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W.M. (43)

82nd Conclusions.

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WAR CABINET 82 (43).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, 7th June, 1943, at 5.30 P.M.

Present :

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (*in the Chair*).

The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Dominion
Affairs.

The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs.

The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON,
M.P., Lord President of the Council.

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P.,
Minister of Labour and National
Service.

The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON,
M.P., Minister of Production.

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON,
M.P., Secretary of State for the
Home Department and Minister of
Home Security.

The following were also present :

The Right Hon. S. M. BRUCE, Repre-
sentative of the Government of the
Commonwealth of Australia.

Sir RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR, Repre-
sentative of India.

The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD,
M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE,
Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P.,
Secretary of State for India and
Secretary of State for Burma.

The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER,
M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty.

The Right Hon. Sir JAMES GRIGG,
M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD
SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of
State for Air.

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 Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff. General Sir ALAN BROOKE, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

General Sir HAROLD ALEXANDER, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, North Africa.

Secretariat:

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

WAR CABINET 82 (43).

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Tunisia.

1. *The Prime Minister*, in welcoming General Alexander, said that he felt sure his colleagues would wish him to express to the General their warm admiration for his recent military achievements in North Africa and to extend to him their best wishes in the heavy work which lay ahead.

General Alexander then gave to the War Cabinet an account of the recent operations in Tunisia, a record of which is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

Naval, Military and Air Operations.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 79th Conclusions, Minute 1.)
Air Operations.
Home Theatre.
Mediterranean.

2. The Chiefs of Staff reported the principal events of the week. Weather conditions had prevented Bomber Command from carrying out night operations. Fighter Command had made successful attacks against enemy E-boats, shipping and locomotives in occupied territory. Enemy losses for the week had been 23 destroyed, 2 probably destroyed and 9 damaged. Our losses had been 13 fighters (including 1 United States aircraft), 1 bomber and 3 Coastal Command aircraft.

Allied aircraft continued to make heavy attacks on enemy airfields in Sicily and Sardinia and against Pantelleria. During the previous two weeks a considerable number of enemy merchant ships had been sunk, and others damaged. Enemy losses in this area had been 50 aircraft destroyed, 13 probably destroyed and 22 damaged. We had lost 8 aircraft.

Naval Operations.
Home Waters.
Mediterranean.

Shipping losses by enemy action during the week, including belated reports, amounted to 28,273 tons. In addition, marine risks accounted for 15,000 tons.

Our coastal forces had sunk 7,000 tons of merchant shipping in a fiord south of Bergen.

Destroyers had sunk 3 enemy merchant ships and a destroyer off Cape Colonne on the morning of the 2nd June. A Greek destroyer had taken part in the action.

The First Lord of the Admiralty was invited to publish an account of this action as soon as conveniently possible.

Pantelleria had been bombarded on four occasions. Our submarines had sunk a 7,000-ton tanker and a 3,000-ton merchant ship.

Military Operations.
Russia.

Further Russian attacks in the Taman bridgehead had not met with much success.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

Anti-U-boat Campaign.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 58th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

3. *The Prime Minister* said that he had received a telegram from President Roosevelt to the effect that he thought that too much information was being given about the progress of the war against U-boats. The President had suggested that he (the Prime Minister) and himself should issue a joint statement each month which, without mentioning any figures, would give a broad statement of the position.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that he was sending the Prime Minister a note giving the Admiralty view about the President's proposal, which, he thought, contained certain risks.

The War Cabinet—

Took note that this suggestion would be discussed by the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

The Shipping Situation.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 57th Conclusions, Minute 5.)

4. *The Prime Minister* read to the War Cabinet a letter, dated the 28th May, from President Roosevelt, pointing out that the United States merchant fleet had continued to increase, whereas ours had decreased, and stating that he had given directions for the transfer to our Flag, for temporary war-time duty, of a considerable number of new ships under construction in the United States on completion.

The Prime Minister said that he had asked the President if he would agree, subject to certain amendments suggested for reasons of security, to his letter being published. In the meantime, the letter would be circulated to his colleagues in the War Cabinet.*

Civil Defence.

Air Raid Warning.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 16th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

5. The War Cabinet took note, with approval, of a Note by the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security (W.P. (43) 228), covering a Joint Memorandum by himself and the Secretary of State for Air, making the following recommendations as to the air-raid warning system:—

- (i) The issue of national air-raid messages in Great Britain, which were at present issued from Fighter Group Headquarters, should be decentralised to Observer Centres.
- (ii) The responsibility for issuing national air-raid messages should be undertaken by the Ministry of Home Security through their Alarm Controllers at Observer Centres, who were at present responsible for issuing local alarms.
- (iii) The transfer of responsibility should be arranged between the two Departments concerned as and when the new tables at Observer Centres were brought into operation.

These recommendations had been approved by the Civil Defence Committee.

Foreign Affairs.

Argentina.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 1st Conclusions, Minute 5.)

6. *The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* said that the revolution in Argentina, which had resulted in the formation of a new Government under General Ramirez, was a favourable event. He had good hopes that the new Government, when established, would break with the Axis Powers.

France.
General de Gaulle and General Giraud.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 75th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

The Prime Minister said that he understood that President Roosevelt thought that the newspaper correspondents were disposed to take a view which favoured General de Gaulle rather than General Giraud. He asked whether the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Information could look into the matter.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and *the Minister of Information* agreed to do so, but added that it was believed that the de Gaullist correspondents had been more active than those who supported General Giraud, in the United States as well as elsewhere.

*Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
7th June, 1943.*

* Subsequently circulated as W.P. (43) 234.



