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W.M. (41)

55th Conclusions.

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WAR CABINET 55 (41).

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons Annexe, S.W. 1, on Thursday, May 28, 1941, at 12 NOON.*

## Present :

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister ( <i>in the Chair</i> ).	
The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.	The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.	The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of State.	The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.	

## The following were also present :

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.	The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD MOYNE, Secre- tary of State for the Colonies.	The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty.
The Right Hon. H. D. MARGESSON, M.P., Secretary of State for War.	The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.	Air Chief Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Vice-Admiral T. S. V. PHILLIPS, Vice-  
Chief of Naval Staff.

*Secretariat.*

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.  
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.  
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

WAR CABINET 55 (41).

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**Naval, Military  
and Air  
Operations.**

(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (41) 54th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 1.)  
Air Operations.

1. *The Chiefs of Staff* made the following reports in amplification of Cabinet War Room Records Nos. 631-634.  
Summary of aircraft losses in the home theatre since the 26th May:—

*Enemy—*  
7 destroyed.  
6 probable.  
6 damaged.

*Our own—*  
3 bombers.

During the previous night 3 enemy bombers had been brought down, 2 by A.A. gun fire and 1 by night fighters.

Air photographic reconnaissance showed the *Tirpitz*, *Hipper* and the *Admiral Scheer* in their usual positions at Kiel.

Naval  
Operations.  
The *Bismarck*.

Our Fleet, returning from the action against the *Bismarck*, had been attacked on the previous day by 5 Focke Wulf aircraft off the coast of Ireland. *Norfolk* had been damaged by a near miss, and H.M.S. *Mashona* had been sunk, 183 survivors being on board H.M.S. *Tartar*.

About 100 German survivors from the *Bismarck* had been picked up by our ships. The Germans had asked the Spanish Government to send out a ship, but it was doubtful whether she had arrived in time to save many lives.

Military  
Operations.  
Crete.

The Cabinet were informed of the latest developments of the situation in Crete, a record of which is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

**United States of  
America.**  
President  
Roosevelt's  
Speech.

2. *The Prime Minister* read to the War Cabinet two telegrams from President Roosevelt. The first dealt mainly with his speech, which had not been delivered when it had been despatched. The second gave information of the supplies which the United States were hoping to send in United States ships to the Middle East.

The Prime Minister read out the reply he had sent.

*The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* said that the President's speech had gone as far as we could have hoped for. He suggested that any Ministers making speeches might take this line.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

**Foreign Affairs.**

3. *The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* gave the following information:—

*Turkey.*

The War Cabinet were informed of the instructions sent to Angora, inviting Turkish co-operation in dealing with the situation in Syria (Telegram No. 1207 to Angora).

*Japan.*

It seemed clear that there was a strong party in Japan which was not committed to the position taken up by M. Matsuoka, that the entry of the United States of America into the war on our side would mean Japan coming in against us.



WAR CABINET 55 (41).

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*U.S.S.R.*

Attention was drawn to Sir Stafford Cripps's latest appreciation of the position (Telegram No. 538 from Moscow).

**Air Raids.**  
Casualties and  
Damage.  
(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (41) 51st  
Conclusions,  
Minute 5.)

4. *The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security* said that the previous night 190 enemy aircraft had been in operation against this country, of which 80 had been over land, the rest being engaged in mine-laying. Little damage had been reported, except at Folkestone, where many houses had been damaged by two parachute mines. Otherwise there was little to report.

**Cabinet  
Arrangements.**  
Whitsuntide  
Recess.

5. *The Prime Minister* said that Meetings of the War Cabinet would be held as usual on Monday, the 2nd June, at 5 P.M., and on Thursday, the 5th June, probably in the morning. Ministers would be warned if any matter of special importance was to be dealt with at these Meetings. The Prime Minister hoped that those of his colleagues whose duties permitted would take the opportunity to be away for a few days during the Whitsuntide Recess.

**Parliament.**  
Meeting Place.  
(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (41) 49th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 5.)

6. *The Prime Minister* said that arrangements to enable both Houses of Parliament to meet again in the Palace of Westminster were not yet fully complete, and that it would probably be necessary for Parliament to meet in the House of Commons Annexe for the first two weeks when Sittings were resumed after the Whitsuntide Recess. He thought, however, it would be a great convenience to many Members to be able to use the Writing Rooms and Library in the Palace of Westminster, while the House continued to meet in the Annexe, and for this purpose he hoped that Standing Orders could be altered so as to allow a longer time for Divisions while this arrangement lasted.

The War Cabinet approved this suggestion and asked that it should be taken up with the Chief Whip.

*Great George Street, S.W. 1,  
May 29, 1941.*





