CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, 19th July, 1943, at 6 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. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Minister of Production.
The Right Hon. R. G. CASEY, Minister of State.

The following were also present:
Sir RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR, Representative of India.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT SIMON, Lord Chancellor (Item 6).
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. the EARL OF SELBORNE, Minister of Economic Warfare (Item 7).
Air Chief Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1 and 2).

Vice-Admiral Sir NEVILLE SYFRET, Vice-Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1 and 2).

Secretariat:
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES
Lieutenant-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY
Mr. NORMAN BROOK
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 56th Conclusions, Minute 1.

1. The Chiefs of Staff reported the principal events of the previous week.

Operations of Bomber Command had been restricted by weather, but two successful attacks had been made, one on Aachen and the other on Turin. The result of another attack on six transformer stations in Northern Italy was uncertain. The Peugeot Motor Works at Montbeliard had also been attacked. Coastal Command had made two promising and three possible attacks on U-boats and sunk one 2,000-ton merchant ship. Enemy losses had been 34 destroyed and 7 probably destroyed. Our losses had been 48 bombers, 25 fighters and 8 Coastal Command aircraft.

United States Air Forces had attacked airfields and depots in Northern France.

United States Air Forces had sunk two and probably sunk one U-boat off the west coast of Morocco.

The Mediterranean Air Command had flown 14,700 sorties during the previous week compared with 2,200 sorties by the enemy. Sicily had been practically clear of Axis aircraft by the middle of the previous week. Our heavy bombers had attacked Messina, Naples, and airfields and ports in Southern Italy. That morning marshalling yards in Rome had been bombed. Enemy losses in this area had been 309 destroyed, 44 probably destroyed and 106 damaged. Our losses had been 89 operational aircraft and some 30 transport aircraft.

Naval Operations.

Sicily.

A satisfactory number of U-boats had been sunk during July. His Majesty's ships continued to give support to land operations.

The War Cabinet were informed of the progress of operations in Sicily. The hardest fighting was taking place to the south of Catania. The morale of the Italian forces was poor. Prisoners amounted to 29,000.

Russia.

The news from Russia was very reassuring. The Russians were making two attacks, north and east of Orel, and had regained all the ground that had been lost in the recent German offensive north of Kursk. The Russians had also launched two more offensives, one in the Rostov area and the other in the Taman Peninsula, about which they had so far given no information.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

2. The Prime Minister said that he had been considering whether there was any further action we could take with a view to compelling the German Government to discontinue the shackling of British prisoners in their hands.

Would it be possible to tell them that we were keeping an account of the number of man-hours during which British prisoners were kept in chains, and that it was our firm intention to shackle German officers after the war for a corresponding number of man-hours? In the first instance we might perhaps inform the Protecting Power in confidence that we contemplated making a public announcement to this effect, unless within a specified time the German Government gave satisfactory assurances that the shackling of British prisoners had been discontinued.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to consider this suggestion.
Ethiopia.

(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (41) 120th
Conclusions,
Minute 3.)

3. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.F. (43) 317). Attached to the Memorandum were two telegrams from the Deputy Minister of State in Cairo, dated the 4th and 14th July, and a telegram from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to our Minister at Addis Ababa, dated the 3rd July. Lord Moyne, in his telegrams, urged that the present position in Ethiopia was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory, and that we should take drastic action to ensure a reasonably good administration in Ethiopia. He urged that consideration should be given to the desirability of denouncing the existing Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement with a view to reaching a fresh Agreement providing for our long-term objectives, and with maximum measures of control.

Reference was also made in discussion to two telegrams from our Minister at Addis Ababa, dated the 17th July and the 19th June (Nos. 564 and 476). In these telegrams the Minister, while suggesting that the present advisory system might need to be modified, was opposed to any attempt to coerce the Emperor in this matter unless we were prepared to give far more substantial aid. In his view action to obtain good government must be taken in collaboration with the Ethiopians. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs expressed himself as in agreement with Mr. Howe's views, especially as expressed in his telegram No. 564.

The following were the main points in discussion:

(a) The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that the position on the frontier between Ethiopia and Kenya was serious. Frequent raids took place across the frontier, and the Emperor was powerless to stop them. To deal with the matter effectively, we should have to employ troops, who would probably have to cross the frontier and occupy for a time the waterholes within Ethiopian territory.

The Prime Minister said that we must give effective protection to our people in Kenya and, if necessary for this purpose, must not shrink from punitive expeditions across the frontier.

(b) The main point in discussion was whether it was incumbent upon us to take action to ensure a reasonable standard of administration in Ethiopia.

The Minister of State said that the position was deteriorating and that there was a danger that it would become chaotic. He favoured a visit by an experienced officer familiar with the discussions on policy in Ethiopia which had taken place in London, and with the past history of the country. He should spend some time in Ethiopia and report on the position. At the present moment there was considerable conflict of personalities. He believed that changes in the advisers would be salutary.

Alternatively, the Minister of State suggested that His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, General Platt and the Governor of Kenya might be invited to attend a Conference on Ethiopia in Cairo.

(c) Mr. Bruce reminded the War Cabinet that it had been generally recognised before the war that it had been a mistake to allow Ethiopia to join the League of Nations, and but for Italy's attack upon her Ethiopia would probably have been called upon to justify her position and answer for the misgovernment that was going on in her territories before the Bar of the League of Nations. He added that in such an event Ethiopia would have had to accept some drastic supervision or be expelled from the League. We had driven the Italians out of Ethiopia,
and until such time as there was a world authority we were more or less in the position of trustees for the world with regard to Ethiopia. It would be very embarrassing to us if, after the war, it were shown that, under our guidance, Ethiopia had reverted to an even worse state than in 1935.

(d) As against this, the War Cabinet were reminded that we had deliberately decided not to attempt any detailed supervision or control of Ethiopian administration. The task of raising the standard of civilisation in Ethiopia might, conceivably, be undertaken as an international responsibility after the war. But there was no obligation of trusteeship resting upon His Majesty’s Government now to ensure good government in Ethiopia. And, in any event, it was doubtful whether in present circumstances we could spare the resources to achieve this even if we wished to do so.

(e) It was pointed out that the financial settlement had been based upon—

(i) a tapering subsidy, and
(ii) a lump sum, not related to any specific period, to deal with unforeseeable expenditure in the transition period.

It was suggested that, if the country was being badly administered, we ought to withdraw this financial support.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies took the view that it would be against our interests to withdraw any substantial part of this subsidy. It was a part of our policy that the Emperor’s Government should be maintained and, if our financial support were suddenly withdrawn, the Emperor’s position would be precarious. At the same time, there was no reason why we should not make use of the financial arrangements to induce the Emperor to improve his administration.

The War Cabinet’s Conclusions were as follows:

(1) General agreement was expressed with the continuance of our present policy in Ethiopia as outlined in recent telegrams from His Majesty’s Minister at Addis Ababa and by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in discussion in the War Cabinet.

(2) The Secretary of State for the Colonies should ensure that the frontier between Kenya and Ethiopia was effectively guarded, and should submit a report to the War Cabinet indicating what measures and what military forces might be required for this purpose.

(3) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should consider, in consultation with the Minister of State, whether the situation was such as to demand the summoning of some local conference to consider the position in Ethiopia. In the meantime the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was authorised to despatch the draft telegram printed as Annex I to W.P. (43) 317.

(4) It would be undesirable that we should withdraw financial support from Ethiopia at the present time; but the support afforded should, so far as possible, be administered in such a way as to encourage the adoption of a correct attitude on the part of the Emperor.
The War Cabinet were informed that Lord Fitzalan was to ask a Question in the House of Lords on the following day about the bombing of Rome.

The Prime Minister said that he had already explained the Government's policy in this matter to Lord Fitzalan, when he came to see him recently to represent the anxieties of the Roman Catholic community about the possibility that Rome might be bombed. It should be made clear, in replying to the Question, that, while we could not forgo our right to take military action against Rome, both as the centre of the Fascist Government and on account of the military objectives which the city contained, special instructions had been given to those taking part in this operation that the greatest care was to be taken to avoid damage to religious and cultural monuments. It might also be possible to give some particulars about the results of the raid, in the light of detailed information which might become available before the Question was answered.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Lord Privy Seal to deal with the Question on these lines.

Mr. R. G. Casey.

5. The Prime Minister said that this was the last Meeting of the War Cabinet which Mr. Casey would be attending during his present visit to this country. He was sure that this visit had been fruitful, and he and all his colleagues had greatly valued Mr. Casey's presence at their Meetings.

Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar was also leaving that week to return to India to take up his appointment as Minister for Supply in the Governor-General's Executive Council. He took the good wishes of all of them in his important new duties.

The War Cabinet—

Warmly endorsed the Prime Minister's statement.

War Pensions.

Pensions Appeal Tribunals Bill.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 95th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

At their Meeting on the 8th July, the War Cabinet had invited the Minister of Pensions to consider whether the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Bill should be amended so as to confer a right of appeal against interim awards made before final assessment.

The War Cabinet considered a Memorandum on this point by the Minister of Pensions (W.P. (43) 314). It was recommended in the Memorandum that the Bill should confer a right to appeal against an interim award two years after it was made; but that, in view of the substantial amount of additional work which this would involve both for the Ministry of Pensions and for the Tribunals, the Bill should also provide that this right should not become operative until a future date when the initial pressure of work on the more important appeals would have been relaxed.

The War Cabinet were informed that the Lord President of the Council and the Minister of Pensions had seen some of the Members who had taken part in the debates on this Bill, and had ascertained that they were likely to be content with the amendment in this form. The Minister of Pensions had also ascertained that the amendment would be acceptable to the British Legion.

At the War Cabinet's earlier discussion the question had also been raised whether there should be any right of appeal to a Tribunal against discretionary decisions by the Minister of Pensions. The War Cabinet were informed that this point had also been discussed with Members who had taken part in the debates. It now appeared that, in matters in which the Minister exercised a discretion, they did not desire that this discretion should be limited;
and that they recognised that there could not properly be an appeal to a Tribunal against a decision dependent on the exercise of a Ministerial discretion.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Authorised the Minister of Pensions to bring forward an amendment of the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Bill on the lines indicated in the last paragraph of W.P. (43) 314.

(2) Agreed that no action should be taken with a view to making it possible for a pensioner to appeal to a Tribunal against a discretionary decision of the Minister of Pensions.

7. In accordance with the decisions reached at their Meeting on the 14th July, the War Cabinet had before them a Note by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (43) 312) containing a series of recommendations in regard to our policy in the Middle East.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Approved these recommendations, subject to the following amendment suggested by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, namely, the substitution for the second sentence of paragraph (1), of the following:—

"This development, which should allow room for the association as desired of any other Governments with special interests in the Middle East area, should be carried out cautiously."

(2) Agreed that, before any approach was made to the United States Government in regard to paragraph (2) of the recommendations, advance notice should be given to the Dominion Governments and the Government of India.

NOTE.—The full text of the recommendations, as amended, is printed as a footnote to W.M. (43) 99th Conclusions, Minute 2.

8. The War Cabinet were informed that an Address had been passed by both Houses of Parliament in Canada praying that His Majesty would cause legislation to be presented to the Parliament at Westminster, providing that, notwithstanding the provisions of the British North America Acts, it should not be necessary that the representation of the Canadian Provinces in the Canadian House of Commons be readjusted, in consequence of the decennial census of 1941, until after the war. It was desired that this legislation should be passed by the Parliament at Westminster before the Canadian Parliament rose on the 24th July.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that the necessary legislation was being prepared, and he was bringing the matter before the Legislation Committee on the following day. He proposed that the Bill should be introduced forthwith in the House of Lords and that every effort should be made to pass it into law before the 24th July.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of this statement.
9. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security said that in previous years a Civil Defence Day had been organised in the autumn. A suggestion had now been made that a "Battle of Britain Sunday" should be held in September, to celebrate the Battle of Britain in 1940; and should be organised jointly by the Ministry of Home Security, the Air Ministry, the Ministry of Aircraft Production and the War Office (in respect of Anti-Aircraft Units). It was proposed that the function should comprise a Service in St. Paul's and a parade in London.

The War Cabinet—
Approved in principle this suggestion and asked that the Ministers concerned should proceed with the necessary arrangements in consultation.

Offices of the War Cabinet. S.W. 1,
19th July, 1943.
The following matters were mentioned in Cabinet, but it was decided not to record them.

**POLAND.**

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS said that the leader of the Polish Secret Army in Poland had been arrested. The Poles were much disturbed about the position and feared that he would be put to death. It was suggested that some threat might be made which would deter the Germans from this action.

The Foreign Secretary said that he did not think there was any action which we could take in the matter. The leader of the Polish Secret Army was, in law, not a prisoner of war, but a franc-tireur.

Agreement was expressed with this view.

**CRETE.**

Mention was made of the atrocities carried out by the Germans in Crete following the successful Commando raid. News of these atrocities had not yet been published.

**PRISONERS.**

In connection with the discussion on the shackling of prisoners of war, THE PRIME MINISTER pointed out that the Germans, by keeping a very large number of Frenchmen of military age as prisoners for several years, had undoubtedly taken action which would affect the French population. He thought that it was for consideration whether some corresponding action should not be taken against the Germans at the end of the war: that is to say, that a large number of young German males should be segregated from their womenfolk and used on forced labour for a period of years to repair the damage done by Germany.

The view expressed in discussion was that while there was much to be said for this idea from the point of view of abstract justice, it was very difficult to believe that such a measure could be enforced for any appreciable time, and that it would be better to leave any retributive action to be taken by the Russians.