i.e. to force us to adopt the 8" gun type, while so limiting the Cruiser total tonnage, that we shall have an insufficient number of Cruisers to protect our commerce.

4. The plan under consideration may, if adopted, last for many years, and will place Great Britain in a position of inferiority to the United States on the High Seas, and I would much prefer a return to the Cabinet terms which were published in the press on 29th July, and which were the Government's instructions to our delegates.
The Sea Lords are unanimous in supporting me in the above recommendation, and in agreeing with me that the situation arising if the Japanese proposals, even as revised by the Cabinet, are adopted, will seriously injure our Sea Power and will place on future Boards of Admiralty and Cabinets a task which will be financially impossible to meet.

5. It is realised that the 8" gun ship may be forced on us by the building programmes of other Powers, but we should leave our hands free to deal with such a situation as our means and our requirements necessitate.

6. The Board have maintained the following principles which have not been controverted, (note (d) is a Cabinet amended figure with which the late Board dissented).

(a) That we need a minimum of 70 Cruisers for security.
(b) That any total tonnage agreement must recognise this fact and be adapted to it.
(c) That if 8" Cruisers are to be established as the smaller type, we must build all 8" ships in future to replace our older 6" ships as they reach the age limit.
(d) That the 5:5:3:25 ratio endangers our security.

7. Attached is a statement of the probable number of Cruisers of all types, which Great Britain, United States of America and Japan may have in 1931 - 1940.

C. MADDEN.
Admiral of the Fleet
First Sea Lord.

ADMIRALTY,
4th August, 1927.
Situation now (1927).

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<td>13 10,000 ton</td>
<td>2 10,000 ton</td>
<td>5 10,000 ton</td>
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<td>1 8,000 ton</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 &quot;Hawkins&quot;</td>
<td>10 &quot;Omahas&quot;</td>
<td>4 &quot;Furutakas&quot;</td>
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<td>44 6&quot; gun ships</td>
<td>8 old ships</td>
<td>20 6&quot; gun ships</td>
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In 1931 under revised Japanese proposals the situation will be if we complete our building programme:

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<td>10 8,000 ton</td>
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<td>22 8&quot; gun ships</td>
<td>22 8&quot; gun ships</td>
<td>8 10,000 ton + ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 &quot;Hawkins&quot;</td>
<td>10 &quot;Omahas&quot;</td>
<td>4 &quot;Furutakas&quot;</td>
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<td>35 6&quot; gun ships</td>
<td>20 others.</td>
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In 1931 under revised Japanese proposals the situation will be if we complete our building programme:

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<td>16 10,000 ton</td>
<td>12 10,000 ton</td>
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Between the years 1931 - 40 all our 6-inch gun Cruisers will be over age and because it is most improbable that any country will build 6-inch gun ships after the recognition at Geneva of the 8-inch type - our 35 6-inch gun Cruisers and 4 "Hawkins" should be replaced by 39 + 9 8-inch gun ships to bring out numbers up to the 70 required.

This gives 48 8-inch gun Cruisers to be built in 9 years and at a time when by the Washington Agreement we must build 15 Battleships.
The result of this Geneva economy Committee will therefore be that at the dictation of the U.S.A. we will be faced by a building programme such as we have not before contemplated - if our communications are to be secured.

But British Tonnage in 1940 if we have 70 ships will be:

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<th>Ships</th>
<th>10,000 tons</th>
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<td>12</td>
<td>120,000 tons</td>
<td>464,000 tons</td>
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If we have 50 ships 35 0,000 tons ships 584,000 tons in Cruisers alone; but our total cruiser tonnage allowed by U.S.A. is to be 400,000 tons. We can therefore only build 35 8,000 ton Cruisers and a total of 47 ships instead of the 70 necessary and half the number (144) which in 1914 was found to be inadequate to our needs.

The U.S.A. will thus have achieved their object of reducing our cruiser numbers below those required to safeguard our sea communications.

4th August 1927.
APPENDIX II.

To CHINA.

Cypher telegram to Sir M. Lampson (Wei-hai-wei).

Foreign Office, 4th August, 1927. 7.00 p.m.

No.2.

In view of last paragraph of your telegram No. 1156 and some earlier telegrams I think that it may be of use to you that I should state the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to the threat or use of force in China for the attainment of political ends as distinct from the protection of life.

The decision of His Majesty's Government to despatch the defence force to Shanghai was based solely on the urgent need for the protection of that great community. The military advisers of His Majesty's Government were and are definitely opposed to a dissemination of such forces as are available and His Majesty's Government were obliged to recognise that similar armed protection by troops could not be afforded at all points where British settlements existed or British interests were involved. For the protection of Peking and Tientsin they have always felt that the main reliance must be placed on Powers which took a lesser part in the defence of Shanghai whilst special instructions were issued dealing with possible eventualities at Canton. It may be necessary from time to time to revise these instructions or to consider afresh particular cases, but in all cases hitherto the protection of life has been the primary and dominating consideration in the mind of His Majesty's Government.
China is in a state of anarchy produced by revolution and civil wars. Such periods of anarchy have been a recurrent feature of Chinese history and they last long. If, therefore, force be used, it is difficult to set any limit to its employment either in time or space; and even if momentarily successful, it may amongst a people with so long a memory leave behind it a resentment which makes future friendly relations still more difficult. His Majesty's Government do not absolutely exclude from consideration the use of force for other purposes, but they hold that such use of force and therefore any threat of its use can be justified only by the most urgent necessity or the most conclusive advantages. They sympathise with your contention that in China the only practicable policy is one of firmness and justice. Such a policy implies, however, that where force is threatened it must be more than a mere threat and must proceed from a settled resolve to take active measures of coercion if the threat of them is not sufficient.

His Majesty's Government could only contemplate the use of coercive measures if the following essential conditions were fulfilled.

1. The end in view must be indisputably attainable by the measures proposed, and the execution of these measures must lie within the military means
available, i.e., such of His Majesty's military and naval forces as are at any time available for service in China.

2. The force to be employed must be commensurate with the purpose which it is desired to achieve. This condition applies equally to the exertion demanded of His Majesty's forces and to the injury or loss inflicted on the Chinese.

3. There must be reasonable assurance that the measures to be taken will prove effective, within a reasonable period, that they will not involve the lock-up of the forces for an indefinite time and that they will not lead to further and unknown commitments.

I should add that His Majesty's Government would require very strong arguments to induce them to embark on a policy based on coercive action without the active co-operation or at least the open support and approval of other interested Powers, notably Japan and the United States of America.

The result of recent instances of proposed united coercive action have shown how little support His Majesty's Government could expect to receive from other interested Powers in the adoption, for any purpose other than that of protection of actual life, of such a line of action.

It is true that your United States and Japanese colleagues have at times led you to believe that their governments might be induced to accept their own views
in regard to the practicability and efficacy of a show
of force for political purposes in China. But
your United States colleague has had frankly to avow
that his government do not accept his recommendations,
and the Japanese minister is clearly equally out of
touch with the views held by the government in Tokyo.
It is therefore fairly clear that His Majesty's Government
could not count on the support of either of these
governments, in whose countries any policy of an active
or aggressive nature would be most unpopular. As member
of the League of Nations, moreover, His Majesty's
Government must themselves take into careful considera-
tion their own obligations and responsibilities to the
League, as well as the general growing tendency in the
rest of the world to condemn the exercise of methods of
violence in international relationships.

From the above it will appear that however
justifiable and even sound may be in principle a policy in-
volving threat or use of force in China in certain
circumstances outside the elemental necessity of pro-
tecting British life there, it is becoming more and more
clear that in practice such a policy must be discarded
as a practicable and effective means of defending British
treaty rights and established interests in that country,
or of bringing the Chinese to see reason.

Nothing in the above telegram is to be interpreted
as modifying the instructions sent to the Commander-in-
Chief on May 12th and referred to in your telegram No.
921A of June 7th.

Please repeat to Peking.