CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street.
S.W. 1, on Monday, 28th February, 1944, at 6 p.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair for Items 1-10).
The Right Hon. C. R. Attlee, M.P., Lord President of the Council (in the Chair for Item 11).
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Minister of Production.

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

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. S. M. Bruce, Representative of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia (Items 1-10).
The Right Hon. Viscount Simon, Lord Chancellor (Items 7-8).
The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Privy Seal.
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.

Colonel the Right Hon. J. J. Llewellyn, M.P., Minister of Food (Item 9).
The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.
The Right Hon. RICHARD LAW, M.P., Minister of State (Item 9).
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The Prime Minister extended a welcome, on behalf of the War Cabinet, to Mr. Nash, who was now on a visit to this country.

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

So far as air operations were concerned, the week had been the most active of the whole war, 20,000 sorties having been flown; 9,058 tons of bombs had been dropped on Germany alone.

Bomber Command had attacked Schweinfurt and Augsburg, following daylight attacks on these cities by United States aircraft. In addition, United States bombers had attacked Regensburg, Rostock, Furth and Gotha with good results.

It was believed that the German capacity for aircraft production had been considerably reduced as a result of the combined United Kingdom and United States air offensive, culminating in the attacks carried out during the previous week.

"Crossbow" targets had been attacked.

Enemy losses for the week, including claims by the United States Air Forces, amounted to 348 destroyed, 86 probably destroyed and 155 damaged. Our losses included 63 R.A.F. bombers and 165 United States bombers.

The enemy had lost 22 aircraft destroyed, 5 probably destroyed and 6 damaged in raids on this country, while 7 further aircraft had been destroyed by intruders across the Channel.

Weather had interfered with our activity in support of the land battle, but targets in Southern Germany and the Balkans had been attacked. In the Mediterranean the enemy had lost 272 and the Allies 141 aircraft.

2. The Navy, Military and Air Operations.

Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (44) 23rd Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air Operations.

Home Theatre.

Mediterranean.

Pacific.

Naval Operations.

Confirmed shipping losses by enemy action for the week amounted to 28,349 tons, including belated reports. February losses so far amounted to 67,042 tons.

During February 12 German U-boats had been destroyed and 4 probably destroyed.

Since its formation the Second Escort Group had destroyed 17 U-boats, of which the Commanding Officer had sunk 12 with his own ship.

The Japanese main fleet had abandoned Truk as a fleet base. In an attack on Guam by aircraft from a United States carrier 135 Japanese aircraft had been claimed as destroyed for the loss of 6 United States aircraft.

During the previous week the fighting had not been very severe on the Anzio bridgehead front, but an early attack by the enemy was expected. Owing to the size of the force in the bridgehead, this command would in future be known as the Allied Bridgehead Force. On the main front there had been nothing to report.

The situation on the Burma front had improved considerably and the Japanese had suffered a very large number of casualties.

The Prime Minister said that he had in mind to make a statement to the House of Commons in the near future regarding the situation on this front.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.
Italy.
Proposals arising out of consideration of the future of the Italian Fleet.
(Previous Reference: W.M.(44)10th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the War Cabinet information about the main issues in the field of foreign affairs.

The Finnish situation seemed to be developing satisfactorily.

As regards the Polish-Russian situation, our Ambassador was to see Premier Stalin that day. Meanwhile, the Polish Government had not helped matters by the statements which they had put out in this country.

The discussions with the Spanish Government were proceeding satisfactorily.

The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that the President had agreed that any change in the Italian Government should await developments in the military situation.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reported that the situation that had arisen in the Argentine, which was obscure, was still under examination, and that he could not yet make any statement about it.

The War Cabinet—
Took note of these statements.

Air Raids.
Casualties and Damage.
(Previous Reference: W.M.(44)23rd Conclusions, Minute 3.)

5. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security made a report to the War Cabinet on the air raids that had taken place in London between the 21st and 25th February.

The raid on the 21st/22nd February, carried out by 26 aircraft, had been of minor importance; very extensive flare-dropping had been a feature of it. The raids on the three following nights had been in many respects similar to one another. Each of these raids had been carried out by 100 to 150 aircraft, many different types having been employed. Casualties last week and the preceding week had been as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seriously injured</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>1,016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slightly injured</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>500</td>
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The War Cabinet—
Agreed that the month's casualty figures, which in the normal course were due for release in the immediate future, should be published.

Civil Defence.
Use of Deep Shelters.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security (W.P. (44) 135) on Deep Tube Shelters. The Memorandum set out the present position in regard to these shelters, their numbers, and the accommodation they afforded. As a result of recent raids, there had been a sharp
increase in the pressure on shelter accommodation, which was
aggravated by the removal of certain of the bunk accommodation
from tube shelters. The resultant congestion at certain tube
shelters had led to pressure, encouraged by sections of the Press,
for the opening of the deep shelters. The accommodation in those
shelters had been provided to meet the need felt at the end of 1940
for shelters in which people could spend the whole of the night.
The recent raids had been short and sharp and the deep shelters
had not been built for this contingency. Moreover, of the eight deep
shelters, one was in occupation by military staffs and two others
were being adapted for the accommodation of Operational Staffs.
The Civil Defence Committee had agreed that it would be desirable
that all the deep shelters should be so reserved, while the Defence
Committee (Operations) had decided that in the allocation of
accommodation in deep tube shelters priority must be given to the
maintenance of the machinery of Government.

The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that,
looking at the matter from the point of view of the shelter accommo­
dation available, there was no need to take these shelters into use.
He deprecated anything that would encourage the development of
the deep shelter mentality, and drew attention to the possible effect
on morale of Civil Defence workers of encouraging it. On a review
of the whole position, he recommended that the deep shelters should
not be opened to the public and that an explanation of the reasons
underlying this decision should be given.

The Prime Minister suggested that, if the present raids were
continued, and these shelters were known to exist, but the accommo­
dation was not made available, there was a risk of strong public
criticism. Would it not be possible to allow the public to use them
temporarily and to close or empty them at the appropriate time?
He also thought that the effect on morale of the opening of these
deep shelters could be exaggerated.

The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that
the possibility of allowing the public to use these shelters
temporarily, and thereafter requiring them to vacate, had been most
carefully examined; but all expert opinion was agreed that it would
not be practicable to do so and that very serious difficulties would
follow any attempt to apply such a policy. Admittedly, the amount
of shelter accommodation in issue was small in relation to the total
population to be catered for. But he attached importance to the
question of morale, and to avoiding anything that would encourage
the existing prejudice against street shelters, or tend to develop
the deep dugout mentality. A question had now been put down in
the House of Commons for to-morrow and he was anxious, if the
present policy was approved, to give in reply to it a real justification
of the policy which he was advocating. He outlined the terms of
his proposed reply.

The Prime Minister said that, while he still felt some doubt as
to the course proposed, he would not press his point of view.

After further discussion, the War Cabinet—

Endorsed the proposals of the Home Secretary and
Minister of Home Security, as contained in W.P. (44) 135,
and agreed as to the terms of the reply to be given in
Parliament, subject to the omission of the reference to
"forthcoming offensive" and the substitution therefor of
some such words as "essential military purposes."
Civil Claims against Members of the United States Forces.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (44) 133) setting out proposed arrangements for dealing with civil claims against members of the United States Forces. Attached to the Memorandum was a draft statement which would be made in the House of Commons if the arrangements were approved.

The main proposals in the Memorandum were:

(i) His Majesty's Government should assume responsibility for the settlement and payment of claims arising out of traffic accidents, accidental shootings, accidental explosions, loss of or damage to chattels in premises requisitioned by United States Forces, and certain other accidents, such as those caused by practice gun-fires and fires in billets. Responsibility would be limited to claims arising on and after the 19th March, and claims would be accepted only if they arose out of acts or omissions of United States Forces in the course of their military duties;

(ii) His Majesty's Government should accept responsibility for payment, but not for the examination, of any outstanding claims of the kind referred to in (i) and the Americans should be urged to clear up these claims satisfactorily and speedily; and

(iii) In the case of outstanding claims for sums exceeding 5,000 dollars, His Majesty's Government should assume at once the responsibility for the examination as well as the payment, since, if it were left to the Americans to settle these claims, they would be forced to refer them to Congress, with a consequent delay of many months.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that there was a great deal of criticism of the delay in settling claims against members of the United States Forces and that, unless a satisfactory solution could be reached, it would be difficult to keep this criticism in check. By no means all the traffic accidents which gave rise to claims were due to dangerous driving.

The following points arose in discussion:

(a) Could American drivers not be made to conform to the same restrictions on speed as were imposed on British Service drivers? It was suggested that the possibility of getting the United States authorities to agree to this might be explored.

(b) To what areas would the arrangements proposed in W.P. (44) 133 extend? It was explained that the arrangements would extend only to the areas covered by the British Claims Commission.

(c) The Prime Minister thought that the proposed statement to be made in the House of Commons was too long. It was agreed that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make a brief oral announcement and circulate the full statement in the Official Report.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the proposals in W.P. (44) 133 subject to "X" above.

8. The War Cabinet had before them—

(i) A Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council (W.P. (44) 124) proposing that an order should be made under Section 1 (2) of the Allied Powers (Maritime Courts) Act, 1941, applying the Act to France; and
(ii) A Memorandum by the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security (W.P. (44) 130) stating what responsibilities and liabilities would fall on him in the event of the establishment of a French Maritime Court in this country.

The Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council explained that the Lord President's Committee were satisfied that an order should be made to enable a French Maritime Court to be established, but that, in view of the desirability in present circumstances of proceeding with great caution in any matter involving the French Committee of Liberation, they had felt it necessary to draw the attention of the War Cabinet to the proposal.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the proposal that an order should be made under Section 1 (2) of the Allied Powers (Maritime Courts) Act, 1941, applying the Act to France.

Food Problems in Liberated Europe.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare (W.P. (44) 113) proposing that, in view of the present world food situation, British propaganda should encourage the Spring sowing of crops while continuing to urge peasants not to market the food through Nazi-controlled channels.

The Minister of Economic Warfare recalled that at the meeting on the 24th September, 1943 (W.M. (43) 131st Conclusions, Minute 3), the War Cabinet had decided to reconsider before the Spring sowings the question whether British propaganda should go so far as to encourage food production in Europe. He suggested that the time had come to take this step if we were going to avoid a situation in which the population of liberated areas in Europe would blame the Allies for the shortages of food which were likely to arise.

The Prime Minister saw some objection to open propaganda on these lines. He suggested that, while not changing our open propaganda to the populations of occupied areas, local agents should be instructed to speak on the lines proposed.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that there should be no change in the public propaganda to populations of occupied countries on the subject of food production, but that local agents in these countries should be instructed to encourage food production.

Army Benevolent Fund.

10. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (44) 119) covering a scheme worked out by the Army Council for the formation of an Army Benevolent Fund.

The War Cabinet—

Deferred consideration of the scheme until after the forthcoming debate in the House of Commons on Army pay and allowances.

Service Pay and Allowances.

11. The Secretary of State for War said that in the Debate on Army Estimates Mr. Kendall, M.P., had a Motion calling attention to the inadequate pay and allowances of Service men and women and moving "that this House is of the opinion that the pay
and allowances of members of His Majesty's Army are inadequate to enable them and their families to maintain a reasonable standard of living, and therefore it is urgent that immediate increases be made in such pay and allowances.

The Secretary of State for War reminded the War Cabinet that on the occasion of the last major alteration in Service pay and allowances in September 1942 it had been stated on behalf of the Government that the concessions then introduced were regarded as a final solution of the matter so long as prices remained substantially at their present levels.

Since that date price levels had not changed, but there had been some increase in industrial wages. The Secretary of State informed the War Cabinet of the general lines of the statement which he proposed to make. This was that His Majesty's Government stood on the position which they had taken up in September 1942 and which had been reaffirmed on several subsequent occasions, and that they remained of opinion that the general scheme of the present pay and allowances was essentially sound and afforded a fair and reasonable standard for officers and other ranks and their families. At the same time the door was not closed so far as concerned the detailed application of the scheme then adopted. The position was constantly being examined in the light of the information received, and suggestions made in debate would be added to evidence already received and would be taken into consideration.

In discussion, it was suggested that the House might be reminded that on the occasion of the alterations effected in September 1942 the whole position had been very fully discussed between the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and Minister of Aircraft Production and a committee representative of all sections of the House, who had accepted as satisfactory the rates of pay and allowances which had then been introduced. It was generally agreed that reference to this might be included in the Secretary of State for War's statement.

Subject to this point, the War Cabinet—

Endorsed the general lines of the statement outlined by the Secretary of State for War.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
28th February, 1944.