CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, May 10, 1943, at 5:30 P.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. C. R. Attlee, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
The following were also present:
The Right Hon. S. M. Bruce, Representative of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia (Items 1-5).
The Right Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. Lord Woolton, M.P., Minister of Food (Item 5).
The Right Hon. Osbert Peake, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Item 5).
The Right Hon. James Stuart, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (Items 5-7).

Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Representative of India (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. Viscount Cranborne, Lord Privy Seal.
Colonel the Right Hon. Oliver Stanley, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (Item 5).
The Right Hon. Sir James Grigg, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Sir Stafford Cripps, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. Brendan Bracken, M.P., Minister of Information.
The Right Hon. G. H. Hall, M.P., Financial Secretary, Admiralty (Item 5).
The Right Hon. W. Whiteley, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury (Items 5-7).
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The operations of Bomber Command had been limited by bad weather. A successful attack had been made on Dortmund, in which 1,670 tons of bombs had been dropped. Coastal Command had made 2 promising and 9 possible attacks on U-boats. Enemy losses for the week had been 13 destroyed, 4 probably destroyed and 13 damaged. Our losses had been 43 bombers, 9 fighters and 7 Coastal Command aircraft.

United States Air Forces had attacked the Ford Works at Antwerp successfully.

In the Mediterranean enemy losses had been 95 destroyed (46 on the ground), 10 probably destroyed and 28 damaged. Including United States aircraft, our losses had been 37 destroyed and 77 damaged. Our bombers had attacked Italian and Sicilian ports and had supported the land operations. In addition, 3 large and 9 small merchant vessels had been sunk.

In a bombing attack on Darwin the Japanese had lost 6 aircraft destroyed, 4 probably destroyed and 9 damaged. Our total losses had been 13 fighters, but only 7 had been shot down in combat; the rest had been lost owing to bad weather conditions. Ten pilots had been saved.

Shipping losses by enemy action during the previous week, including belated reports, had been 74,494 tons.

In the Mediterranean our submarines and destroyers had sunk a 7,000-ton munition ship, 2 destroyers, 2 small merchant ships, a schooner and a barge loaded with troops. All available small naval vessels were now being used for patrol work in the Sicilian Narrows.

An outward-bound Atlantic convoy had been heavily attacked by U-boats on the 4th and 5th May. Out of some 42 ships, 9 or 10 had been sunk. The escort had made vigorous attacks on the U-boats, sinking 5 of them, with the result that the attacks on the convoy had ceased. The Prime Minister had sent congratulatory messages to the officers in charge of the escort and of the convoy.

Our small craft had picked up 12 survivors from 2 U-boats, one of which had been sunk by Coastal Command aircraft and the other by ramming.

The operations in Tunisia were described. Following the fall of Bizerta and Tunis, the enemy was putting up a stiff resistance in the neighbourhood of Hamman Lif, and we had made little progress against them up till the previous evening. There had been no reports of the retreat of the First Italian Army, which was facing the front of the Eighth Army. The administrative situation of the enemy was desperate and they would have extreme difficulty in maintaining themselves in the Cap Bon Peninsula. It was estimated that there were still about 100,000 Axis troops in Tunisia.

Our forces in Burma had withdrawn a few miles from Buthidaung.

The War Cabinet—
Took note of the above statements and decided that congratulatory messages should be sent in their name to Generals Eisenhower and Alexander, Air Vice-Marshal Tedder and Admiral Cunningham.
3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that, for the time being, the best contribution we could make towards relieving the tension between Russia and Poland would be: (a) to urge the Soviet Government to facilitate the departure of Polish subjects wishing to leave Russia, and (b) to secure that newspapers, including Polish and other foreign newspapers, published in this country refrained from comment likely to exacerbate feelings between the two countries.

It was unfortunate that the Daily Worker was taking a provocative line. The War Cabinet, while agreeing that it would be inexpedient for the Minister of Information to offer any advice to this newspaper, thought that for the time being effect should not be given to the decision of the Lord President’s Committee that the ban on the export of the Daily Worker should be lifted.

4. The Secretary of State for War said that the film had now been seen by representatives of the War Office and the Ministry of Information, who took the view that it was unlikely to attract much attention or to have any undesirable consequences on the discipline of the Army. In the circumstances, he had reached the conclusion that the right plan was to allow the film to be shown.

The War Cabinet—
Endorsed this view.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (43) 193) covering the report agreed by the United Kingdom and United States Delegations to the Bermuda Conference on the refugee problem.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the most important of the recommendations made by the Conference were—

(i) The recognition that the refugee problem could not be solved by the United States and Great Britain alone, but concerned the whole community of civilised nations; and that Allied and neutral Governments should be invited to share in the relief of these refugees.

(ii) The proposal to establish a temporary camp in North Africa to relieve the immediate pressure on Spain.

(iii) The proposal to revive the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees which was appointed by the Evian Conference.

The Conference had been a marked success, and it was gratifying that the co-operation of the two Delegations had been so cordial and effective.

Points made in discussion were:

(a) There were signs of increasing anti-Semitic feeling in this country. From this point of view, it would be preferable in public statements to avoid implying that refugees were necessarily Jewish and to refer to refugees by nationality rather than by race.

(b) Reference was made to the statement in the draft declaration (reproduced in Annex B of the Report) that neutral Governments should be assured that they would not be expected to maintain refugees in their territory for an indefinite period.

It was explained that the intention was that all Allied Governments should undertake to facilitate the return after the war of refugees originating from their
territories. As regards enemy territories, we could only do our best to ensure that conditions were created in those territories which would enable refugees to return to them.

(c) It was agreed that no public statement should be made at this stage regarding the number of additional refugees whom we might be willing to receive into this country, at any rate until a decision had been reached on the question of a temporary camp in North Africa.

(d) The Secretary of State for India drew attention to an inaccuracy in paragraph 14 of the Report. It was there stated that India was taking 5,000 Polish refugees. In fact, India had undertaken to receive 11,000 refugees.

The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that he had observed a number of small inaccuracies in the Report. He need not trouble the War Cabinet with these, but would let the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs have a note of them for purposes of record.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Accepted the Report of the Delegates to the Bermuda Conference.

(2) Agreed that in the forthcoming debate in the House of Commons the opening statement, on behalf of the Government should be made by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, and that a senior Minister should reply to the debate. In view of the risk that a disproportionate number of the speeches might be by Members holding extreme views in favour of the free admission of refugees to this country, the Whips were invited to arrange that some Members would intervene in the debate who would put a more balanced point of view.

6. The War Cabinet considered a suggestion that the bells should be rung and a Thanksgiving Service held on the following Sunday to celebrate the victory of the Gulf of Tunis.

The War Cabinet—

Decided that this had better be deferred until enemy resistance in the Cap Bon Peninsula had been crushed, bearing also in mind that a special Thanksgiving Service on the following Sunday would conflict with the celebration of the Home Guard Anniversary already arranged.

The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that an Order had been made which permitted the Church bells to be rung on Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day to summon people to Church. A special Order would be necessary to allow the bells to be rung for any other purpose. He was already being questioned as to whether Church bells could be rung for services on week-days, and it was for consideration before long whether the Order which limited the ringing of Church bells should not be entirely revoked.
7. The War Cabinet discussed the business of the House on the following day, and agreed that the Deputy Prime Minister should make a short statement on the victory in Tunisia. It was not thought that the statement need be followed by discussion, but it was desirable to give the House an opportunity of expressing their thanks to the troops.

Attention was drawn to a Question for answer by the Prime Minister on the following day, asking whether he would give time for discussion of a Motion calling upon the Government to take steps to raise by 50 per cent. the rates of Workmen's Compensation provided for in the 1925 Act.

The view taken was that, while it might be desirable to allow opportunity for discussion of the position in regard to Workmen's Compensation in the House before long, the time was not yet ripe; moreover, when this discussion took place it would probably not be on the Motion referred to in this Parliamentary Question. The reply given should therefore be to the effect that no hope could be held out at present that time could be afforded for discussion of this subject.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
May 10, 1943.
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS read to the War Cabinet two telegrams which he had received from the Prime Minister (PENCIL Nos. 22 and 23) about the reply which he proposed to send to the telegram received from Premier Stalin (ALCOVE No. 42). The former telegram gave the Prime Minister's general reactions to Premier Stalin's telegram, and the latter contained the text of the Prime Minister's draft reply, in respect of which he asked for the Foreign Secretary's comments.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that the Prime Minister had not asked him to consult the War Cabinet on the terms of the draft reply to Premier Stalin. As, however, he was not in agreement with the Prime Minister's draft, he thought it was right that he should ascertain the views of his colleagues before replying to the Prime Minister.

The Foreign Secretary also thought that the Prime Minister's draft reply had been prepared before he (the Prime Minister) had received the telegram reporting the Foreign Secretary's interview with M. Maisky on May 6th.

The Foreign Secretary said that he was apprehensive of the paragraph in the Prime Minister's draft which virtually committed us to bring about changes in the Polish Government. He handed round copies of a draft reply which he proposed to send. (A copy is annexed to this Minute).

The Foreign Secretary's draft met with general approval, subject to the second paragraph being modified to read as follows:

"The Poles did not tell us what they were going to do. So we could not warn them of the peril of the course they were going to take."

Some minor amendments were proposed in the fourth paragraph.

It was also felt that the fifth paragraph required amendment. We knew that the Russian Government were taking the line that those who came from the part of Poland East of the Molotov-Ribbentrop frontier were now Russian citizens and it would therefore be dangerous to express gratitude for the information that it was not the policy of the Soviet Government to put obstacles in the way of the exit of "Polish subjects" in U.S.S.R. In substance the reply should take note of this information but should not commit us by implication to acceptance of the Russian views on this point.

The Foreign Secretary undertook to amend the draft on the lines indicated in the discussion. The telegram as amended was despatched as...
Following from Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin.
Personal and Most Secret.

1. I am much obliged to you for your message about the Polish affairs.

2. If the Poles had taken us more into their confidence, we might have saved them from several blunders. You surely know that the last thing we wanted was to make bad blood between you and them.

3. The Polish press will be disciplined in future and all other foreign language publications.

4. I agree that Polish Government is susceptible of improvement, though there would be great difficulty in finding better substitutes. I think, like you, that Sikorski and one or two others should in any event be retained. But you will, I hope, agree that it is very difficult for him to reconstitute his Government under foreign pressure. If he did so, he would probably have to go, and we should not get anyone as good in his place. Therefore he probably cannot make changes at once, but I will take every opportunity to urge him in this direction as soon as may be. I will discuss this with President Roosevelt.

5. I am most grateful to you for your intimation that it is not policy of Soviet Government to put obstacles in way of exit of Polish subjects in U.S.S.R. or of families of Polish soldiers.

6. Many thanks for your message about occupation of Tunis and Bizerta. The question is now how many do we catch.
Follow up your minister to receive a reply.

If no response, ask for an action plan.

It is essential to keep the lines of communication open.

If the response is not prompt, follow up again later.

Let your minister know your concerns and expectations.

He has control of the situation, so it is crucial to maintain a positive attitude.

Communication is key in resolving any issues.

If difficulties in communication arise, it is important to be clear and direct in your correspondence.

I have been following up with your minister, but I have not received any response.

I have been trying to contact him, but there has been no response.

I am concerned about the delay in receiving a response.

Our correspondence has been hampered by the lack of a response.

I have been trying to get through, but there has been no response.

I have been following up, but there has been no response.

I have been following up, but there has been no response.

I have been following up, but there has been no response.
FROM: Admiralty

IMMEDIATE

AICOVE NO. 166

Following for Prime Minister from Foreign Secretary,

Following is text referred to in my immediately

preceding telegram.

Following from Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin,

Personal and Most Secret.

I am much obliged to you for your message about the

Polish affair.

The Poles did not tell us what they were going to do,
and so we could not warn them against the peril of the

course which they proposed to take.

The Polish press will be disciplined in future and

all other foreign language publications.

I agree that Polish Government is susceptible of

improvement, though there would be great difficulty in

finding better substitutes. I think, like you, that

Sikorski and some others should in any event be retained.

But you will, I hope, agree that it is hardly possible for

Prime Minister to reconstruct his government under

foreign pressure. If Sikorski did so, he would proba

ble have to go, and we should not get anyone as good in his

place. Therefore he probably cannot make changes at once,

but I will take every opportunity to urge him in this

direction as soon as may be. I will discuss this with

President Roosevelt.

I note your intimation that it is not policy of

Soviet Government to put obstacles in way of exit of polish

subjects in U.S.S.R. of or families of Polish soldiers,

and will communicate with you further on this subject

through the Ambassador.

Many thanks for your message about occupation of

Tunis and Bizerta. The question is now how many do we catch.

102237B

Deputy Prime Minister

S/S Foreign Affairs

Sir A. Bridges

Mr. Peck

Capt. Clifford