WAR CABINET 130 (44).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, 2nd October, 1944, at 5-30 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. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Minister of Production.

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

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

The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. LORD WOOLTON, Minister of Reconstruction.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT SIMON, Lord Chancellor (Items 6 and 7).

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVENEBROOK, Lord Privy Seal.


The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. R. S. HUDSON, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (Items 6 and 7).


The Hon. SIR ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-5).

Marshal of the Royal Air Force SIR CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.

The Right Hon. SIR JAMES GRIGGS, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. THOMAS JOHNSTON, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland (Items 6 and 7).


The Right Hon. BRENDA BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Right Hon. SIR DONALD SOMERVELL, K.C., M.P., Attorney-General (Items 6 and 7).

Admiral of the Fleet SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1-5).

Field-Marshal SIR ALAN BROOKE, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 1-5).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

General SIR HASTINGS L ISMAY.

SIR GILBERT LAITHWAITE.

Mr. W. S. MURRIE.

Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Naval, Military and Air Operations</td>
<td>103</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>Mediterranean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naval Operations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mediterranean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Operations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern France and Holland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bombing Policy</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Russia and Poland</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Attacks by Rockets, Flying-bombs and Long-range Artillery</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Casualties and damage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Town and Country Planning Bill</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Civil Air Transport</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (44) 127th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

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

Bomber Command, whose operations had been hampered by the weather, had flown 4,900 sorties and dropped 4,500 tons of bombs on targets in Germany and 7,800 tons on the Channel ports. Mosquitoes had flown 400 sorties and dropped 500 tons of bombs, all over Germany, losing only one aircraft.

United States Heavy Bombers had flown 5,900 sorties, dropping 12,100 tons of bombs on targets in Germany. 117 United States and 10 British bombers had been lost.

The Allied Expeditionary Air Force, at the cost of 4 bombers and 105 fighters and fighter bombers, had flown over 15,000 sorties, mainly over the battle area. They claimed to have destroyed some 200 motor transport vehicles, 5 tanks, 153 locomotives, 64 barges and 55 oil tank cars.

244 enemy aircraft had been destroyed.

98,000 wounded had been evacuated by air from D-day up to the previous night.

5,000 sorties had been flown and 3,300 tons of bombs dropped. 35 enemy aircraft had been destroyed as against 28 Allied. Our aircraft had sunk one U-boat, one cruiser and 11 small vessels in the Mediterranean area. 8 enemy air transports, evacuating troops from the Aegean, had been destroyed.

There had been no shipping losses from enemy action during the previous week. The total losses from this cause for September had been 25,973 tons. 8 U-boats had been sunk and one probably sunk during September.

On the night of 30th September 5 M.T.B.s on patrol off the Dutch Coast had, in a series of engagements, hit 2 enemy merchant ships and damaged 2 trawlers by gunfire. Two of our M.T.B.s had been sunk.

On the night of the 24th September 2 destroyers had sunk a convoy of 5 craft near Scarpanto. On the 28th September the cruiser H.M.S. Black Prince had bombarded Syra Island, sinking shipping and damaging harbour installations. On the 27th September Greek troops and stores had been successfully landed on the Island of Poros.

The main feature during the previous week had been the battle at Arnhem and the withdrawal of the remainder of the First Airborne Division, totalling some 2,200 men. Since then the enemy had launched heavy attacks on both sides of the Nijmegen salient. These attacks had been held and broken, and the salient had now been widened. Canadians were now pushing on towards Tilburg. The taking of Cap Gris Nez and Calais had yielded some 8,300 prisoners. Further south some progress had been made north of Aachen, and advances made between Nancy and Belfort. The administrative situation had improved.

Our main gains had been north of Florence. A certain amount of progress had also been made north of Rimini after heavy fighting.

The Japanese were now pushing down the railway line from Hankow towards Kweilin with a view to joining up with their forces advancing north-west from Canton. If this junction was achieved it would mean the loss of the United States aerodromes at Kian, Kanchow and Sincheng.

In the north the Russians were closing in on Riga. Further south little information had been received about the Russian thrusts towards Southern Hungary and into Yugoslavia.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.
2. The Prime Minister said that now that Havre, Boulogne, and Calais had been captured, he hoped that Bomber Command would direct the greatest possible weight of attack against targets in Germany. The Chief of the Air Staff said that this was the intention.

Reference was made to targets in Eastern Germany out of range from the West. The Prime Minister suggested that the Chief of the Air Staff should supply him with a list of, say, 15 targets which could appropriately be bombed by the Russians. He would then consider forwarding this list to Marshal Stalin.

3. The War Cabinet was given the latest information about the position in Warsaw and the relations between Russia and Poland.

A record of the discussion and conclusions reached is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

4. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that during the week beginning the 25th September there had been, in all, 11 long-range rocket incidents. About 20 flying bombs had crossed the coast. Two had reached the London area and 10 had been destroyed. Casualties for the week were:

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Seriously Injured</th>
<th>Slightly Injured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shelling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-range rocket</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flying bomb</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The War Cabinet—
Approved the course of action suggested by the Prime Minister at "X."
6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Town and Country Planning (W.P. (44) 547) dealing with Clauses 45 and 46 of the Town and Country Planning Bill.

The Minister of Town and Country Planning explained that since the Second Reading of the Bill he had received a large number of representations against the restriction of the escalator clause to owner-occupiers of small houses and of agricultural properties, and had come to the conclusion that, unless the Government, before the Committee stage of the Bill, put down amendments making some concession, there was little hope of securing the passage of the Bill this Session. He accordingly proposed that a clause should be included in the Bill on the lines of Section 11 of the War Damage Act, 1943, under which a percentage increase might be made in respect of any class of property. He also proposed that all owners, and not only owner-occupiers, should be entitled to the percentage increase. There would be provision for a percentage deduction where this was appropriate, and payments in respect of war-damaged properties under the War Damage Act would have to be brought into line with the amended proposals.

In favour of the amendments proposed by the Minister of Town and Country Planning, it was urged that it was inequitable to give compensation beyond the 1939 standard to owner-occupiers of small houses while denying it to other claimants, such as small shopkeepers and owner-occupiers of larger houses or of factories, all of whom would be hard put to it to reinstate themselves if dispossessed. Again, the restriction of the concession to owner-occupiers would cause hardship in the case of Service men who owned their houses but were not in possession of them owing to war circumstances. Although the 1939 standard might fairly be applied to undeveloped land, the rise in building costs was such that payment of compensation on the 1939 standard was bound to be insufficient in the case of buildings. It was not proposed that all owners of property should automatically get an addition to the 1939 standard, and the form of the amendment proposed would enable the Treasury and Parliament to exercise full control over the extent to which the 1939 standard was exceeded in any particular type of case.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that Clauses 45 and 46 of the Bill, as they stood, represented a compromise agreed to by the Reconstruction Committee and the War Cabinet. Instead of providing for a 1939 ceiling, which would have allowed local authorities to purchase land in certain areas at prices below the 1939 standard, the clauses provided that the 1939 standard should apply in all cases. Moreover, a special concession had been made in favour of owner-occupiers of small dwelling houses and agricultural properties. If this concession were now extended universally, the result would be that the 1939 ceiling would be turned into a floor. While it might be possible to meet the special case of Service men who had temporarily ceased to occupy their houses by some change in the definition of owner-occupier, there was no ground for a universal extension of the concession to all owners of property.

The amendments proposed by the Minister of Town and Country Planning would place a considerable responsibility on the Treasury. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, having in view the variations between different types of property, he had great difficulty in seeing how the principles on which the Treasury were to operate could either be defined to the satisfaction of Parliament or worked in practice.

The Minister of Aircraft Production supported the view that in practice it would be impossible to devise a system which would provide varying scales of increase, appropriate to different types of property. In practice, it would be found necessary, if any further concession were to be made, to apply a single uniform percentage increase.
Reference was made to the risk that, unless this matter was very carefully handled, it might result in a division on party lines.

In further discussion the Prime Minister suggested that the best course might be to arrange that, when Clause 45 was reached, there should be a general discussion on all the amendments. This would enable the Government to test the feeling of the House of Commons. The Minister could explain that the Government had put forward Clauses 45 and 46 in their present form as, in all the circumstances, the most workable solution of the problem and point out the difficulties inherent in the various alternatives proposed. If after hearing the views of all sides he came to the conclusion that the House would not accept the Clauses in their present form, he should not allow the issue to be pressed to a division, but should promise to reconsider these two clauses. The War Cabinet would then, in the light of the debate, be in a better position to decide what course should be taken. If necessary, additional time for the Committee stage could be secured by arranging for the House to sit on a Monday.

The War Cabinet—

'Agreed that the Minister of Town and Country Planning should proceed on the lines indicated at "X" above.'

7. The War Cabinet was informed that Lord Londonderry had put down a Motion in the House of Lords for Thursday, the 5th October, in the following terms:

"To ask His Majesty's Government, whether they have any information to give regarding any negotiations on post-war Civil Aviation in which the Lord Privy Seal may have been engaged during his recent visit to the United States; and what changes in the post-war Civil Air Transport policy of His Majesty's Government may be expected therefrom, in regard to the Ministerial direction of that policy, the "Chosen Instrument," or the provision of Civil Air Transport machines; and to move for Papers."

Lord Londonderry had now agreed to postpone his Motion for a week, until the 12th October.

The Prime Minister said that he was meeting a deputation of Conservative Members in the near future, and he hoped that the War Cabinet would be able to have a further discussion on Civil Air Transport later in the week.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of this statement.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
2nd October, 1944.