CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, 21st November, 1944, at 6 p.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
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. JOHNSON ANDERSON, The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Minister of Production.
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. VISCOUNT SIMON, Lord Chancellor (Item 6).
The Right Hon. LORD BEVERBROOK, Lord Privy Seal.
The Right Hon. OLIVER STANLEY, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 7 and 8).
The Right Hon. JAMES GRIGG, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. LORD CHERWELL, Paymaster-General.
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. LORD SIR JOHN SIMON, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.
Admiral of the Fleet, SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1–6).
Air Marshal SIR DOUGLAS C. S. EVILL, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1–6).

Secretariat:
SIR EDWARD BRIDGES.
SIR HASTINGS L. ISMAY.
SIR GILBERT LAITHWAITE.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

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

Bad weather had again interfered with the operations of Bomber Command. 2,800 sorties had been flown and 11,000 tons of bombs dropped on targets in Germany, which had included oil plants and operations in support of the land battle.

United States bombers had flown 16,000 sorties and dropped 4,020 tons of bombs. Their main operations had been in connection with the land battle.

The Allied Expeditionary Force had flown 13,000 sorties in support of the land battle. Some 880 enemy motor transport vehicles were also claimed as destroyed.

Total Allied losses for the week had been 150 aircraft; 31 bombers, 114 fighters and 5 Coastal Command.

In the Mediterranean 13,000 sorties had been flown, for the loss of 139 aircraft. 7,240 tons of bombs had been dropped on industrial targets in Austria and Southern Germany.

Shipping losses from enemy action for November amounted, so far, to 21,584 tons.

It was now known that, in the attack on the enemy convoy off Norway on the night of the 12th November, all except two of the 11 enemy ships had been destroyed, and one of these two had been driven ashore.

It was expected that the Scheldt would be cleared of mines and open to shipping by the end of the month.

Most of the effective units of the Japanese Fleet were still in the area of the Philippines. Estimates were given of the losses in the recent battle.

In the North the Second Army had advanced some 10 miles on a 20-mile front towards Venlo. In the important sector opposite Cologne the Americans had made a small advance north of Aix la Chapelle, but the enemy was putting up a stiff resistance in this area and progress was difficult. Further south, the two American corps attacking north and south of Metz had made good progress and had now joined forces east of the fortress. The United States Seventh Army had made satisfactory progress towards Saarebourg and Fraize. In the extreme south the French had done extremely well and had now reached the Rhine near Basle.

The Eighth Army, in difficult conditions, had advanced some 3 to 5 miles on a 30-mile front.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

Successor to Field-Marshal Sir John Dill and Consequential Appointments.

2. The War Cabinet were informed of the arrangements proposed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Field-Marshal Sir John Dill, Head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, and of certain consequential appointments.

Attacks by Rockets and Flying Bombs. Casualties and Damage.

3. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that in the previous 8 days there had been 43 incidents from long-range rockets, 30 of them in the Greater London area, 10 in Essex and 8 in Kent. This was the highest figure for any 8-day period. Most of the incidents had been in East and South-East London, but there had been a few incidents further west.

In the same period there had been flying bomb activity on 4 nights; 69 bombs had been launched against this country, of which 30 had been brought down by anti-aircraft guns. 32 incidents had resulted; 14 in Essex, 6 in London, 5 in Suffolk, 4 in Kent and 3 in Hertfordshire.
Casualties in the period had been as follows:—

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<th>Killed</th>
<th>Seriously Injured</th>
<th>Slightly Injured</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rockets</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
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<td>Flying Bombs</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>130</td>
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<td>199</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>971</td>
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The War Cabinet—
Took note of this statement.

4. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that there were signs of increasing pressure in Parliament and the Press as regards relief for the civil population of the Channel Islands, and it might be necessary to make a statement next week. No reply appeared yet to have been received from the Germans to the proposals put to them through the Swiss Government for the despatch of parcels on the prisoner-of-war basis for the civil population. At his request the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to consider how we stood as regards a reply from the German Government, and whether a reminder should be sent.

5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed the War Cabinet of the latest developments in the dispute between the Soviet and Persia over the grant of an oil concession to Russia in North Persia.
A record of the discussion and of the conclusions reached is kept in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Lord Chancellor (W.P. (44) 648) reviewing the position as regards the machinery for dealing with war criminals for crimes against British subjects.
In reply to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, who said that he had received representations from the Dominion High Commissioners as to the importance of securing the dossier of war criminals where the actual perpetrator of the crime was not available, and as to the desirability of its being within the purview of the Commission to take evidence even when the criminal could not be found, the Lord Chancellor said that, while the Commission had at first taken a narrower view on this matter, the revised instructions which had been issued to them fully covered this point.
The War Cabinet approved the proposals in the Memorandum, which were as follows:—
(a) The statement made in the course of the discussion at the War Cabinet on the 4th October was confirmed, namely, that war crimes committed against British subjects or in British territory should be dealt with by military courts set up to try them in Germany (or wherever else was appropriate).
(b) The Chiefs of Staff were invited—
(i) to send to the Combined Chiefs of Staff the amended directive attached as Appendix A to the paper (authority being given to the Chiefs of Staff to agree such further amendments as they might think desirable); and
(ii) to recommend strongly to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that supreme Allied commanders be instructed to establish at once a suitable organisation with an adequate staff qualified to investigate war crimes and track down offenders. [It was important that Allied national offices should have direct contact with such organisations established at supreme headquarters wherever this was necessary.]

(c) The Secretary of State for War was invited, in consultation with the Treasury Solicitor, to consider and give effect to any measures required to carry out the above recommendations, particularly in so far as war crimes alleged to have been committed against British subjects were concerned.

7. The War Cabinet had before them—

(i) a memorandum by the Secretary of State for India (W.P. (44) 632) describing the situation which had arisen between India and South Africa over the anti-Asiatic legislation in Natal; and

(ii) a joint memorandum by the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (W.P. (44) 653), to which were attached draft telegrams to the Government of India and to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in South Africa. The latter telegram requested Sir Evelyn Baring to convey orally to Field-Marshal Smuts a personal message from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Secretary of State for India said that the draft telegram to the Government of India appended to W.P. (44) 653 made it clear that His Majesty's Government could not, and would not, approve the enforcement of prohibitions by the Government of India on the import from South Africa of materials required for essential war purposes and which could not be procured from other sources either at all or without serious disarrangement of shipping programmes or existing financial arrangements.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs read to the War Cabinet the text of the proposed message to Field-Marshal Smuts. The Prime Minister agreed that this message should issue from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and not from himself (the Prime Minister).

The War Cabinet—

Approved the draft telegrams to the Government of India and the United Kingdom High Commissioner in South Africa appended to W.P. (44) 653.

8. The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that there had been an exchange of letters between the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy, which had not yet been circulated to the War Cabinet and which he thought it was desirable that they should see. He invited the Secretary of State for India to arrange for their printing and circulation.

The Secretary of State for India undertook to make the necessary arrangements.
The War Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (W.P. (44) 643). In his memorandum the Secretary of State for the Colonies proposed—

(i) That the Colonial Development and Welfare Act should be extended for a further 10 years as from 1946.
(ii) That the annual sum provided should be £10 million a year for the first 3 years, starting in 1946-47; £15 million a year for the ensuing 4 years; and £20 million a year for the last 3 years. These would be overall sums, and would include provision for research and certain additional schemes such as higher education, which would otherwise have to be brought forward outside the scope of the present Act.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, with whom he had discussed the matter very fully, found himself unable to commit himself to a higher provision than £10 million a year for development and £1 million a year for research. The matter was accordingly submitted for decision by the War Cabinet.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, in supporting his proposals, made the following points:

(a) It was essential to work on an overall 10-year plan, and if this was to be effective it necessarily meant a rising scale of grant.
(b) The figures which he proposed were based on outline plans put forward by several of the larger territories, including Nigeria and Uganda, and represented a scale of provision which, in his view, was essential.
(c) The great bulk of the expenditure would be incurred in the United Kingdom and the Colonies and would be subject to strict financial control.
(d) In framing his estimate of the sums required, he had taken into account the existing sterling balances of the Colonies. These comprised—
   (1) The backing for the currency. This could not be touched.
   (2) Colonial Government balances and investments in the United Kingdom. These he had assumed would be expended by degrees on development.
   (3) Holdings of British commercial companies banked in the Colonies. These he hoped would also be used by private enterprise for development.
(e) He was satisfied that the scheme proposed was the least which would be regarded in Parliament and in the Colonies as meeting the needs of the case.
(f) The Chancellor of the Exchequer fully recognised that the provision of £5 million a year, with an additional £1 million a year for research, made under the Act of 1940 did not represent a scale of provision which would to-day be regarded as adequate. He thought, however, that it was unnecessary to do more than double these sums.
(g) He took exception to the rising scale of grant proposed, which he thought might be taken as implying that our financial position a few years after the war would be greatly relieved. This was not the case.
(h) The Sterling balances of the Colonies represented very substantial sums. Thus, in West Africa, the excess of those balances over the currency reserves amounted to £47 million. In East Africa the corresponding figure was £50 million.
(i) In further discussion, the Prime Minister drew attention to the extreme gravity of the financial position with which we would be faced after the war, and said that he was very unwilling to see any rate of expenditure authorised in excess of that proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
(k) The Minister of Labour and National Service drew attention to the effect on the working of any scheme of this kind of the provision that any unexpended balance, at the end of the financial year, of the grant payable in respect of that year must be surrendered to the Exchequer.

(l) It was pointed out in this connection that the total expenditure so far incurred under the 1940 Act only amounted to about £4 million in all over five years, against a maximum provision of £20 million under the Act, the balance having lapsed. Several Ministers favoured an arrangement whereby any unexpected balance of the grant in respect of a particular year could be carried forward and not surrendered. The Secretary of State for the Colonies should be in a position to plan on the basis of a total expenditure over a period of 10 years, irrespective of the exact spread of expenditure between particular years.

(m) Other Ministers expressed the view that the criterion which should be applied to this expenditure was the purposes on which the money could be spent; and that if the grants were required for economic development they would prove a sound investment on the part of Great Britain.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for the Colonies to arrange for the matter to be further discussed in the light of the views expressed in discussion, a report being made to the War Cabinet.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
21st November, 1944.
THE PRIME MINISTER said that he had been considering the important appointment of a successor to Field Marshal Sir John Dill as Head of the Joint Staff Mission in Washington. He had come to the conclusion that General Sir Maitland Wilson was the right man to fill the gap. This appointment would enable General Alexander to be appointed Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean. As such he would retain operational control of the Armies in Italy. In General Alexander's place as Commander of the 15th Army Group, it was proposed to appoint General Mark Clark, and in General Mark Clark's place as Commander of the 5th Army, the U.S. General Truscott.

President Roosevelt had been consulted about these appointments and had expressed his entire agreement with them.

The Prime Minister added that His Majesty The King had intimated his approval of General Alexander being promoted to the rank of Field Marshal. This promotion would take effect from the date on which Rome had been captured. Field Marshal Montgomery, at the time of his promotion to that rank, had been informed that when General Alexander was promoted to be Field Marshal, his appointment would take effect from this date and that General Alexander would rank above him as a Field Marshal.

The King had also expressed his approval of General Maitland Wilson being promoted to the rank of Field Marshal as soon as he took up his appointment at Washington.

The War Cabinet expressed their approval of these proposals.

NOTE. The Prime Minister had on a previous occasion notified his intentions in this matter to a meeting attended by the War Cabinet (W.M. (44) 152nd Conclusions).