WAR CABINET.

NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR SITUATION.

APPRECIATION BY THE CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE.

Note by the Secretary.

By direction of the Prime Minister, I circulate herewith, for consideration by the War Cabinet, the attached weekly Résumé (No. 1) by the Chiefs of Staff Committee dealing with the Naval, Military and Air Situation up to 12 noon, 7th September, 1939. (Paper No. C.C.S.(39)18).

(Signed) B.E. BRIDGES.
Secretary.

Richmond Terrace, S.W.1.
8th September, 1939.
WAR CABINET,

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE.

WEEKLY RESUME (NO. 1) OF THE NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR SITUATION UP TO 12 NOON, 7th SEPTEMBER.

REPORT.

The accompanying Joint Naval, Military and Air Force appreciation of the situation as at 12 noon on the 7th September is circulated in accordance with the recommendation contained in Paper No. W.P. (G.) (39) 3, and approved by the War Cabinet on the 7th September, (Paper No. W.M. (39) 7th Conclusions, Minuted 17.

2. We should be glad of instructions as to whether the form and substance of this Appreciation meets the requirements of the War Cabinet.

(Signed) C.L. NEWALL.
DUDLEY POUND.
E. IRONSIDE.

Richmond Terrace, S.W.1.

8th September, 1939.
General.

1. The Royal Navy has been fully engaged in its task of securing sea communications, escorting military and air reinforcements, giving protection to British and Allied shipping, and in interrupting the Enemy's seaborne trade.

2. The entire Fleet has taken up War Dispositions as modified to meet the naval situation which has developed in the opening days of the war. The necessary patrols have been established.

3. Three Polish Destroyers made a timely passage from the Baltic to the North Sea, and will, in due course, make a valuable addition to our Destroyer strength.

4. Progress is being made with the fitting out of liners as Armed Merchant Cruisers.

5. The French Fleet have taken up their dispositions as agreed in the Allied war plans.

Attacks upon Enemy Submarines.

5. Since war broke out, there has been very little activity by German submarines in the North Sea and no shipping has been sunk there. Mines have been laid by a submarine, in one instance, in this area.
7. In the Atlantic, and off the west coast of the British Isles, German submarines have definitely made their presence known as far South as the coast of Portugal. There are also reports of German submarines in the Caribbean probably based on Curacao.

8. There is no reliable information of submarines having passed through the Channel, but a steamer is reported to have been blown up off Shoreham in the afternoon of 6th September. No details yet received. This may have been due either to a submarine or to a mine laid by a submarine. Enemy submarines are reported and have been attacked in the Western Channel.

9. A number of attacks have been delivered upon enemy submarines but detailed reports, which would enable a definite opinion as to their success to be given, have not yet been received.

10. List of British and Foreign Merchant Vessels sunk by the enemy up to a.m. 6th September, 1939.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Flag</th>
<th>Gross Tonnage</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>By</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>ATHENIA</td>
<td>Br.</td>
<td>13581</td>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>off Ireland</td>
<td>s/m.</td>
<td>Torp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>BOSNIA</td>
<td>Br.</td>
<td>2401</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>off Spain</td>
<td>s/m.</td>
<td>Gun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>ROYAL SCEPTRE</td>
<td>Br.</td>
<td>4853</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>off Bay of Biscay.</td>
<td>s/m.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>RIO CLARO</td>
<td>Br.</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>off Spain</td>
<td>s/m.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enemy Merchant Shipping and Losses.

11. On 1st September German merchant ships were generally ordered to leave British, Colonial and French ports and make for home or the nearest neutral ports. Those neutral ports most in favour are Brazilian and Spanish ports, especially the Canary Islands and Vigo, and also Italian ports in the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

12. In the Far East, Dutch East Indian ports and Japanese ports are being used. A number of German ships are still on the high seas, probably making for such refuge as is practicable.

13. Bremen is probably at Murmansk, North Russia, but she has also been reported at Vera Cruz and making for Mar Del Plata.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ship</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>By</th>
<th>How dealt with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olinda</td>
<td>4576</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>off River Plate</td>
<td>AJAX</td>
<td>Sunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Friten</td>
<td>6594</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>off River Plate</td>
<td>AJAX</td>
<td>Sunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.Molkenbuar</td>
<td>5294</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>off Norway</td>
<td>JERSEY</td>
<td>Captured while sinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inn</td>
<td>2867</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>near Para</td>
<td>NEPTUNE</td>
<td>Captured and sunk?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Convoys.

15. The convoy system is being commenced on certain routes. Elsewhere the controlled routing system is in force.
Enemy Mines.

16. The Germans have declared a mined area in the North Sea, and there is evidence that laying has commenced.

Mines have also been reported in the Southern part of the North Sea and definitely located off the North Forelands.

17. The Germans have also broadcast the limits of mined areas in the eastern North Sea and the entrances of the Baltic.

 Movements of Enemy Warships - German Main Units.

18. On 1st September, the disposition of the German units appeared to be as follows:

- **Battlecruiser**
  - "Gneisenau"
  - "Scharnhorst"

- **Armoured Ships**
  - "Deutschland"
  - "Scheer"
  - "Graf Spee"

- **Cruisers**
  - "Hipper"
  - "Blucher"
  - "Nurnberg"
  - "Leipzig"
  - "Koenigsburg"
  - "Koln"
  - "Emden"

  - **Battle**
    - Mouth of the Elbe
  - **Baltic**
  - **neighbourhood of Wilhelmshaven**
19. The information received concerning the subsequent movements of these vessels is very scanty, but it would appear that no vessels have left German territorial waters except two cruisers possibly "Koln" and "Konigsberg" accompanied by two destroyers which were sighted about 60 miles N.W. of Horn's Reef at 0715, 6th September, returning to Germany. It is possible this force was employed in covering minelaying activities in that area.

Light Forces.

20. On 1st September, the German Destroyer Flotillas are believed to have been divided evenly between the Baltic and North Sea ports. It is probable that the majority are now stationed at North Sea ports. The Torpedo Boat Flotillas are still believed to be in the Baltic.

Other Warships.

21. The old battleship "Schleswig-Holstein" has been in the vicinity of Danzig since 25th August; she has been engaged in bombarding Gdynia.

The old battleship "Schlesien" is believed to have been based at Wilhelmshaven since 1st September.

Raiders.

22. No reports have yet been received of any German raider activities.
MILITARY SITUATION.

FRANCE.

23. French troops are reported to be in contact with the forward elements of the Siegfried Line in the Saar, but no further details are yet available.

POLAND.

24. The German forces crossed the Polish frontiers at 5.55 a.m. on 1st September. The first moves came from Pomerania into the Corridor, from German Silesia into and North of Polish Silesia, and from Moravia and Slovakia across the Carpathians. A further move from East Prussia South and Westward soon became apparent. From the outset the Poles were at a grave disadvantage in that they had only some 30 infantry divisions with which to face the initial heavy German concentrations against them; they have few mechanized units, their transport is largely horsed, and their air defence inadequate.

25. By 4th September the Polish Corridor was to all intents and purposes in German occupation, so that East Prussia could be easily reinforced, and as a result the drive on Warsaw increased in strength.

26. It was early apparent that the German attack from Silesia was being made in great strength and with mechanized formations, with the result that the Poles had to fall back rapidly, and must have lost fairly heavily both in casualties and in prisoners.
27. No efforts to advance were made by the Germans in the Poznan Salient. The movement with which the Poles were faced was a pincer movement from East Prussia and from Silesia.

28. The progress of the two arms of the pincers from reports received up to mid-day 7th September is as follows:

(a) North (German Fifth Group).

The Polish forces are resisting the German attacks some miles North of Warsaw. While the attacks appear to be held up for the moment N.W. of Warsaw there are indications that the main German drive may be designed to pass East of the Capital.

(b) South (German First and Second Groups).

In the South the Poles are holding the Germans on the line Sieradz - Piotrkow South of Lodz and there is a report of a Polish counter-attack near Piotrkow, but the Germans claim the capture of Kielce, although the Poles have not yet admitted it. This drive is very serious for not only does it bring the German forces very close to the Polish Industrial area S.E. of Warsaw but also, in conjunction with the attack from East Prussia, there may be grave danger of all Polish forces in the Poznan Salient being completely surrounded.

South of the attack on Kielce the situation is still obscure. The Germans have claimed Cracow and there is little doubt that this pocket must go before long.
29. The main cause of the great difficulties with which the Polish armies have been faced has been the overwhelming German air superiority. Polish railways have been heavily attacked, a considerable proportion of their war industries have been put out of action, and their meagre air force has been reduced to a state of impotence.

Nevertheless the last official reports stated that the morale of the Polish Army remained high.

**GERMANY.**

30. German divisions on 7th September have been identified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Frontier</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Germany</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Frontier</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition further reserve and Landwehr divisions have probably been formed.

**Eastern Front.**

31. It is believed that the German forces operating on the Eastern Front are divided into five groups and that the tasks of these groups are as follows:

- **First Group.**
  - To occupy Cracow.

- **Second Group** (motorized group).
  - To attack junction of Polish Second and Third Armies and to advance from Radomsko to Warsaw.
Third and Fourth Groups.

These have cut off the Corridor and are now reported to be mopping up the isolated Polish forces.

Fifth Group.

This group advanced from East Prussia.

Western Front.

32. Latest information is that areas of Aachen and Osnabrück are being reinforced by German troops and a new reserve division has been identified opposite the Dutch frontier. An unconfirmed report stated that troop trains filled with mechanized troops, etc., were seen on 5th September in the neighbourhood of Berlin moving from East to West. There is no confirmation, however, that these troops are being moved from the Eastern Front.

U.S.S.R.

33. There have been rumours ever since the German-Soviet non-aggression pact was signed on 22nd August that a military pact was also contemplated. Certain Soviet Officers have gone to Berlin but there is no confirmation yet that a military pact will be concluded. The reports of Soviet military concentrations on her Western frontiers are not conclusive and appear, at present, to be no more than is reasonable under the present circumstances. There are few signs that the Soviet is yet likely to abandon the policy of letting other nations fight, while she waits to reap the benefits later.
34. The partial withdrawal of Japanese troops from the vicinity of Hong Kong, together with other local indications, suggests that the Japanese do not at present contemplate any major operations against Hong Kong.

35. Japan has, however, been quick to take advantage of the European war situation, and has presented demands to Great Britain and other countries involved in the present European conflict to withdraw troops from regions under Japanese control. Japan has also asked us to stop helping the Chinese.

AIR SITUATION.

Strength of German Air Force.

36. The estimated strength of the German Air Force on the 1st September was as follows:

- 1750 long range bombers (858 in North West Germany)
- 380 short range bombers
- 1215 fighters
- 670 reconnaissance and Army Co-operation
- 305 Coastal and ship borne

Total 4320

37. Apart from the aircraft listed above, which are all of modern types, Germany had available about 1,000 troop transport aircraft, of which it is estimated that 500 are in troop transport units. She also had available a considerable number of aircraft of obsolescent types including aircraft taken over from the Czech Air Force. Reports have been received that Germany is forming reserve squadrons out of these second line aircraft, but no confirmation can be obtained of the number of
squadrons to be formed. The reserves of modern aircraft behind the first line units are estimated at 100%.

German Operations in Poland.

38. German air attacks have so far been directed against aerodromes, aircraft and engine factories, and rail communications, as well as against the Polish forces. Casualties to civilians have been caused mainly by bombs falling in the vicinity of the objectives aimed at. There is no confirmation of the reports from Polish sources that the Germans are using mustard gas bombs. Although the aircraft factories and the flying training schools must be regarded as now out of action, the alternative aerodromes which had been prepared for use by the operational squadrons were well concealed, and it is understood that they have not yet been located and attacked. The Polish Air Force consisted, on the outbreak of war, of 494 aircraft of which only some 50 bombers were of modern types. The German Air Force has therefore been able to obtain a complete ascendency and is now in a position to concentrate almost entirely in support of land operations.

British Air Operations.

39. An attack against German warships was carried out on 4th September, 1939, by two squadrons of Wellingtons and two squadrons of Blenheims. The results reported were - two hits with 500 lb. bombs on a warship in the Schillig Roads, and one hit on the side of the lock alongside a warship at the entrance to the Kiel Canal.
The attack was carried out at a low altitude in the face of considerable opposition by fighters and A.A. fire. Seven of our aircraft failed to return.

40. In addition flights over Western Germany have been carried out each night in order to distribute propaganda pamphlets. Opposition has been slight, and has been confined to spasmodic A.A. fire. No fighters have been encountered and it is estimated that some 9,000,000 pamphlets have dropped in Germany.