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C.O.S. (46) 155TH MEETING

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held on
MONDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 1946, at 4 p.m.

PRESENT

Vice Admiral Sir Rhoderick R. McGrigor,
Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (In the Chair)

Air Marshal Sir William
Dickson,
Vice Chief of the Air
Staff

Major General C.S. Sugden,
Representing the Vice Chief
of the Imperial General Staff

SECRETARIAT

Major General Sir Leslie C. Hollis
Brigadier A.T. Cornwall-Jones
Group Captain D.C. Stapleton
Lieut. Colonel T. Haddon

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1. UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY - SOVIET PROPOSAL REGARDING INFORMATION ON ALLIED TROOPS IN NON-ENEMY TERRITORIES.

(Previous reference: C.O.S.(46) 134th Mtg., Min.5)

BRIGADIER CORNWALL-JONES sought the instructions of the Committee on the line that he should take in representing the Chiefs of Staff at a meeting in the Foreign Office later the same day.

The Soviet had put forward an item for inclusion on the Agenda of the forthcoming General Assembly proposing that the strength of allied troops in non-enemy territories should be disclosed. This was the same proposal which had recently been defeated in the Security Council.

A telegram had now been received from Washington explaining that the United States Secretary of State took the view that it would be impossible to oppose the inclusion of this item on the Agenda of the Assembly; and suggesting that we might agree to the matter being discussed provided the Russians agreed to its scope being extended to include the exchange of information on allied troops in ex-enemy countries, e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Roumania.

The Foreign Office were proposing to advise the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that our line should be:-

- (a) To agree that this matter could not be excluded from the Assembly Agenda.
- (b) To take at first the same line that we had taken in the Security Council, stating our view that no evidence had been produced which proved that the presence of these allied troops was in any way a threat to the peace and that the Soviet proposal was in fact entirely malicious.
- (c) To go on then to offer the suggestion that the subject was one which, if it were only working properly, might well be discussed in the Military Staff Committee.

The Foreign Office were of the opinion that if we had no constructive suggestion to make, and were entirely negative in our criticism of the Russian proposal, as we had been in the Security Council, we should not only have an acrimonious debate but the general trend of opinion in the Assembly might be

* No. 6159 of 19th October.

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against us. It was unlikely that a two-third majority would demand disclosure of this information but the vote might be such as to leave world opinion with the feeling that we had something to conceal.

In discussion the Chiefs of Staff made it quite clear that they were emphatically opposed to disclosing, or making any suggestions at this stage that we might at some future date be prepared to disclose, our orders of battle in ex-enemy or other territories. Any such disclosure would give away Anglo-American weakness in Europe and British weakness in Greece and Iraq; it would involve giving away information which had not been given to Parliament; and it was most unlikely that we should get any accurate Russian information in return. As regards the proposal that the exchange of information on this subject should be discussed by the Military Staff Committee, the function of this body was to work out arrangements for providing forces which the Security Council would employ to keep the peace and to prepare plans to enable those forces to operate. These functions in no way implied a commitment to disclose our order of battle.

The Chiefs of Staff would much prefer that the Soviet proposal should never reach the Assembly Agenda but if this was impossible they hoped that the Foreign Office would be able to arrange to defeat it as had been done successfully in the Security Council.

THE COMMITTEE:-

Instructed Brigadier Cornwall-Jones to present their views to the Foreign Office accordingly.

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2. JAVA AND SUMATRA - WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH (C.O.S. (46)252(0))
 (Previous Ref: C.O.S. (46)136th Meeting, Item 11)

THE COMMITTEE had before them a copy of a letter dated 18th October from the Foreign Office, suggesting that the time had come to notify the American Chiefs of Staff of our intentions to withdraw British Forces from Java and Sumatra by the 30th November, 1946. Secondly, a telegram from the Supreme Commander* containing details of the evacuation of Apwi from Central Java.

In discussion general agreement was expressed with the Foreign Office suggestion and a draft telegram was circulated to the Joint Staff Mission, Washington, asking them to notify the U.S. Chiefs of Staff that as the Supreme Commander S.E.A. anticipated completing his tasks allotted to him in Java and Sumatra by the 30th November, all British/Indian troops would be withdrawn by that date.

THE COMMITTEE :-

- (a) Agreed that the U.S. Chiefs of Staff should be notified of our intentions to withdraw British/Indian troops from Java and Sumatra by the 30th November and instructed the Secretary to inform the Foreign Secretary accordingly.
- (b) Approved the Draft Telegram to the Joint Staff Mission circulated in discussion and instructed the Secretary to despatch it.
- (c) Took note of the telegram from the Supreme Commander about the details of evacuation of A.P.W.I. from Java.

* SECOS 773.

∅ Annex.

∧ Sent as C.O.S. (W) 384.

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COS(46)ISSUEXT

3. HOME DEFENCE COMMITTEE - AGENDA FOR MEETING ON
THURSDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 1946

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SIR RHODERICK McGRIGOR asked whether the Vice-Chiefs of Staff wished to have any preliminary discussion of the agenda for the 2nd Meeting of the Home Defence Committee to be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, 24th October, 1946. If so, he suggested that such a meeting might be held on the afternoon of Wednesday, the 23rd of October.

THE COMMITTEE were given an outline of the main points for discussion at the 2nd Meeting of the Home Defence Committee.

In discussion, it was suggested that there might be advantage in having an informal meeting of the Service members of the Home Defence Committee, to discuss the agenda for the 2nd Meeting.

THE COMMITTEE:-

Agreed to hold an informal meeting of the Service members of the Home Defence Committee at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, 23rd October, 1946.

4. TRANSPORT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM PALESTINE TO CYPRUS

C.O.S.(46)250(0)

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(46)150th Meeting, Minute 11)

THE COMMITTEE had before them a Note by the Ministry of Transport forwarding their suggestions regarding the request made by the Commanders-in-Chief, Middle East, in their telegram for the provision of ships for the transport of immigrants from Palestine, capable of going alongside at Famagusta in Cyprus.

SIR RHODERICK McGRIGOR referred to the Ministry of Transport's suggestion that in the absence of ships suitable for going alongside at Famagusta, steps should be taken to improvise other means of disembarking, such as the diversion of the immigration ships themselves into Cyprus direct. This point had already been taken up by the Chiefs of Staff and the Colonial Office and was awaiting governmental approval which he understood was dependent to a certain extent on legislation in Cyprus. The Ministry of Transport's second suggestion of directing ships that had already succeeded in reaching Palestine had been argued fully before and had been shown not to be a practicable course of action. The Ministry of Transport's offer to assist by the provision of tugs for towing vessels which could not proceed under their own power was open to the same technical objections as to their second proposal, and that the tugs when reaching the illegal immigrant ships on the high seas, would not be able to accomplish much more than an attendant destroyer.

MAJOR-GENERAL SUGDEN said that the Services, in conjunction with the Colonial Office, had undertaken to do everything in their power to stop illegal immigration and their efforts should not be allowed to break down on technical grounds. The Ministry of Transport implied from their third paragraph that they wished to terminate the provision of three ocean-going ships now allocated for the transfer

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of illegal immigrants from their own ships. In his opinion the provision of these three ships should continue, failing another solution to the problem. He enquired if the use of craft such as L.S.T.s would be of help.

SIR RHODERICK McGRIGOR said he thought there would be technical objections to the use of L.S.T.s, however none were at present stationed in the Mediterranean. He suggested that instead of communicating by a letter with the Ministry of Transport, the Committee should invite their representative to meet them, possibly on Friday, 25th October, to review the whole question of a solution to this problem.

There was general agreement with this view.

THE COMMITTEE:-

- (a) Agreed to reconsider the Note by the Ministry of Transport at their meeting on Friday, 25th October.
- (b) Instructed the Secretary to invite the Ministry of Transport to send a representative to discuss the question of transport of illegal immigrants from Palestine to Cyprus.

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5. S.E.A.C. - INTERNAL SITUATION REPORT

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(46) 152nd Mtg., Min. 6)

THE COMMITTEE took note of a telegram⁺ containing the Weekly Internal Situation Report on countries within South East Asia Command.

+ SAC.16816

6. S.E.A.C. - WITHDRAWAL OF L.S.T.s

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(46) 149th Mtg., Min. 3)

THE COMMITTEE took note of a telegram^x from SACSEA notifying that all L.S.T.s due for transfer to India had now sailed and that any alteration in arrangements for their use would be a matter for the Government of India.

x SAC.16814

7. INDONESIA - ACCELERATION OF RICE DISPOSAL TO INDIA

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(46) 149th Mtg., Min. 13)

THE COMMITTEE took note of a telegram[/] from SACSEA stating that the 200 lorries required to accelerate the transport of rice to the ports of Java were ready to be handed over, since the assurances required by him had now been received by the Government of India Representative in N.E.I.

/ SEACOS 774

8. DUTCH-INDONESIAN NEGOTIATIONS; POSITION OF SUPREME COMMANDER

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(46) 153rd Mtg., Min. 7)

THE COMMITTEE took note that the attention of the Foreign Office had been drawn to a telegram^{*} from the Supreme Commander, following his previous reference[∅] to the subject, requesting that neither he nor his successor should be appointed mediator to the Truce Commission in the N.E.I. and that they had been requested to take this telegram into account in the comments they may be asked for by the War Office.

* SAC.16865

∅ SAC.16767

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9. MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE - ISSUE OF PRESS COMMUNIQUE

THE COMMITTEE took note that, in anticipation of instructions, the views of the Foreign Office had been requested on a telegram from the British Military Representatives on the Military Staff Committee containing their comments on a proposed amendment to a draft Rule of Procedure by the French Delegation regarding statements to the Press on the work of the Military Staff Committee.

MSC.18

10. B.C.O.F. - FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

(Previous References: C.O.S.(46) 140th Mtg., Min. 13, and C.O.S.(46) 150th Mtg., Min. 15)

THE COMMITTEE took note:-

- (a) Of a telegram⁺ from C.-in-C. India containing his objections to the outline proposals on the allocation of financial contributions from each of the countries concerned in the B.C.O.F.
- (b) That the War Office have been invited, in consultation as necessary with other Departments concerned, to examine and prepare draft replies to two telegrams[■] from BIEJCOSA - the first submitting that the formula recorded in Everson's plan should make it clear that man-power contribution is not to be the deciding factor in determining the allocation of costs, and the second containing a suggestion from the U.K. Representatives that present financial negotiations concerning B.C.O.F. offer an ideal opportunity for an exchange of views on a government level concerning the basis on which British Commonwealth defence costs might be shared.

+ 119/COS

■ PACCOS 42 & PACCOS 43

11. AMERICAN AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING - INVITATION TO BRITISH REPRESENTATIVES

THE COMMITTEE took note that the Admiralty, in consultation with Combined Operations Headquarters, had been invited to examine and prepare a draft reply to a telegram[■] from J.S.M., Washington, stating that authority has been obtained for the attendance of two representatives

■ JSM 334

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of the J.S.M. at forthcoming amphibious training exercises due to take place in San Diego area during the months of November and December, 1946.

12. S.E.A.C. - BRITISH SERVICE REPRESENTATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

C.O.S.(46) 235 .

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(46)141st Meeting, Minute 7)

The Secretary was informed of the approval of the War Office and the Air Ministry to a draft telegram to S.A.C.S.E.A. attached to a memorandum by the First Sea Lord, and it was therefore despatched^o.

^o sent as COSSEA 580

Offices of the Cabinet and
Minister of Defence, S.S.1.

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