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17th April, 1945.

**WAR CABINET.**

**STANDING DOWN OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE SERVICES.**

MEMORANDUM BY THE HOME SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HOME SECURITY.

IN view of the general shortage of man-power I should not be justified in maintaining the Civil Defence Services on an operational footing after the Chiefs of Staff are able to advise that further attacks against the United Kingdom by rockets, flying bombs or any other types of aircraft are no longer to be expected. I would propose, when I am so advised by the Chiefs of Staff, to instruct the local authorities to give the customary period of notice (two months in all) to whole-time members of the Civil Defence (General) Services and to wind up the whole war-time organisation as quickly as possible.

2. As from the moment when this notice is given the services can no longer function on an operational basis and the whole-time members will be progressively released within the period of two months as work is found for them by the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The part-time members will be released at once.

3. For some time the Civil Defence (General) Services have been progressively reduced, and I have recently examined the possibility of a complete disbandment in the less vulnerable regions accompanied by progressive reductions in a series of cuts in London. The administrative arrangements required to maintain a working service on such a basis would, however, involve the local authorities in a complicated reorganisation which could not be completed in less than three months. For this reason, I prefer that the Services should be maintained at their existing strengths until I am enabled to demobilise them in their entirety with Cabinet authority on the basis of the advice of the Chiefs of Staff that the operational need for them has ceased. I assume that this advice is not likely to be delayed.

4. It should be understood that the demobilisation of these Services logically connotes the abandonment of the warning system and complete relaxation of the black-out (except possibly as far as submarines are concerned). I should mention that one effect, which I would regret, of the abandonment of the warning system would be that it would be impossible to sound the proposed three minutes' "All Clear" on V.E. Day. It could be done in London, but would be impracticable elsewhere.

5. I ask the War Cabinet to approve the course proposed.

H. M.

Home Office, S.W. 1,  
17th April 1945.





