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W.M. (40)

262nd Conclusions.

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WAR CABINET 262 (40).

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 30, 1940, at 5 P.M.*

## Present :

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister ( <i>in the Chair</i> ).	
The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.	The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.	The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

## The following were also present :

The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.	The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.	The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.	The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Minister of Supply.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.	Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the  
Imperial General Staff.

*Secretariat.*

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.  
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.  
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

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**Munitions  
Production.**  
Programme  
and priorities.

The War Cabinet had a provisional discussion on the Munitions Situation, and had before them the following Papers :—

- (1) Memorandum by the Minister of Supply (W.P. (40) 339).
- (2) Memorandum by the Prime Minister (W.P. (40) 352).
- (3) Memorandum by the Minister of Aircraft Production (W.P. (40) 360).
- (4) Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (40) 370).
- (5) Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service (W.P. (40) 378).
- (6) Appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff on Future Strategy (W.P. (40) 362).

The War Cabinet reached the following Conclusions :—

- (a) The existing programmes of the three Services were reaffirmed. The Ministers concerned were invited to make sure that their programmes were stated in a concise form, in order that all Departments concerned with the Munitions programme should be fully acquainted with the position.
- (b) Every effort must be made to complete the programmes by the due dates. No delay in completion of the programmes could be accepted at this stage. Nevertheless, it would be better to accept some lag in the completion of the programmes, rather than to truncate the programmes themselves.
- (c) The available resources of labour, material, and industrial capacity must be allocated proportionately to the existing programmes, the basis of the allocation being determined in relation to strategic priority.
- (d) A system of double entry should be devised and administered by a central priority organisation, in order to check the use made by Departments of the material allocated to them, and to ensure that material urgently required by one Service is not being retained in anticipation of the future needs of some other Service.
- (e) Where bottle-necks occur, they must be determined by an arbitrary decision, based on the facts of the particular case.
- (f) The demand of the Minister of Aircraft Production for 45,000 tons of alloy steel for the Quarter 1st October–31st December, 1940, was approved.
- (g) The proposal in the Secretary of State for War's Paper, that 300,000 men should be recruited from within the United Kingdom in the period September 1940–March 1941, inclusive, was approved.
- (h) A decision was deferred on the intake into the army in the period April–October 1941. But as this intake would materially affect the labour supply situation, it should be reviewed within the next two months.
- (i) The Minister of Supply had ordered 25,000 vehicles in the United States, and was anxious to order another 35,000 at an early date. This matter should be discussed with the Treasury and an early decision reached.
- (j) The Minister of Supply wished to increase the order for rifles in the United States from 400,000 to 1,000,000. This order was approved, subject to the Treasury being satisfied that the increase could not be met by, *e.g.*, orders in India or Australia.
- (k) The Minister of Supply hoped to obtain increased capacity for the manufacture of small arms ammunition in the United States, and might invite the assistance of the Prime Minister in this matter.

- (l) The Secretary of State for War undertook to inform the Minister of Supply, within the next few days, whether the War Office would accept field guns of United States pattern, the United States authorities being unwilling to manufacture guns to the pattern of our 25-pdr. The view generally expressed was that, although it was undesirable to increase the number of different types of guns in the Army, we might well have to agree to accept the United States type of field gun.
- (m) General approval was given to the policy outlined in Section VI of the Paper by the Minister of Supply (W.P. (40) 339) for dealing with the ammunition programme. Under this plan, manufacturing capacity would be prepared, ready to produce at short notice the ammunition which the guns could fire; but only a part of this capacity would be put into production forthwith, care being taken not to hamper immediate needs.
- (n) The Minister of Supply, the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Minister of Labour, acting in consultation, were authorised to give effect to a scheme whereby directions were given to industrial firms, requiring them to train specified numbers of men and women.
- (o) Discussion on these questions should be continued at a further Meeting to be held in the near future.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,  
September 30, 1940.*

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