WAR CABINET 106 (44).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, 14th August, 1944, 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 following were also present:
The Right Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.

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.

Mr. M. S. McCorquodale, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour (Item 6).

Sir Orme Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Charles F. A. Portal, Chief of the Air Staff.


The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. R. A. Butler, M.P., Minister of Education.

The Right Hon. Lord Cherwell, Paymaster-General.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Security (Item 6).

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.
Mr. W. S. Murrie.
Mr. W. L. Gorell Barnes.
## WAR CABINET 106 (44).

### CONTENTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lord Cranborne</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Naval, Military and Air Operations</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Air Operations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Theatre.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flying Bombs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mediterranean Theatre.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naval Operations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Operations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normandy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Front.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversations with M. Massigli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>French Indo-China</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversations with M. Massigli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Man-power</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy in 1944.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. The War Cabinet asked the Deputy Prime Minister to convey a special message of sympathy on their behalf to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs on the loss of his younger son.

2. The Chiefs of Staff reported the principal events of the previous five days.

Bomber Command had flown 4,043 sorties and dropped 13,257 tons of bombs.

United States heavy bombers had flown 3,906 sorties and dropped 7,403 tons of bombs, 1,672 of which had been on Germany.

Coastal Command had flown 1,048 sorties. Ten U-boats had been attacked, of which 3 were sunk, 1 probably sunk and 1 possibly damaged, while 5 awaited assessment. In attacks on shipping, 2 minesweepers had been sunk and 31 other vessels damaged.

A.E.A.F and United States fighters had flown nearly 19,000 sorties and dropped 4,733 tons of bombs.

No enemy aircraft had flown over the United Kingdom.

Over the battle area the enemy had flown about 1,000 sorties by day and 370 by night.

The enemy had lost 189 aircraft as against Allied losses of 259.

310 flying bombs had been launched, of which 157 had been destroyed and only 58 had reached the London area. 3,450 tons of bombs had been dropped on flying bomb installations.

In the Mediterranean Theatre Allied aircraft had flown 6,800 sorties for the loss of 98 aircraft as compared with 600 enemy sorties for the loss of 49.

Total confirmed shipping losses for August amounted to 25,933 tons.

Five U-boats had been sunk during August. The Germans were now transferring U-boats from their Northern Biscay Ports to Bordeaux and La Pallice.

Our light forces had had engagements off the French coasts on four nights. Thus, on the night of the 11th August H. M. Cruiser Diadem and 2 destroyers had sunk a 6,000-ton Sperrbrecher, and on the night of the 13th August 2 destroyers had intercepted and engaged an enemy convoy between Jersey and Guernsey, many hits on the enemy ships being observed. Both destroyers in this action had sustained slight damage and casualties.

On the 12th August H.M.S. Rodney had bombarded a 12-gun battery on Aldernay with satisfactory results.

During the course of the week ending the 14th August H.M. Cruiser Froisher, H.M. Repair Ship Albatross, a minesweeper, a store-ship and a United States and British merchant ship were damaged by under-water explosions in the assault area.

During the night of the 8th August the floating dock at Trincomalee collapsed and H.M.S. Valiant, which was being docked, had sustained damage.

A new attack on Falaise was being launched from the north that day. Meanwhile, United States troops were pushing northwards and eastwards from Argentan and thus narrowing the gap of retreat for the considerable German forces in the area of Flers. The enemy had finally abandoned their counter-attack against Avranches. The enemy forces were in a difficult position, and the outlook for the Allies was promising.

The build-up of our forces was proceeding very satisfactorily.

Over 15,000 tons a day had been handled over the beaches. We now had in France 27 days' reserve of rations, 16 days' reserve of petrol and 2 to 3 weeks' reserve of most types of ammunition.

There had been little change in the position on the Italian front. Some progress had been made in Florence and by the Polish troops on the Adriatic coast.
Eastern Front. On the Eastern Front the Russians had made a number of small thrusts in the North and had held German counter-attacks in the neighbourhood of Kovno, Warsaw and Cracow.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

Poland.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (44) 104th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he had just had three hours' talk with the representatives of the Polish Government. Taken as a whole, the position was by no means unsatisfactory. It seemed that the atmosphere at the meetings between Premier Stalin and M. Mikolajczyk had been quite favourable. M. Mikolajczyk had not yet discussed matters with his Cabinet, but inclined to the view that the right way of dealing with the situation might be that the Presidency should be conferred on a new incumbent, who would choose a new Government representative of all the parties. He thought that there was a reasonable chance that such a Government would be accepted by the Russians, although the representatives of the Polish National Committee would resist a solution on these lines.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs thought that M. Mikolajczyk would have considerable trouble in getting a solution on these lines accepted by his supporters in this country. He had advised M. Mikolajczyk that he should not let any constitutional difficulties stand in the way of seeking a solution of the present difficulties. There was nothing more which we could do at this juncture.

Reference was made to the arrangement for sending help by air to the Polish Underground Army in Warsaw.

The Chief of the Air Staff said that two squadrons had already been diverted to this work, and that additional crews and some additional aircraft had been sent to reinforce the Special Duty Squadron employed on this work. It was hoped that United States aircraft would shortly start dropping supplies.

The War Cabinet was also informed that M. Stalin had promised to send supplies, and was proposing to drop a Liaison Officer in Warsaw to make the necessary arrangements.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that there was some risk that bitterness as a result of the difficulties of the Polish Underground Army in Warsaw might lead to something being said which would exacerbate Polish-Russian relations. M. Mikolajczyk had it in mind to make a helpful statement on the matter when he held a press conference. It would be of assistance if the Minister of Information would encourage M. Mikolajczyk to hold this press conference in the near future.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs added that on several occasions the Polish Government had pressed him to issue some statement to the effect that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom recognised the Polish Underground Movement as having belligerent status. He had taken the line that any such statement, to be of any value, would have to be countersigned by the Soviet Government. His attitude had evoked protest from certain quarters in this country, and he thought it desirable, therefore, to seek the views of the War Cabinet on the matter.

The general view of the War Cabinet was that the line taken by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was the right one, particularly as Poland was in the area of Russian operational responsibility.

The War Cabinet—

Took note, with approval, of these statements.
4. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (44) 439) setting out the statement of policy on which he proposed to base himself in speaking to M. Massigli. Subjects to be discussed included “France and the work of the European Advisory Commission; questions concerning the armistice, the Rhineland and the occupation of Germany.”

The War Cabinet—
Took note, with approval, of this Memorandum.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the future of French Indo-China (W.P. (44) 444), this being one of the matters which would be dealt with in the forthcoming discussions with M. Massigli. The policy already approved by the War Cabinet was that the French should be allowed to retain these territories after the war, provided they accepted such international obligations as might result from a system of collective security. The position was complicated, however, by the attitude of the United States Government in this matter. In the circumstances the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposed to leave the initiative to M. Massigli on this subject as far as possible. Discussion showed general agreement with the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the view was expressed, however, that, in view of the exploratory nature of the talks, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs might wish to be rather more explicit as to the policy in this matter.

The War Cabinet—
Took note, with general approval, of the line set out in the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (W.P. (44) 440) about the man-power allocations for the second half of 1944.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer recalled that at their meeting on the 12th July, 1944, the War Cabinet had approved the provisional man-power allocations for the second half of 1944 proposed in W.P. (44) 375 on the understanding that those allocations would be renewed again in August. It had been hoped that it might be possible in August to make definite assumptions about the date of the end of the war with Germany. The present assumption on which Departments were working was that regard should be had to the possibility that the war with Germany might continue after the 30th June, 1945. The available man-power was, of course, decreasing, and it was particularly desirable that Departments should be able to work on as definite an assumption as possible in deciding how the deficiency should be apportioned. He suggested that in the present circumstances it was reasonable to ask Departments to prepare and submit to the War Cabinet revised estimates of their requirements for the second half of 1944 on the assumption that the war with Germany, though it might be prolonged beyond the end of 1944, would not continue beyond the 30th June, 1945. It had been suggested to him that it might be better to substitute for that date the 31st March, 1945.

The following points were raised in discussion:

(a) The Minister of Aircraft Production asked whether the acceptance of the proposal made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer would affect the decisions reached by the War Cabinet at their meeting on the 3rd August, 1944, with regard to the provisional allocation of man-power to the Ministry of Aircraft Production (W.M. (44) 100th Conclusions, Minute 4). It was agreed that the acceptance
of the new assumption would not affect the earlier decisions.

(b) The Secretary of State for War confirmed that, in considering the needs of the Army, account would be taken of the fact that the casualties sustained in France were lighter than had been expected.

(c) The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Security, said that, in view of the additional strain on the Civil Defence Services in the areas liable to flying bomb and rocket attacks, it might not be possible for the Ministry of Home Security to release as many as 11,000 Civil Defence Workers by the end of September.

There was general agreement that it would be safe to assume that the war with Germany would not continue beyond the 30th June, 1945.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that the revised estimates of man-power requirements for the second half of 1944 might be based on the assumption that the war with Germany would not continue beyond the 30th June, 1945.

(2) Invited the Service Ministers and the Minister of Production to submit estimates of man-power requirements for the Services and the munition industries on the revised assumption in time for the War Cabinet to review the possible requirements before the end of August and to fix firm allocations of man-power for the second half of 1944.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1, 14th August, 1944.