

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

*Printed for the War Cabinet. October 1943.*

**SECRET**

Copy No. 51

**W.M. (43)**

**145th Conclusions.**

**WAR CABINET 145 (43).**

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, 25th October, 1943, at 6.30 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 President of the Council.	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. OLIVER LYTTTELTON, 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 following were also present :**

Field-Marshal the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.	The Right Hon. S. M. BRUCE, Representative of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.	The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Lord Privy Seal.
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.	The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty.
The Right Hon. Sir JAMES GRIGG, M.P., Secretary of State for War.	The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.	The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.
The Right Hon. RICHARD LAW, M.P., Minister of State.	The Right Hon. LORD CHERWELL, Paymaster-General.
The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.	Admiral of the Fleet Sir ANDREW CUNNINGHAM, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff.	General Sir ALAN BROOKE, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

*Secretariat :*

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.  
Mr. NORMAN BROOK.  
Brigadier L. C. HOLLIS.  
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

[26318]

B

**WAR CABINET 145 (43).**

---

CONTENTS.

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Subject.</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	Naval, Military and Air Operations ..... Air Operations: Home Theatre. Mediterranean. Pacific. Naval Operations: Shipping losses. Home Waters. Mediterranean. Military Operations: Italy. Russia.	113
2	India ..... Indian Sterling balances.	113
3	Moscow Conference .....	114
4	Portuguese Atlantic Islands .....	114
5	Military Government of Occupied Territory ..... Appointment of Members of Parliament to AMGOT Staff.	115

---

Naval, Military  
and Air  
Operations.

(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (43) 142nd  
Conclusions,  
Minute 1.)

Air Operations.  
Home Theatre.

1. The Chiefs of Staff reported the principal events of the previous week.

Bomber Command had carried out three major raids against Hanover, Leipzig and Kassel, dropping 4,800 tons of bombs. Mosquitoes had also raided 12 other towns in Germany, including Berlin. Coastal Command had made five attacks on U-boats, of which 1 had been sunk and 2 possibly damaged. The liner *Strasbourg* had been hit off the Dutch coast and afterwards seen beached. Enemy losses had been 57 aircraft destroyed, 9 probably destroyed and 29 damaged. Our losses had been 78 bombers, 20 Fighter Command and Tactical aircraft and 2 Coastal Command aircraft.

The operations of United States aircraft had been hampered by bad weather, but 260 tons of bombs had been dropped at Düren.

Mediterranean.

Allied air activity had increased in the Mediterranean Theatre by 50 per cent. compared with that of the previous week. 2,600 tons of bombs had been dropped on airfields, rail and road targets in Italy and the Aegean. One large and 1 small enemy merchant ship had been sunk and a number of smaller ones damaged. Enemy losses in this theatre had been 62 aircraft destroyed, 3 probably destroyed and 37 damaged. Allied losses amounted to 20 aircraft.

Pacific.

207 Japanese aircraft had been claimed as destroyed during the previous week as against 19 Allied.

Naval  
Operations.

Shipping losses by enemy action, including belated reports, during the previous week amounted to 28,000 tons.

Shipping Losses.

Home Waters.

The number of U-boats sunk continued to be satisfactory.

In operations off the Dutch coast on the previous night 2 E-boats had been claimed sunk. On the night of the 22nd/23rd October the cruiser *Charybdis* and the destroyer *Limbourne* had been sunk off the north coast of Brittany.

Mediterranean.

In a sweep off the West coast of Italy a 5,000-ton enemy ammunition ship had been sunk. In the Aegean 2 destroyers had been sunk, 1 of them carrying military personnel to Leros.

Military  
Operations.  
Italy.

During the previous week the major advance of the Allied Forces had been in the centre. On the right the 8th Army had resumed the offensive and the River Trigno had been crossed. On the left of the line there had been heavy fighting. There were indications that the enemy was falling back to prepared positions on the line of the River Sangro.

Russia.

All the Russian bridgeheads on the Dnieper had been maintained. In the Dnieper bend the Russians had made a deep penetration in the direction of Krivoi Rog and appeared to have every chance of delivering a serious blow to the enemy forces in this area.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

India.

Indian Sterling  
Balances.

(Previous  
References:  
W.M. (43) 106th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 2; and  
W.M. (43) 111th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 1.)

2. *The Prime Minister* drew attention to the fact that our sterling indebtedness to India was growing at the rate of a million a day and was now over £800 millions. This was a very serious position, and he thought that grave embarrassment would arise if the facts continued to be kept from the public knowledge. Moreover, it seemed clear that, for large operations in the Far East, we should have to rely to a considerable extent on base facilities in the Middle East. He was also informed that, as a result of inflation in India, we were paying an excessive price for commodities purchased there.

*The Paymaster-General* gave various instances, based on figures given in a Memorandum circulated to the Standing Committee on Indian Financial Questions. Among the instances quoted was that we were paying £25 millions this year for petrol purchased at the

[26318]

B 2

price of 3s. 2d. a gallon. The prices of atta and ghi were also quoted. These now stood at 19·8s. and 210s. per 100 lbs. as compared with the pre-war figures of 4·5s. and 79·5s.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that the Committee on Indian Financial Questions had held several meetings and had then adjourned pending the submission of detailed particulars which had been asked for from India. These particulars had only just been received and were to be considered at an early meeting of the Committee.

*The Prime Minister* said that he thought it would be the general view of the War Cabinet that continuance of the increase in our sterling indebtedness to India at the present rate would result in a very serious position at the end of the war, more especially if the debt was due in part to our being charged inflated prices.

The War Cabinet—

- (1) Asked that the Standing Committee on Indian Financial Questions should submit an early Report on the matter's remitted to it.
- (2) Asked the Secretary of State for India to submit a Report to the Prime Minister on the statement that His Majesty's Government was spending £25 millions during this financial year in purchasing petrol in India at the rate of 3s. 2d. a gallon.

**Moscow  
Conference.**  
(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (43) 142nd  
Conclusions,  
Minute 3.)

3. *The Prime Minister* said that the news received from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs showed that the Moscow Conference was proceeding very well on all points. It looked as if we should receive satisfaction in regard to the treatment of British personnel in North Russia.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the Russian request for a share of the Italian Fleet. He thought that this matter would require very careful examination, and would possibly have to be brought before the War Cabinet before a final conclusion was reached.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements.

**Portuguese  
Atlantic  
Islands.**  
(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (43) 142nd  
Conclusions,  
Minute 2.)

4. *The Prime Minister* said that the United States Administration had modified the instructions which they had originally given to Mr. Kennan, their Chargé d'Affaires at Lisbon, regarding the demands to be made on the Portuguese Government for the grant of facilities in the Azores. They were now prepared to leave the conduct of these negotiations to their Chargé d'Affaires. The Prime Minister thought that we should leave it to His Majesty's Ambassador at Lisbon to advise Mr. Kennan in this matter. His personal view was that he doubted whether the United States Government would be satisfied until they had obtained for United States Forces the same facilities as had been accorded to British Forces and, in addition, facilities for a ferry service for United States aircraft.

**Military  
Government of  
Occupied  
Territory.**

Appointment of  
Members of  
Parliament to  
Amgot Staff.

(Previous  
Reference:  
W.M. (43) 115th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 8.)

5. At their meeting on the 16th August the War Cabinet had discussed the question whether Members of Parliament should be appointed to positions on the staff of AMGOT. While no conclusion had been recorded, it had been the general view of the War Cabinet on that occasion that it might be politically embarrassing if Members of Parliament were appointed to these posts. The Secretary of State for War had been invited to consider the matter further in the light of the discussion.

*The Secretary of State for War* said that it had now become necessary for him to make a public statement on this point, in answer to a Parliamentary Question on the following day. On further reflection, he was now disposed to think that it would be difficult to maintain a ban on the appointment of Members of Parliament to these posts.

*The Prime Minister* agreed with this view. He thought the position should be that Membership of the House of Commons should not disqualify for appointment. Any application from a Member of Parliament should be considered on its merits; whether it succeeded would, of course, depend on the qualifications of the other candidates offering themselves for appointment.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for War to answer the Parliamentary Question on the lines proposed by the Prime Minister.

*Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,  
25th October, 1943.*

ap

G. R.

77

