CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, 16th April, 1945, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.
The Right Hon. LORD WOOLTON, Secretary of State for Reconstruction.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Minister of Reconstruction.
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. JAMES GRICE, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. RICHARD LAW, M.P., Secretary of State.
The Right Hon. Sir JAMES GRICE, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Sir RANALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
Sir ORME SARGENT, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The following were also present:
Field-Marshal The VISCOUNT WAVELL, Viceroy of India.
The Hon. Sir FIROZ KHAN NOON, Representative of the Government of India.
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. Sir JAMES GRICE, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. RICHARD LAW, M.P., Minister of State.

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

Secretariat:
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
General Sir HASTINGS L. ISMAY.
Mr. NORMAN BROOK.
Mr. W. S. MURIE.
## WAR CABINET 46 (46).

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

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

On the western front, Allied air forces had flown an average of 6,000 sorties a day. Enemy opposition was declining rapidly; and our losses had dropped from about 7 per thousand sorties to under 5 per thousand sorties. Enemy air activity had dropped to about 1,400 sorties a week—only one-thirtieth of the scale of Allied air operations.

Bomber Command had flown 3,900 sorties, for the loss of 19 aircraft, and had dropped 10,700 tons of bombs, mainly on communications and ports. There had been two heavy attacks on Kiel. Mosquitoes had attacked Berlin on five nights.

United States bombers had flown 5,400 sorties, for the loss of 27 aircraft, and had dropped 12,300 tons of bombs, mainly on oil centres, communications and airfields. They had dropped 3,000 tons on strong points in South-Western France, in support of the attack by French forces on the German positions round Bordeaux.

The Tactical Air Force had flown 24,000 sorties, for the loss of 111 aircraft, and had inflicted very heavy damage on enemy vehicles.

Losses of enemy aircraft during the week were 1,476 destroyed, 38 probably destroyed, and 945 damaged. Many of these were destroyed or damaged on the ground.

Coastal Command had flown 1,236 sorties. They had sunk 6 midget submarines and probably sunk another. Two U-boats were claimed to have been sunk, one probably sunk and one possibly damaged. In attacks on surface craft, nine merchant vessels, one tanker and three other craft had been damaged.

Mediterranean.

In the Mediterranean 17,000 sorties had been flown, for the loss of 73 aircraft, and 12,000 tons of bombs had been dropped, mainly on communications and in support of operations by the Eighth Army. 18 enemy aircraft had been destroyed and 14 damaged.

South-East Asia.

In South-East Asia 13,000 sorties had been flown, for the loss of 9 aircraft. The principal targets had been enemy communications in Burma, where 43 bridges had been destroyed. Mines had been laid off Malaya and Sumatra in long-distance flights of over 21 hours' duration.

In the Pacific 5,260 sorties had been flown by land-based aircraft, for the loss of 6 aircraft. 11 enemy aircraft had been destroyed and 6 damaged.

Super Fortresses had flown 592 sorties for the loss of 10 aircraft, and had dropped 2,800 tons of bombs on Tokyo, Nagoya and other cities in Japan. Losses of enemy aircraft were 116 destroyed, 41 probably destroyed and 51 damaged.

The Chief of the Air Staff said that he had not been able to obtain the full information, for which the War Cabinet had asked at their meeting on the 9th April (W.M. (45) 41st Conclusions, Minute 1, Conclusion (2)), about the activities of Dominion Air Forces operating with United States Air Forces in the Pacific theatre. He had, however, ascertained that during March 11,000 sorties had been flown in this theatre by the Australian Air Force, and 159 by the New Zealand Air Force, against Japanese garrisons in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomons. The units of the Dominion Air Forces operating at the most forward points in this theatre were 9 Australian squadrons in Morotai and 11 Australian squadrons in New Guinea.

Naval Operations.

Two merchant vessels totalling 7,292 tons had been lost by enemy action during the week. Shipping losses for April now amounted to 27,725 tons.

During the week five U-boats had been sunk and two probably sunk (including those claimed by Coastal Command). The results for April so far were six U-boats sunk, five probably sunk and six promising attacks.

[20035—1]
On the night of 12th/13th April our Forces had driven off eight U-boats approaching the Nore-Flushing channel. A French naval force was supporting the military operations at the mouth of the Gironde.

Eleven midget U-boats had been sunk and six probably sunk during the week.

Between 11th and 14th April coastal forces had had considerable success against enemy convoys in the North Adriatic. As a result of a sweep by our destroyers off the Burma coast, five small enemy craft had been sunk. British naval forces, including battleships, had bombarded north-west Sumatra on the 11th April.

Recent submarine patrols had sunk four coasters, three landing craft and three junks off Sumatra.

Operations in the Ryuku Islands had continued during the week. United States naval forces claimed to have shot down 100 enemy aircraft and sunk 23 small craft between the 11th and 13th April.

The British Pacific Fleet had attacked airfields at Formosa on the 12th and 13th April and 38 enemy aircraft had been shot down. Successful attacks had also been made on shore installations and buildings in Formosa.

In North-East Holland, advances had been made in the Apeldoorn-Arnhem area, and our forces had now reached the coast. German resistance South of Bremen was strong, but further east considerable progress had been made and Bremen was likely to be out-flanked from the south-east. The United States 9th Army had advanced to the line of the Elbe from Wittenberge to a point south of Magdeburg. Substantial progress had been made in Saxony, and it seemed likely that the United States Forces in this sector would link up with the Russians and split the German armies into two. The Ruhr pocket had been further compressed and 120,000 prisoners had been taken there during the week.

The total number of prisoners for the week was 250,000 and for the period since the crossing of the Rhine 500,000.

The arrangements for sending food into Holland on its liberation had been reviewed. There were no reports of food shortages in rural areas in occupied Germany; but the release of the foreign labour, on whom the Germans had depended for much of their agricultural work, was likely to lead to shortages later in the year. Industrial production in Germany was virtually at a standstill.

The 8th Army had made a considerable advance on their whole front. Some progress had also been made in the centre towards Bologna and in the extreme west; and a total of 6,500 prisoners had been taken during the week.

The 20th Division had moved southward from the Mandalay area and was now advancing towards Magwe and Taungdwingyi. This advance might well isolate considerable enemy forces.

The Russian advance west of Vienna continued, and it seemed likely that the Russians would eventually join up with the Allied armies now advancing towards Nuremberg. Except for a small attack in the Königsberg area, Russian activity had been confined to the South.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.
2. The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security said that the War Cabinet might like to have the total casualties suffered in this country from attacks by flying bombs and long-range rockets. These were as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of Attack</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flying Bombs</strong></td>
<td>12th/13th June, 1944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously injured</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly injured</td>
<td></td>
<td>24,493</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total, killed and injured</strong></td>
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<td>48,648</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Range Rockets</strong></td>
<td>13th September, 1944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously injured</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly injured</td>
<td></td>
<td>15,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, killed and injured</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>24,715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A general statement was now under preparation, covering the total casualties and damage suffered as a result of all forms of enemy attack on this country throughout the war. This would distinguish between air raids, flying bombs and long-range rockets.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of this statement.

3. The Home Secretary said a Memorial Service for President Roosevelt was to be held in St. Paul’s Cathedral on Tuesday, the 17th April. The B.B.C. desired to broadcast both to this country and to the United States a commentary on the Service, in the course of which they would wish to announce that His Majesty The King was present. This would be contrary to the existing rule restricting the publication of news relating to The King’s movements. There seemed, however, to be no risk in disclosing The King’s presence on this occasion, through the broadcast commentary; and the Home Secretary was disposed to recommend that, subject to The King’s pleasure, the proposed broadcast should be allowed.

The Chief of the Air Staff confirmed that this proposal involved no risk from the point of view of possible air attack.

The suggestion was made that some opportunity should be given for the whole nation to pay tribute to President Roosevelt, possibly by observing two minutes’ silence at some point while the Memorial Service was in progress.

There was general support for the proposal for a nation-wide tribute, but it was pointed out that in the short time available it might not be possible to make effective arrangements for a two minutes’ silence, and it was suggested as an alternative that arrangements might be made for the tolling of bells throughout the country at a prearranged time, possibly at the end of the Memorial Service.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that, subject to His Majesty’s pleasure, no objection need be raised to the broadcasting of a commentary on the Memorial Service.

(2) Invited the Home Secretary to report to them at their meeting later in the day what arrangements might be made to enable the nation as a whole to join in paying a tribute to President Roosevelt at the time of the Memorial Service.
4. In the course of the discussion recorded in the preceding Minute, it was pointed out that, if the B.B.C. were allowed to broadcast a commentary on the ceremony disclosing that The King was present, the newspapers would protest if they continued to be required to observe the existing rule by which The King's movements could not be publicly reported until a specified time after they had taken place.

Some discussion followed on the question whether the time had not now come when this restriction could safely be withdrawn.

The Chief of the Air Staff doubted whether it was necessary to maintain the existing rule, so far as concerned risks of enemy air attacks.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Home Secretary to ascertain His Majesty's views on this question and to consider, in consultation with the Minister of Information and other Ministers concerned, whether the existing rule restricting the publication of news of The King's movements could now be withdrawn.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1.
16th April, 1945.