CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, 12th July, 1944, at 6.15 p.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. O. Lyttelton, M.P., Minister of Production.
The Right Hon. L. Woolton, Minister of Reconstruction.
The Right Hon. V. Cranborne, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. L. Amery, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma (Items 3–5).
The Right Hon. S. Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. S. Cripps, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production (Items 1–5).
The Right Hon. R. S. Hudson, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (Item 1).
The Right Hon. B. Bracken, M.P., Minister of Information.
The Right Hon. L. Beaverbrook, Lord Privy Seal (Items 1–5).
The Right Hon. J. Grigg, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. A. Duncan, M.P., Minister of Supply (Item 1).
The Right Hon. H. Dalton, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (Items 3–5).
The Right Hon. J. J. Llewellyn, M.P., Minister of Food (Item 1).
The Right Hon. L. Cherwell, Paymaster-General (Items 1–5).

Secretary:
Sir E. Bridges.
Sir G. Laithwaite.
Mr. W. S. Murrie.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Man-power Policy in 1944.</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Demobilisation Scheme for Reallocation of Man-power after the end of Hostilities in Europe.</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Closer Union between Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gandhi: Place of Detention if Rearrested</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>India Position in Bengal and Orissa.</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Palestine High Commissioner.</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The War Cabinet had before them—

(i) A Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (W.P. (44) 375) setting out the results of the considerations given by the Ministerial Committee on Man-Power to the man-power allocations for the second half of 1944.

(ii) A Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (44) 316) dealing with the man-power requirements for the Army in 1944-45.

The following were the main points in discussion:

**Service Allocations.**

(a) The Chancellor of the Exchequer explained that the Man-Power Committee proposed to give the Army an intake of 49,500 men in July and August. This would consist of 28,300, representing the whole of the balance of the new call-up, 6,000 men from the R.A.F. deferred list, 4,000 additional men whose call-up would be brought forward to July and August and who would be replaced by releases from the R.A.F. deferred list later in the year, and transfers of 6,200 and 5,000 trained men from the Navy and the R.A.F. respectively. The men transferred from the Navy and the R.A.F. should be Grade I and, so far as was necessary, compensation should be given to the Navy and R.A.F. by the transfer to them of men of a lower medical category from the Army.

The Committee proposed that the intake of women into the three Services for July and August should be 1,500 to the W.R.N.S., 4,500 (including 3,500 on account of the allocation for the first six months of 1944) to the A.T.S. and 1,500 to the W.A.A.F.

For the rest of 1944 the provisional allocation for all three Services should be 75,000 men and 10,000 women, making a total call-up for the six months of 123,000 men and 17,500 women.

(b) The Prime Minister said that he was glad to note that the Committee had been able to provide for an intake of 49,500 men into the Army during July and August.

(c) The Secretary of State for Air pointed out that if only 4,500 men were provided for the R.A.F. in July and August, it would be necessary either to reduce the number of front line squadrons or to place an increased strain on the men serving in those squadrons. Every effort would be made to avoid any reduction in the front line squadrons but it should be realised that it would be necessary to make increased use of skilled men to perform unskilled work.

(d) The Prime Minister said that he doubted whether the maintenance of the Navy at its present strength could now be justified, having regard to the great reduction in the naval forces of our enemies and to the size of the United States naval forces in the Pacific. Although the figures proposed by the Ministerial Committee should be accepted provisionally, it was desirable that the Defence Committee should consider whether a substantial reduction of, say, 200,000 men, should not be made in the Navy over the next twelve months.

The First Lord of the Admiralty pointed out that a very large cut had been made in the Navy in the previous year. Since then the Navy had been called on to undertake new tasks in connection with the invasion of the Continent in the shape of bombarding the enemy coasts, manning landing craft and providing beach and port parties. It was also necessary to provide against the new submarine offensive which was threatened, and to build up Naval forces for the Japanese war.

**Civil Defence.**

(e) The allocation made by the War Cabinet in December, 1943, involved a reduction in the Civil Defence Services of 50,000 during...
1944, 27,000 being non-replaced wastage and 23,000 actual releases. Wastage was taking place at the estimated rate but it had been found necessary to postpone the planned releases and the Committee considered that they could not ask the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security to release more than 11,000 by the end of September. They recommended that the Chiefs of Staff should make a new appreciation of the risk of air attack and that, in the meantime, the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security should prepare a scheme for the release of personnel in certain areas which could be put into operation without delay if and when the War Cabinet decided some disbandment in those areas could take place. Similar plans should be prepared by the Chiefs of Staff for the release of personnel from A.A. defences and fighter stations in the less vulnerable areas.

(f) The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that he had taken into account the fact that London and the neighbouring area formed the main target of attack and had encouraged the maximum mobility and adaptability among Civil Defence workers (e.g. by training firemen in rescue work). The Civil Defence forces in the less vulnerable areas had already been reduced very substantially and reinforcements were being drawn on from these areas for London. If it was decided that additional risks might be taken in certain areas, it would be possible to effect savings both in Civil Defence personnel and in the personnel of the Regional Organisation.

(g) The Prime Minister suggested that the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security might consider the possibility of awarding a civil defence medal to Civil Defence personnel who had volunteered for service in any part of the country.

Supply Departments.

(h) The Chancellor of the Exchequer explained that the Man-Power Committee were satisfied that owing to the new operational demands which the Ministry of Supply had to meet, it was impossible to secure the original planned reduction of 220,000, and it was proposed that the reduction in the second half of 1944 should be 110,000, making a total reduction during the year of 170,000. The Admiralty and the Ministry of Aircraft Production had already reduced their labour forces to the full extent of the reductions originally planned for 1944, but further reductions of 30,000 in the Admiralty labour force and of 112,000 in the Ministry of Aircraft Production labour force should be made in the second half of the year. The Supply Departments should forthwith consider, through the Joint War Production Staff, how, assuming that the war against Germany continued into the first half of 1945, their programmes could be related to the Service intakes in the remainder of the year and the probable strengths of the Services in the first half of 1945. The Supply Departments should work to the provisional allocations since, even if some slight relaxation were found possible in the August review, it would only postpone the reductions by a short time.

(j) The Minister of Supply explained that one of the main reasons why it had not been possible for the Ministry of Supply to make the planned reductions in their personnel was the additional demand for ammunition—chiefly 25-pounder—which had been made earlier in the year. This alone had meant the employment of 30,000 additional workers and there had been additional demands for a large range of other supplies. With the help of the Ministry of Labour the task of manning the filling factories, in order to produce the new supplies of ammunition, had been carried out smoothly.

The Minister of Production said that the ammunition position appeared to be satisfactory. The figures at the 1st June showed an increase in stocks despite the expenditure of ammunition in the battle of Italy.
The Minister of Aircraft Production said that he had made a provisional estimate showing the effect on the output of aircraft of the reductions proposed by the Ministerial Committee. Once those reductions were made it would not be possible to increase the output programme again.

In reply to a Question by the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Air said that the target for the Royal Air Force was 300 squadrons by September 1944 and 529 squadrons by September 1945. The present strength of heavy bombers was 80 squadrons at home and overseas, which were due to increase to 95 squadrons by September 1944 and to 128 squadrons by September 1945. The cuts proposed would mean a reduction of 3 Halifax squadrons and 1 Lancaster squadron below the target for December 1944, and of 9 Halifax and 3 Lancaster squadrons below the target for June 1945.

It was pointed out that the War Cabinet had hitherto proceeded on the assumption of the maximum impact in 1944, and that it was impossible to plan on the assumption that the strengths of the Services should continue to rise during 1945. In these circumstances the planned expansion of the R.A.F. in 1945 ought to be reviewed.

The First Lord of the Admiralty pointed out that the cuts which the reductions have required to be made in the allocation could not be made at the expense of shipbuilding or heavy engineering and must come from the manufacture of equipment. The result would be that there would be delay in the completion of ships for the Navy.

Industries and Services in Groups II and III.

The Committee recommended a reduced global allocation of 75,000 men, as compared with an original allocation of 123,000; and for industries and Services in Group III a global allocation of 35,000, as compared with an original allocation of 49,000. In Group II the allocations for coalmining and the merchant navy would have to be met in full. If the global allocations for Groups II and III were approved, it would be necessary to consider their distribution among the industries and services concerned. It was not now expected that the industries and services in Group III which were due to give up labour, would be able to conform to the original allocations, but Departments should continue to regard these allocations as targets and make every effort to achieve them.

The Minister of Food said that since the beginning of the year there had been a reduction instead of an increase in the man-power employed on food production. Particular difficulties were being experienced in the production of flour and margarine and in oil crushing, and the hours worked in these trades were excessive. He hoped that in the distribution of the global allocation to Group II the needs of the food industries would be kept in mind.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries said that the peak demands for agricultural labour would arise in August and September, and that it was impossible for the agricultural industry to await the proposed review at the end of August. It had been impossible to find suitable recruits for the Women's Land Army up to the number allocated, and he suggested that it would be helpful if additional prisoners of war were allocated to the agricultural industry. He understood that most of the German prisoners of war were being sent to the United States and that it had hitherto been found impossible to employ German prisoners of war on agricultural work in this country because of the proportion of guards required.

The Prime Minister said that the possibility of employing German prisoners of war on agricultural work should be explored, as a matter of urgency, and that in the meantime no further batches of prisoners of war should be sent to the United States.
The War Cabinet's conclusions were as follows:

1. The intakes into the three Services and the transfers between the Services during July and August proposed in sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph 28 of W.P. (44) 375 were approved.

2. The provisional man-power allocations for the six months, the 1st July–31st December, 1944, proposed in paragraph 27 of W.P. (44) 375 were approved, on the general understanding that these allocations would be reviewed towards the end of August, and subject also to the specific points referred to below.

3. As regards Civil Defence, it was agreed that before the August review—
   (a) the Chiefs of Staff should prepare a new appreciation of the risk of air attack;
   (b) the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security and the Chiefs of Staff would prepare a scheme for the release of personnel from Civil Defence and A.D.G.B. in the less vulnerable areas which could be put into immediate operation if and when the War Cabinet decided that the risk of disbanding these services in those areas could be accepted.

4. For the purpose of the review in August 1944 the Supply Departments should consider through the machinery of the Joint War Production Staff the implications of the provisional intakes and allocations approved, and should review their programmes for the first half of 1945 on the basis that still further cuts in the munitions industries would then become necessary.

5. The provisional allocation proposed for the Ministry of Aircraft Production was also subject to the proviso that it should be reviewed in the light of an examination to be undertaken by the Defence Committee of the assumption as to the strength of the Royal Air Force in 1945 to which the current aircraft programme should be related. Thus, should it be assumed that the strength of the Royal Air Force would not be expanded in 1945 beyond the strength which it was planned to reach at the end of 1944?

6. Note was taken that the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister of Food contemplated difficulties if further cuts were made in agriculture and food industries. The points raised would be taken into account in the allocations to Group II Industries.

7. In connection with agriculture, attention was drawn to the question whether further help could be found from prisoners of war.

8. The Minister of Labour and National Service was asked to examine, in consultation with the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, the Secretary of State for War, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Secretary of State for Scotland, the possibility of employing German prisoners on agricultural work.

9. Pending this enquiry the Secretary of State for War was asked to take steps to see that further batches of German prisoners were not sent from this country to the United States.

10. Note was taken of the Prime Minister's statement that he proposed to ask the Defence Committee to consider whether a substantial reduction could not be effected in Vote A over, say, the ensuing twelve months.
2. At their meeting on the 17th February, 1944 (W.M. (44) 22nd Conclusions, Minute 2), the War Cabinet had approved in principle a White Paper setting out a scheme for reallocation of man-power after the end of the war with Germany, but had deferred a decision as to the date of publication.

The War Cabinet now had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service (W.P. (44) 336) stating that he would like to start consultations with both sides of industry on this matter as soon as possible, but could not do so pending publication of the scheme.

After a short discussion the War Cabinet—

Decided that publication of the scheme should stand over until after the Summer Recess.

3. The War Cabinet had before them a joint memorandum by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies (W.P. (44) 363) reporting that, as approved by the War Cabinet on the 27th April (W.M. (44) 58th Conclusions, Minute 3) they had discussed the question of closer union between Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland with the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia during his recent visit to this country, and had informed him that the United Kingdom Government considered amalgamation of the three territories under existing circumstances to be impracticable. They had at the same time put to him proposals for a permanent Inter-Territorial Council.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that Sir Godfrey Huggins, while disappointed at the decision, did not seem to be surprised or unduly upset by it. He had indicated that he would have to consult his colleagues about a public announcement. There were arguments for and against such an announcement, but on balance if the Southern Rhodesian Government should favour one, he and the Secretary of State for the Colonies recommended that His Majesty’s Government should agree.

The Prime Minister suggested postponement of a decision on this matter until the result of Sir Godfrey Huggins’s consultations with his colleagues was known, when the matter should again be considered by the War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the Prime Minister’s suggestion.

4. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for India (W.P. (44) 371) reporting that the Government of India were anxious to have plans ready in the event of its becoming necessary to rearrest Gandhi, and that they favoured his internment, in company with the Congress Working Committee, in Ahmednagar Fort. The Aga Khan’s palace was no longer available.

The Secretary of State for India said that the proposal before the War Cabinet represented the considered view of the Viceroy and the Government of India, whose judgment he felt might properly be accepted on a matter such as this.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that the Government of India’s proposal should be accepted.
5. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for India (W.P. (44) 372) describing the present position as regards ministerial government in Bengal and Orissa. In Bengal there was a possibility that the ministerial government, which Mr. Casey had so far with difficulty been able to keep going, might in the near future collapse. In that event he considered, and the Viceroy agreed, that if the Ministry were to fall in the circumstances described in W.P. (44) 372, Mr. Casey would be fully justified in taking over the administration under Section 93 of the Government of India Act.

The Secretary of State for India felt that the War Cabinet should be aware well in advance of the possibility that it might be necessary to resort to the provisions of Section 93 in the case of Bengal, and he proposed to inform the Viceroy of his general approval of the policy recommended by him and by the Governor.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Took note of the position in Bengal and approved the course proposed by the Secretary of State for India.

The Secretary of State for India informed the War Cabinet that in Orissa, for local reasons, the Ministry had resigned and it had not been possible to form an alternative Ministry. The Governor had accordingly been obliged to issue a Proclamation under Section 93 and once again take over the administration. No important reactions on the Indian political scene were expected.

The War Cabinet—

(2) Took note of the statement by the Secretary of State for India.

6. The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that the question of the succession to Sir Harold McMichael when his term of office as High Commissioner for Palestine expired some months hence had been under consideration, and informed them of the name which he had in mind to submit for His Majesty's approval when the time came.

The War Cabinet—

Expressed full agreement with the Prime Minister's proposal.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
12th July, 1944.