CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, September 18, 1941, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Supply.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
The Right Hon. W. S. MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security (Items 1-6).
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. Archibald SINCLAIR, Lt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. LORD Leathers, Minister of War Transport (Item 7).
Mr. D. R. GRENFIELD, M.P., Secretary for Mines (Item 7).
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Lord MOYNE, Secretary of State for the Colonies.
Captain the Right Hon. H. D. MARGESSON, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. ANDREW DUNCAN, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (Item 7).
The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.
Sir ORME SARGENT, Deputy Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office.
General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
### WAR CABINET 94 (41).

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1. The Chiefs of Staff gave the following information in amplification of Cabinet War Room Records Nos. 744-746:

Summary of aircraft losses since the 15th September:

**Home Theatre—**

**Enemy—**
- 21 destroyed.
- 11 probable.
- 13 damaged.

**Our Own—**
- 16 Fighters (4 Pilots safe).
- 13 Bombers.

**Overseas Theatre—**

**Enemy—**
- 6 destroyed (plus 10 Junkers 87 lost in a sandstorm).
- 3 probable.
- 9 damaged.

**Our Own—**
- 8 Fighters.

Two ships totalling 5,500 tons had been hit and two attacks had been made on submarines by our aircraft.

During the previous three days 13,000 tons of shipping had been sunk and 34,000 tons damaged.

There had been an increase recently in the enemy’s mine-laying activities on the East Coast.

Information was given of satisfactory arrangements made with the United States Naval Authorities in regard to convoy escort duties.

In the Ukraine, German forces by-passing Kiev had joined hands and were now attacking from the East and the South with the object of forcing the encircled Russians back towards Kiev. German forces were also advancing towards Poltava on the road to Kharkov. Further south the Germans were now astride all the land communications to the Crimea, and Russian forces there were cut off from the remainder of Marshal Budenny’s Army. General Anders, the Polish Commander in Russia, had stated that the situation in the Ukraine was very serious.

The Germans had gained a footing on the Island of Oesel; this would further restrict the operations of the Russian Baltic Fleet.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. A discussion took place, which is recorded in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

3. The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet the reply which had been sent to M. Stalin’s last message.
The Minister of Supply gave the War Cabinet information as to the discussions regarding aid to Russia now proceeding with the United States representatives, preliminary to the Moscow Meeting.

A record of the discussion is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet agreed that this matter (and the related question of supplies to Turkey) should be discussed at a Meeting of the Defence Committee to be held on Friday night.

Foreign Affairs.

Persia.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (41) 93rd Conclusions, Minute 5.)

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the following information:

With the Shah's abdication, matters were working out satisfactorily for us. Enquiries were being made for a suitable asylum for the Shah in some British Colony.

The War Cabinet congratulated the Foreign Secretary on the successful handling of the Persian problem, and invited him to discuss our future policy in Persia with the Chiefs of Staff, reporting to the Prime Minister as necessary.

Reference was made to further telegrams which had passed.

The War Cabinet—

Endorsed the Prime Minister's view that we should bring diplomatic pressure to bear on Afghanistan to get rid of the German Colony, and might offer suitable inducements to this end, but should not at this stage take action which committed us to sanctions.

The Foreign Secretary said that the political situation in Egypt was rather disquieting. Nevertheless, he hoped that we should not depart from our general policy of abstaining from direct interference in the internal affairs of Egypt.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that it had now been arranged to hold on the 24th September the postponed meeting of the Allies. The Russians were prepared to associate themselves publicly with the joint declaration by the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt.

The War Cabinet—

T ook note of this statement and invited the Minister without Portfolio to communicate to the Dominions Secretary the text of a small alteration made in one clause of the Resolution on Post-War European Needs.

5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that it had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (41) 220) recommending that no further warning should be given to Japan by this country as to the consequences of any further encroachments until after a complete review of our Far Eastern policy, with particular reference to our action in the event of an attack by Japan on Russia, or of a new attack on China. The United States Government might be informed, after the necessary consultation with the Dominions, that, in our view, a warning from us in general terms
at the present time would add nothing to the Prime Minister’s broadcast statement of the 24th August, and might even detract from its force.

The War Cabinet—
Accepted the policy recommended in this Paper. It was, however, important that the United States Government should be given no grounds for thinking that we had not taken action in this matter fully corresponding to their own. The communication to the United States Government might therefore take the form of saying that, if they thought that we could usefully make any further statement, we would do so; but that, in our own judgment, it was undesirable to add anything at this stage to the Prime Minister’s broadcast.

Coal Production.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council (W.P. (G) (41) 96) pointing out that miners returning to the pits would, at the end of September, still fall short by 5,000 of the 720,000 men required to meet the needs of war-time consumption.

The Lord President’s Committee had come to the conclusion that it was necessary that the full 720,000 should be made available by the middle of October. In order to attain this aim, they were satisfied that there must be some modification of the limitations hitherto placed on the withdrawal of men from industry. While it was not proposed to withdraw fully-skilled men from the excluded industries unless the Supply Department concerned had agreed and arrangements had been made for replacement, they recommended that men engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled work in any of the excluded industries should be made available for immediate withdrawal without consultation, on the understanding that the Minister of Labour and National Service would do his utmost to replace such men as quickly as possible, and that, where considerable numbers were employed in one establishment, they would be withdrawn gradually.

The Lord President of the Council said that, while the numbers concerned were not large, his Committee was satisfied that, if we were to get through the winter without serious trouble, it would be necessary to recruit up to the figure of man-power now proposed.

The President of the Board of Trade explained that the Coal Production Council had asked for 50,000 men to be returned to the industry, but had abated their demand to 30,000. The number proposed represented the absolute minimum. Moreover, it was essential that the full number should be returned not later than the middle of October.

The Minister of Supply expressed his grave reluctance to any arrangement whereby men were taken away from establishments working for the Ministry of Supply without prior consultation. He instanced a number of establishments, engaged on vital munitions production, where the withdrawal of miners would dislocate the production of essential munitions.

The First Lord of the Admiralty also attached great importance to consultation before men were taken.

After further discussion, the War Cabinet agreed as follows:

(1) In principle, the proposals in the Lord President’s Paper were accepted, on the understanding that the Minister of Labour and National Service would take steps to ensure that the power to withdraw men was not exercised harshly or without discrimination.
(2) Any Minister aggrieved by the exercise of these powers would, of course, have the right of appeal to the War Cabinet, or to such other authority as might be determined for hearing appeals.

(3) In cases where appeals were made, withdrawal should be deferred for a week, to enable the appeal to be heard.

(4) The Secretary of State for War was instructed to take steps to ascertain that there were no miners employed in occupations in the Army which would lend colour to the suggestion that the attitude of the Government to the release of men for the colours was unreasonable.

*Great George Street, S.W. 1,*  
*September 18, 1941.*
Many thanks for your message. The Harriman Mission has all arrived and is working all day long with Beaverbrook and his colleagues. The object is to survey the whole field of resources so as to be able to work out with you a definite programme of monthly delivery by every available route and thus help repair so far as possible losses of your munition industries. President Roosevelt's idea is that this first plan should cover up till the end of June but naturally we shall go on with you till victory. I hope the Conference may open in Moscow 25th of this month, but no publicity should be given till all are safely gathered. The routes and method of travel will be signalled later.

2. I attach great importance to opening the
through route from Persian Gulf to Caspian, not only by railway but by a great motor road, in the making of which we hope to enlist American energies and organisation. Lord Beaverbrook will be able to explain the whole scheme of supply and transportation; he is on the closest terms of friendship with Harriman.

3. All possible theatres in which we might effect military cooperation with you have been examined by the Staffs. The two flanks, North and South, certainly present the most favourable opportunities. If we could act successfully in Norway the attitude of Sweden would be powerfully affected but at the moment we have neither the forces nor the shipping available for this project. Again in the south the great prize is Turkey, if Turkey can be gained another powerful army will be available. Turkey would like to come with us but is afraid, not without reason. It may be that the promise of considerable British forces and supplies of
technical material in which the Turks are deficient will exercise a decisive influence upon them. We will study with you any other form of useful aid, the sole object being to bring the maximum force against the common enemy.

4. I entirely agree that the first source from which the Russian fleet should be replenished should be at the expense of Germany. Victory will certainly give us control of important German and Italian naval vessels and in our view these would be most suitable for repairing losses to the Russian fleet.
will experience a noticeable influence from now on. The example will show why you may also need to consider the satisfaction. These are some common changes that I have noticed since I started working at the company. It is interesting how these changes have been consistent across different departments and industries. I have also noticed a significant improvement in overall efficiency and productivity. Based on these observations, I have made some suggestions for further improvements.