CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room on Wednesday, 9th August, 1944, at 6 p.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
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. VICOUNT CRANBORNE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
Colonel the Right Hon. OLIVER STANLEY, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.
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.
Sir ORME SARGENT, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Mr. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Supply (Items 9 and 10).
Admiral of the Fleet Sir ANDREW CUNNINGHAM, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

Field-Marshal Sir ALAN BROOKE, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat:
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
General Sir HASTINGS L. ISMAY.
Sir GILBERT LAITHWAITE.
Mr. W. S. MURRIE.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
## WAR CABINET 104 (44).

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1. The Chiefs of Staff reported the principal events of the previous nine days.

Bomber Command had flown 6,856 sorties and dropped 22,700 tons of bombs.

United States heavy bombers had flown 10,400 sorties and dropped 19,700 tons of bombs, 11,000 of which had been on Germany.

The Allied Expeditionary Air Force had flown 29,000 sorties and dropped 6,000 tons of bombs. They had also destroyed 187 tanks, 177 locomotives and a considerable number of motor transport vehicles and railway trucks.

The enemy had lost 232 aircraft as against Allied losses of 335. During the previous nine days 556 flying bombs had been launched, of which 51 per cent. had been destroyed. 16,000 tons of bombs had been dropped on flying bomb launching sites and storage depots.

During the week ending the 7th August there had been no shipping losses due to enemy action. Total losses for July amounted to 74,920 tons.

Eight U-boats had been destroyed and four probably destroyed during July.

The Prime Minister said that what might prove to be a battle of great importance was now being fought in Normandy. The British and Canadian attack south of Caen was proceeding satisfactorily and our armour was now within 6 or 7 miles of Falaise. The American forces, moving with great daring, were engaged in a wide encircling movement. To avoid encirclement of part of his forces the enemy might have to make a considerable withdrawal.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

2. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security gave the War Cabinet the following figures as to the attack by flying bombs. Casualties since the inception of the attack up to 6 a.m., the 9th August:

<table>
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<th>Casualty Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>5,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously injured</td>
<td>14,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly injured</td>
<td>19,865</td>
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29,530

3. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that there had been some criticism that the time for which the siren sounded for the "alert" or "raiders past" was rather on the long side. He proposed gradually to reduce the time of the signal, perhaps by as much as 50 per cent. He did not suggest making any public statement, but would observe what the reactions of the public were.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the proposal of the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security.

4. The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet a personal telegram which he had received from Premier Stalin about his talks in Moscow with M. Mikolajczyk, Grabski and Remer. M. Mikolajczyk and his colleagues had then had discussions with representatives of the Polish National Committee. No final decisions had been reached, but the outlook seemed more promising.
Italy.
Proposed Article in the Daily Worker.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed the War Cabinet that the Daily Worker had asked the Italian Communist Party for permission to appoint a correspondent to Italy, and had invited Signor Togliatti to cable an article on the present position in Italy.

In his view it was undesirable that the Daily Worker should obtain material from Italy, and it would be embarrassing if the Minister of a Government with whom we were not yet at peace were to write articles for the British Press.

He had accordingly instructed Sir Noel Charles to request the Italian Prime Minister to take steps to prevent any messages from being sent to the Daily Worker.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the action taken by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Jewish Refugees.
Hungarian offer to allow Jews to leave Hungary.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (44) 71st Conclusions, Minute 8.)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the War Cabinet the main facts about the offer. The United States Government had informed us that, in their view, our two Governments should undertake to care for all Jews who were permitted to leave Hungary, or who reached neutral or United Nations territory. This went beyond acceptance of the “Horthy offer.” The matter had been discussed by the War Cabinet Committee on Refugees, and the general view had been that we should take joint action with the United States Government on this matter, but that we must make it clear to the Americans that in practice we were not in a position to accept an indefinite commitment.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that we could take another 11,000 refugees in Palestine without any conflict with pledges which had been given in Parliament as to the continuance during the war of the White Paper policy. The War Cabinet were informed that Switzerland had undertaken to take 50,000 children, and possibly a greater number, though in that event additional imports would be needed. This was a very generous offer which would go far to relieve the situation.
General agreement was expressed with the view that the extent to which we had made provision for refugees since the outbreak of the war was not realised by the United States Government, and that, if the present offer of the Hungarian Government to allow Jews to leave Hungary resulted in a considerable exodus, we should have to press them strongly to undertake their fair share of the burden.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that he was prepared to consult the Dominion Governments on this matter as proposed in paragraph 7 of the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but thought it was unlikely that they would see their way to help.

The War Cabinet's conclusions were as follows:

1. The draft telegram to the United States Government (Annex IV to W.P. (44) 434) was approved subject to the addition to paragraph 2 of the words "and take their fair share of the burden."

2. In addition, a further telegram should be sent suggesting the terms of the declaration to be made jointly by His Majesty's Government and the United States Government. So far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, this should be to the effect that to the extent of their resources they will co-operate with the United States Government in caring for Jews who are permitted to leave Hungary and who reach neutral or United Nations territory.

3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was invited to arrange for the preparation by the Departments concerned of a short statement, setting out what we had done to provide accommodation for refugees since the war, as a basis for a communication to the United States Government on this matter.

Reference was made to the attack made on Sir Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner, who was due to retire shortly, while travelling to attend a farewell function in his honour.

The Prime Minister said that it should be made clear to the responsible Jewish leaders that we looked upon them to take all practicable steps in their power to stamp out the gangs responsible for such outrages.

The War Cabinet also agreed that consideration of the general issues affecting our policy in Palestine should be resumed at an early date.

Jewish Fighting Force. (Previous Reference: W.M. (44) 86th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

8. On the 3rd July the War Cabinet agreed that the Government spokesman in the House of Lords should announce that, while the creation of a Jewish Division was impracticable, the possibility of forming a smaller unit, such as a Brigade Group, would be carefully examined.

Arrangements were in train for the formation of a brigade which could later be expanded into a Brigade Group. Discussion centred on three points. The first was whether the Brigade Group should be available for general service in any theatre or part of the world.

The Prime Minister said that the Jewish Brigade would in fact be called upon to serve against the Germans, but not against Japan.

The Secretary of State for War said that there was no intention to employ the force in the Far Eastern war; but he thought that the brigade ought to be free from any express limitations of service.
The Prime Minister suggested, and the War Cabinet agreed, that this matter should be dealt with by means of a private letter, which would state that there was no intention of employing the brigade in the Far East, but that it would be undesirable to make any specific announcement to this effect, since this might be embarrassing vis-à-vis the United States.

The second point was whether the brigade would serve in Palestine or would be brought there for demobilisation.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that if the Jewish Brigade was brought back to Palestine this would lead to wide disturbances.

The Prime Minister said that he agreed that the brigade would not serve in Palestine.

The third point concerned the question whether the Jewish force should be allowed to carry a special flag.

It was agreed that this matter should be further considered when a design for the flag had been prepared.

9. At their meeting on the 28th July (W.M. (44) 98th Conclusions, Minute 2) the War Cabinet had agreed that, in the event of rocket attack, certain security measures, set out in Appendix I of W.P. (44) 413, should be put into force and continued for a period of 48 hours.

The War Cabinet now had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (44) 435) pointing out that under these measures all foreign governmental organisations in this country would be absolutely prevented from communicating with their Governments or officials outside this country for a period of at least 48 hours. He proposed that an exemption should be granted to Allied Governments resident in this country and to the United States and Soviet Ambassadors. The Foreign Ministers of these Governments and the Ambassadors would, however, be asked to make themselves personally responsible for ensuring that no information about rocket attack was sent out of this country by ordinary cypher telegram and courier, and steps would also be taken to ensure that such information was not sent out by the United States Embassy over their direct lines or by the private wireless transmitter at the Soviet Embassy. The Foreign Office would agree the terms of the request to the Allied Foreign Ministers and the Ambassadors with the Home Defence Committee.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the proposal made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in W.P. (44) 435.

10. At their meeting on the 7th July (W.M. (44) 88th Conclusions, Minute 2) the War Cabinet had agreed that on the 1st August Sir Findlater Stewart should review the "Overlord" security restrictions still in force in consultation with the Departments concerned and with S.H.A.E.F.

The War Cabinet now had before them a note by the Minister of Production (W.P. (44) 432), annexed to which were extracts from a report by Sir Findlater Stewart giving the result of a review which he had carried out.

It was explained that, as a result of the review, it had been agreed that the visitors' ban should be lifted from the Firth of Forth area and that an announcement to this effect had been made. It had also been agreed that the restrictions on overseas travel and on travel between Great Britain and Ireland should be removed, and the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security had made a statement in Parliament indicating that there would be a relaxation of these restrictions.
With regard to the remaining measures, S.H.A.E.F. had agreed that the restrictions on telephone calls between Great Britain and Ireland might be removed on or about the 15th August, and that the Eire authorities might be informed about the same date that the Aer Lingus Teoranta Service might be reintroduced. The Security Service and the security authorities in the War Office had strong objections to the restoration of the Swedish A.B. Aero Transport Service, and it was proposed that the Departments concerned should consider this matter further with the Security Executive.

S.H.A.E.F. had urged that the visitors' ban on the area from the Wash to Southampton should be retained for a further period, which might amount to a matter of months. On the other hand, the Civil Departments, who were prepared to accept the continuance of the ban for a few more weeks, were of opinion that it imposed considerable hardship on the population and should be removed as soon as possible.

In discussion, it was pointed out that, in view of the recent course of operations, the arguments adduced by S.H.A.E.F. in favour of the retention of the ban had lost much of their force. The ban undoubtedly imposed inconvenience on the civil population by debarring them from holiday areas, and the general feeling of the War Cabinet was that it would be desirable to explain to S.H.A.E.F. that in all the circumstances they hoped that the request for the continuance of the ban for a further period would not be pressed.

The Secretary of State for War explained that, long before the imposition of the general ban in the interests of "Overlord" security, the public had been excluded from certain coastal areas in Kent. He assumed that, despite the raising of the general ban, the public would continue to be excluded from these areas.

The Secretary of State for War also undertook to consider what steps might be taken, by the removal of barbed wire and other obstructions, to give the public freer access to the sea in areas where there was no longer any reason for excluding them from the beaches.

With regard to the removal of the restrictions on telephone calls between Great Britain and Ireland and the restoration of the Aer Lingus Teoranta Service, it was urged that there might be considerable security objections to making any change in the present position so soon as the 15th August. It was also argued that there were strong security objections to the restoration of the Swedish A.B. Aero Transport Service.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Invited Sir Findlater Stewart to explain to S.H.A.E.F. the grounds on which the War Cabinet felt it desirable that the ban should be lifted and to express the hope that in the circumstances the request which had been made for its continuance would not be pressed. The general removal of the ban would be without prejudice to the continued exclusion of the public from certain coastal areas in Kent and elsewhere for special military reasons.

(2) Agreed that the proposals (a) to remove the special restrictions on telephone calls between Great Britain and Ireland, and (b) to inform the Eire authorities that the Aer Lingus Teoranta Service might be resumed, should be reconsidered in two to three weeks' time.

(3) Took note that the Security Executive would consider with the Departments concerned the question whether the Swedish A.B. Aero Transport Service might be restored.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
9th August, 1944.
W.H. (14) 10/41: CONCLUSIONS
9th August, 1944, at 6 p.m.

The War Cabinet were informed that the Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply had addressed to the Prime Minister a minute (copy attached) about the decision taken by the War Cabinet on the 28th July that efforts should be made to confuse the enemy as to where his flying bombs were falling without attempting to induce him to shift his aim in any particular direction.

The Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply was convinced that action on these lines would not be effective and said that the Chiefs of Staff shared his view. There was no doubt that the enemy was aiming his bombs at Central London, but in fact about one-half of the bombs landing within 30 miles of Charing Cross had fallen within 8 miles of a central point in Dulwich. If the enemy could be induced to believe that he was shooting over the target and thus to shift the point of impact south-east from Dulwich, there would be a very considerable saving in casualties and damage. He accordingly suggested that the proposal which had been before the War Cabinet at their meeting on 28th July that a deliberate attempt should be made to convey to the enemy the impression that his bombs were over-shooting the target should be adopted.

In favour of the proposal made by the Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply the following arguments were adduced:

(i) A shift of the mean point of impact to a point 6 miles south-east from Dulwich would mean that a very much greater number of the bombs would fall either on completely open country or on less thickly built areas. It was estimated that this would lead to a reduction of 1,500 a month in the numbers killed and of over 10,000 in the numbers injured. Conversely, if the enemy were to adjust his aim in such a way as to make Charing Cross the mean point of impact, the numbers killed each month would rise by 500 and the numbers injured by 2,500.

(ii) Since the areas to which the enemy's fire would be diverted were more openly built, less damage would be suffered to property.

(iii) It was essential that the agents on whom the enemy depended should supply him with some information. If the information given by these agents was merely of a vaguely confusing kind, the agents would be discredited and the enemy would be driven to seek information by other means. In the result he might well discover that his bombs were, in fact, falling short and adjust his aim. Thus, if the policy proposed did nothing else, it would at least prevent the present position from deteriorating.
(iv) It was not proposed to make any abrupt change in the information conveyed to the enemy, but to give him selected information about actual incidents, so as to lead him to build up a pattern which would gradually convince him that he was over-shooting. Up to the present he had been given the impression that he was achieving a mean point of impact at Charing Cross.

The following arguments were brought forward against the proposal:

(i) The Government would be taking a very serious responsibility in diverting the enemy's fire from one area to another, and before attempting to do so they should be satisfied that their action would be of substantial advantage. This had not been established.

(ii) The type of property in the south-eastern areas to which the greater weight of bombs would be diverted if the enemy were misled, was largely of light construction, and, despite the fact that the houses were more openly spaced, the total damage from any particular incident might in the result be found to be higher.

(iii) The result of diverting the enemy's aim would probably be that a larger number of bombs would land in East London.

(iv) If the enemy found that his agents, after indicating to him for over six weeks that the mean point of impact was Charing Cross, were suddenly suggesting that his bombs were over-shooting the mark, he might suspect that the information given to him was deliberately misleading. In any event there was no guarantee that he did not check the agents' reports against other sources of information.

No conclusion was reached. It was decided that the policy pursued hitherto (i.e. that of giving the enemy the impression that he was achieving a mean point of impact at Charing Cross) should be maintained for the present and that the War Cabinet should resume consideration of the matter later.

11th August, 1941