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C.O.S.(44) 135th Meeting (Q)

# BIGOT

WAR CABINET

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting held on WEDNESDAY,  
26TH APRIL, 1944 at 11.0 a.m.

PRESENT:

Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
Sir Charles F.A. Portal,  
Chief of the Air Staff.  
(In the Chair)

Admiral of the Fleet,  
Sir Andrew B. Cunningham,  
First Sea Lord and Chief  
of Naval Staff.

Lieut.-General A.E. Nye,  
Vice-Chief of the Imperial  
General Staff.

Lieut.-General Sir Hastings L. Ismay,  
Office of the Minister of Defence.

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT:

Brigadier V.D. Thomas,  
representing Chief of Combined  
Operations (For part of Meeting)

SECRETARIAT

Major-General L.C. Hollis  
Colonel C.R. Price  
Group Captain A. Earle  
Lieut.-Colonel D. Capel-Dunn

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1. REPATRIATION OF EVACUEES FROM THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

THE COMMITTEE considered a minute from the Minister of War Transport to the Prime Minister and a reply the latter proposed to send and which he asked the Chiefs of Staff to agree, regarding the use of the 'Mauretania' to repatriate women and children evacuees now in the United States and Canada.

## THE COMMITTEE:-

Agreed there was no military objection to the proposal and instructed the Secretary to inform the Prime Minister accordingly.

2. S.E.A.C. - TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT FOR OPERATIONS IN BURMA

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 132nd Meeting (O), Minute 13)

THE COMMITTEE took note of a telegram<sup>x</sup> from the Joint Staff Mission stating that the American Chiefs of Staff had instructed General Sultan that any request from Admiral Mountbatten for the use of the transport aircraft placed at his disposal and which had now been released, during any part of the period for which they were made available, should be acceded to without further reference to Washington.

x J.S.M. 18

3. REOCCUPATION OF NAURU AND OCEAN ISLANDS

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 129th Meeting (O), Minute 4)

THE COMMITTEE took note of a telegram<sup>x</sup> from the Joint Staff Mission reporting the outcome of a meeting between the Combined Chiefs of Staff and General Blamey and General Pttick.

x J.S.M. 17

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4. BRAZILIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 132nd Meeting (O), Minute 17)

LT.-GENERAL NYE said he had ascertained that General Marshall's statement<sup>x</sup> that the personnel shipping required could be made available had been made on the authority of the War Shipping Administration on which the British were represented, and must therefore be regarded as having been agreed by our representatives. He adhered to the view previously expressed by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that there would be no military advantage in shipping Brazilian troops to the Mediterranean but suggested that the proposal should be agreed if it was considered necessary in the light of political considerations.

## THE COMMITTEE:-

Instructed the Secretary to inform the Prime Minister of their views as expressed above.

x J.S.M. 9

x Annex

5. FOOD SUPPLIES FOR ROME

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 132nd Mtg. (O), Minute 3)

THE COMMITTEE took note of two telegrams<sup>x</sup> from General Wilson and from Sir d'Arcy Osborne to the Foreign Office respectively, regarding the identification from the air of convoys of Vatican lorries bringing food supplies to Rome.

x F. 37454 and No. 279

6. "CROSSBOW"

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 133rd Mtg. (O), Minute 7)

THE COMMITTEE took note of the following statement by the Chief of the Air Staff of the results achieved by attacks on "CROSSBOW" objectives to date:-

Ski Sites

Category A	70
Category B	18
Category C	8

Total	96
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Large Sites No change.

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7. OPERATIONS ON THE DALMATIAN COAST(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 53rd Meeting (O), Minute 6)

THE COMMITTEE considered a minute<sup>x</sup> by the Secretary stating that the Prime Minister had asked for their comments on a personal telegram<sup>†</sup> from General Wilson regarding the organisation of operations against the islands off the Dalmatian coast.

LT.-GENERAL NYE handed round copies of a suggested reply to the Prime Minister.

## THE COMMITTEE:-

Approved the terms of the draft reply, subject to amendments agreed in discussion, and instructed the Secretary to submit it to the Prime Minister.

x C.O.S. 639/4  
 † T.O.O. 240916Z  
 † Annex II

8. "OVERLORD" - SHIPPING REQUIREMENTSC.S.A.(44) 41 (O)(Revise)(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 103rd Meeting (O), Minute 6)

THE COMMITTEE considered a report by the Principal Administrative Officers Committee on the shipping requirements for operation "OVERLORD".

SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM said that he felt that the maintenance tonnage estimated by S.H.A.E.F. was excessive. He pointed out that these tonnages did not include oil fuel or coal and the quantities to be cleared over the various beaches would be equivalent to the highest figures yet achieved at Anzio.

LT.-GENERAL NYE said that in the early days of the operation there would be no limit to the tonnage required which should therefore be the maximum which could be transported and cleared across the beaches. Once satisfactory reserves had been built up it should be possible to decrease the tonnage considerably. He doubted if it was correct that from D 42 onwards there could be no reduction in the tonnage. He understood that the present figures represented a reduction of approximately 53% on S.H.A.E.F.'s original requirements. This reduction had been made in view of the fact that it had been estimated that it would be impossible to clear the tonnage originally requested over the beaches. The present estimate was, he believed, based on the total calculated clearance capacity of the ports.

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He noted that the report did not contain any comments by the Principal Administrative Officers as to the necessity for the quantities requested by S.H.A.E.F. While he did not suggest that operations should be in any way restricted by limitations on the tonnage to be transported or by failure to meet justified requirements, he did not agree that S.H.A.E.F.'s demands should be met without question and irrespective of their effect on other essential requirements. Some shipping would certainly be required from the Americans and a telegram on the lines of that attached to the P.A.O.'s report should be sent in the near future.

THE COMMITTEE:-

Instructed the Secretary to arrange for the P.A.O.'s to attend their meeting on Thursday, 27th April, when the report would be given further consideration.

9. "OVERLORD" - PROVISION OF COLLIERIES AND ARMAMENTS STORE ISSUING SHIPS

C.S.A.(44) 44 (O)

THE COMMITTEE considered a report by the Principal Administrative Officers Committee on the provision of colliers and armaments store issuing ships for "OVERLORD".

SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM said he understood that a further requirement for three additional colliers was being put forward by S.H.A.E.F. He was informed that these vessels were required to coal trawlers engaged in producing smoke to cover "MULBERRIES". He noted that the report made no recommendations as to how these vessels, which he agreed were necessary, should be provided.

THE COMMITTEE:-

Agreed to discuss the report with the Principal Administrative Officers at the meeting the following day.

10. PLAN "BODYGUARD"

J.P.(44) 108 (Final)

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 125th Meeting (O), Minute 3)

THE COMMITTEE considered a report by the Joint Planning Staff covering a draft reply to a telegram<sup>x</sup> from General Wilson reporting the effect of demands for the Italian campaign on his capacity to implement the Mediterranean part of plan "BODYGUARD".

*Copy attached.*  
x MEDCOS 94

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SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM said that considerable difficulties would arise if the proposals contained in paragraph 2 (d) of the suggested reply were adopted. He felt that the desired effect could be achieved by more simple methods. This matter was being studied by the Naval Staff. He suggested that this sub-paragraph should be reworded in general terms.

THE COMMITTEE:-

Approved the terms of the draft reply, amended as agreed in discussion, and instructed the Secretary to arrange for its despatch.<sup>x</sup>

x Sent as COSMED 94

11. EXPANSION AND DISTRIBUTION OF R.A.F. SQUADRONS DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1944

C.O.S.(44) 364 (O)

THE COMMITTEE took note of a memorandum by the Chief of the Air Staff reporting the expansion and distribution of R.A.F. squadrons during the second quarter of 1944.

12. REPORT BY 220 MILITARY MISSION

(Reference C.O.S.(44) 120th Meeting (O), Conclusion 12 (j))

THE COMMITTEE discussed the arrangements which had been made on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff to keep track of the progress made by Departments and Committees concerned in examining Major-General Lethbridge's report.

It was agreed that the responsibility for keeping track of items, in which one department only was mainly concerned, should rest with that department. Progress reports to the Chiefs of Staff were only required from Committees and Departments concerning items which were of an Inter-Service nature.

THE COMMITTEE:-

Instructed the Secretary to revise the Schedule circulated on 20th April<sup>x</sup> in the light of the above decision.

x Reference C.O.S. 602/4

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13. INFORMATION FOR THE U.S.S.R. - MONTHLY REPORTS

THE COMMITTEE considered a telegram from the Joint Staff Mission, enquiring whether, as a result of the cancellation of "ANVIL", all reference to this operation should be deleted from the Commanders-in-Chiefs future Progress Reports when sent on to Moscow.

It was agreed that the texts of the telegrams exchanged between the Prime Minister and Marshal Stalin regarding our future operations should be repeated to the Joint Staff Mission, in order that they might see just how the question of the cancellation of "ANVIL" had been handled with the Russians. Future Progress Reports to Moscow should omit all reference to this operation.

## THE COMMITTEE:

Instructed the Secretary to draft and despatch a reply<sup>x</sup> to the Joint Staff Mission in the above sense.

<sup>†</sup>J.S.M. 19

<sup>‡</sup>Sent as C.O.S.(W) 14

14. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN INDIA

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 111th Mtg. (O) Min. 8)

THE COMMITTEE considered a telegram from General Auchinleck, asking that the military implications of the serious economic situation in India should be pointed out to His Majesty's Government.

It was recalled that this question had been fully discussed at the meeting of the War Cabinet<sup>o</sup> two days previously, when it had been decided that the Prime Minister would telegraph to the President asking for shipping assistance from the United States.

## THE COMMITTEE:

Instructed the Secretary to draft and despatch a reply<sup>‡</sup> to General Auchinleck, stating that military considerations had always been taken into account by His Majesty's Government and had been emphasised by the Chiefs of Staff.

<sup>†</sup> 75053/COS

<sup>o</sup> W.M.(44) 55th Conclusions

<sup>‡</sup> Sent as C.O.S.(INDIA) 3

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15. FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN "OVERLORD"

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44) 132nd Mtg. (0) Min. 5)

LIEUT.-GENERAL NYE said that the War Office had examined the proposals put forward in J.S.M.15 regarding shipping for the balance of the vehicles of the French 2nd Armoured Division. The Ministry of War Transport had been discussing with W.S.A. the most economical arrangements for covering this move, and had issued instructions to their representatives in the Mediterranean to provide British shipping to the maximum possible extent.

Lieut.-General Nye handed round a draft reply to the Joint Staff Mission to this effect.

## THE COMMITTEE:

Took note of the above statement, and instructed the Secretary to despatch the draft reply<sup>†</sup> to the Joint Staff Mission.

†C.O.S.(W)13

16. OPERATION "CALIPH"

(Reference: C.O.S.(44) 366 (0))

THE COMMITTEE had before them a draft telegram to the Joint Staff Mission, prepared in the light of the discussion at the Staff Conference on the 24th April, outlining the questions which it was intended to discuss with General Wilson during his forthcoming visit to this country.

The Committee went through the draft telegram paragraph by paragraph, and agreed to certain amendments.

## THE COMMITTEE:

Instructed the Secretary to submit the draft telegram, as amended, to the Prime Minister for his approval before despatch

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17. CONDUCT OF THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

THE COMMITTEE considered a minute<sup>†</sup> by the Secretary covering a draft minute to the Prime Minister, suggesting the line that should be taken in discussions with the Dominion Prime Ministers and their advisers regarding the conduct of the war against Japan.

After a short discussion THE COMMITTEE:

- (a) Instructed the Joint Planning Staff to examine and report on the draft minute to the Prime Minister in time for consideration by the Chiefs of Staff at the meeting the following morning.
- (b) Took note that the Staff study<sup>\*</sup> by the Joint Planning Staff on our strategy in the Far East would not be available until about the middle of the following week

<sup>†</sup>C.O.S.641/4

<sup>\*</sup>Reference: C.O.S.(44) 129th Meeting (0),  
Minute 3

18. MEETING WITH DOMINION PRIME MINISTERS - STATEMENTS BY THE CHIEFS OF STAFF

THE COMMITTEE discussed the procedure to be followed in giving the Dominion Prime Ministers Conference a review of the world military situation.

It was agreed that, following an introductory statement by the Prime Minister, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff should be invited to outline the military situation in the following theatres without referring specifically to future operations:

North West Europe.  
Mediterranean.  
Burma.  
Pacific.  
Russian Front.

The First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Air Staff would give supplementary statements on each theatre as necessary.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff might then give a brief appreciation of the strategical situation from the enemy point of view, to be followed by a statement by the First Sea Lord on the war at sea, and a statement by the Chief of the Air Staff on the war in the air.

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It was agreed that these statements should be prepared by the Service Staffs (and not by the Joint Planning Staff), and that arrangements for co-ordinating the statements on the various theatres of operations should be initiated by the General Staff.

THE COMMITTEE:

Agreed to adopt the above procedure in preparing their statements for the Dominion Prime Ministers Conference the following week.

19. POTENTIALITIES OF AUSTRALIA AS A BASE

(C.S.A.(44)38 (O) (REVISED FINAL)) \*

(Previous Reference: C.O.S.(44)129th Mtg. (O) Min. 13)

THE COMMITTEE had before them a revised report by the Principal Administrative Officers Committee on the potentialities of Australia as a base, and on the composition of the reconnaissance parties which it was desired to send to Australia as soon as possible.

It was noted that although it was stated in paragraph 10 of the report that two officers from C.O.H.Q. would go with the Army Mission, no reference to this was made in the final recommendations.

THE FIRST SEA LORD said that it was, in the opinion of the Naval Staff, unnecessary for representatives of C.O.H.Q. to be included in the reduced party; such information about combined training facilities as was not already available in this country could be obtained by the Naval or Army Missions.

THE COMMITTEE:

- (a) Took note of the revised report by the Principal Administrative Officers Committee.
- (b) Invited the Chief of Combined Operations to put forward his reasons for including representatives from C.O.H.Q. if he still considered this was necessary.
- (c) Instructed the Secretary to prepare an aide-memoire for use by the Prime Minister when discussing this question with the Prime Minister of Australia after his arrival.
- (d) Invited Service Departments to make provisional arrangements for the despatch of the parties enumerated in paragraph 12 of the P.A.O.'s report on the assumption that their recommendations would be eventually accepted.

Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W.1.

26TH APRIL 1944.

*x Copy attached*

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ANNEX

Copy of a minute (C.O.S. 650/4) dated 26th April 1944 to the Prime Minister from the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee

The Chiefs of Staff have examined the proposal in the attached telegrams (J.S.M. 1650 Flag 'A') and J.S.M. 9 Flag 'B') regarding the employment of Brazilian forces in the Mediterranean.

2. The necessary personnel shipping can be found but the replacement, in North Africa, of equipment and maintenance stores needed for the Brazilians will present a problem. This is being examined in Washington.

3. While the Chiefs of Staff do not consider that the proposal has any particular military advantages, in view of the heterogenous character of the Allied forces already in the Mediterranean, they are prepared to agree with it if political considerations make this course desirable.

4. May I have your instructions please.

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ANNEX II

Copy of a Minute (C.O.S. 655/4) dated  
27th April 1944 to the Prime Minister  
from the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff  
Committee

In accordance with your instructions the Chiefs of Staff have considered General Wilson's Special Unnumbered signal of 24th April, giving details of his policy in the Adriatic Islands. The Chiefs of Staff consider that General Wilson's report is satisfactory.

2. There is no doubt that the recent commando operations successfully completed against the German garrisons on Solta and Hvar - (which accorded with the plans outlined in your telegram to General Wilson OZ 467 of 26th January, have returned us a good dividend; in particular they have prevented the Germans mounting an attack against our base of Vis, for which a few weeks ago the enemy seemed preparing. It is essential that we hold Vis if seaborne supplies on a sufficient scale are to reach the Partisans.
3. Moreover our offensive action, together with Partisan activities on the mainland, helps to tie down the three German divisions located in this area.
4. The Chiefs of Staff suggest that General Wilson might be asked to elaborate his plans for the Adriatic Islands during the course of his forthcoming visit to London.

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J. P. (44) 108 (FINAL)

*808 (H) 135th Mtg (O) Minuli 10.*

24TH APRIL, 1944

WAR CABINET

JOINT PLANNING STAFF

PLAN "BODYGUARD" -- MEDCOS 94

Report by the Joint Planning Staff

1. As instructed by the Chiefs of Staff Committee<sup>+</sup>, we have, in consultation with the Controlling Officer, examined General Wilson's telegram MEDCOS 94 of the 16th April. We are in general agreement with General Wilson's conclusions in paragraphs 5 and 6, which are to the effect that, with the Army forces at his disposal not committed to Italy, he cannot build up really convincing threats in the Mediterranean area.

2. General Wilson does not mention the subject of the naval units, shipping, and invasion craft at his disposal, which might support threats in the Mediterranean, but we believe that this is also a factor which the enemy will carefully assess in any appreciation of our intentions. In examining this problem we are satisfied that all such Mediterranean forces are already either committed to Italy or are already being utilised for deception purposes. In addition the maximum use is being made of dummies (especially L.C.T's) to exaggerate our potential in the Mediterranean.

3. It seems clear, therefore, that all General Wilson's forces are already committed and the only way in which the Mediterranean threats could be augmented would be by reinforcement from outside. In this connection we have considered the following possibilities:-

(a) Possible Army Reinforcements.

No reinforcements from U.S.A., U.K., or India are available. The possibility of using a Brazilian division is now under consideration<sup>o</sup> by the War Office and the Ministry of War Transport.

+ C.O.S.(44) 25th Meeting (O) Item 3  
o C.O.S.(44) 132nd Meeting (O)

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(b) Possible Naval and Shipping Reinforcements(i) The transfer of landing craft to the Mediterranean.

No landing craft are available for the purpose.

(ii) The transfer of escort carriers at present in Home Waters to the Mediterranean during the month of May and their maintenance in the Mediterranean for as long as possible after OVERLORD D day.

Details are attached<sup>+</sup> from which we conclude that seven escort carriers might be made available and could arrive in the Mediterranean, three early in May and four towards the end of May, if General Wilson considered they would materially support his threat. Moreover it is desirable to concentrate these vessels for a possible part in post-OVERLORD operations and the Western Mediterranean is a very suitable area.

(iii) The possible delay of a Fleet Carrier in the Mediterranean while en route to the Eastern Fleet.

Details are attached<sup>+</sup> from which we conclude that the delay involved is not acceptable.

(iv) The Sailing of an unusually Large Convoy into the Mediterranean shortly before D day by juggling the present Convoy Programme.

As will be seen from Annex B such a plan would require close examination and would entail readjustment of the existing convoy and escort programme. If, however, General Wilson feels that a convoy of this kind would materially support his threats at a critical period, we suggest that the feasibility of putting it into effect should be examined.

In any case it is suggested that in order to give the impression of increasing reinforcements entering the Mediterranean, from the 1st May onwards all eastbound convoys should if possible enter the Straits of Gibraltar during daylight, while all westbound convoys should pass through the Straits at night and if possible during moonless hours. If General Wilson considers that this plan would assist, it is recommended that the Admiralty should, when feasible, put it into practice.

(c) Possible Air Reinforcements

We do not consider that any reinforcements can be made available from other theatres or would be worth while, in view of the large numbers already there.

+ Annex A

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4. The above would appear to be the only means by which we might assist General Wilson in augmenting his threat in the Mediterranean. In addition the Controlling Officer intends to submit as a separate paper a politico-military deception plan, which might support General Wilson's threats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. We recommend that the Chiefs of Staff should approve the draft telegram attached+ for despatch to General Wilson.

(Signed) G. GRANTHAM  
C. S. SUGDEN  
W. L. DAWSON

Offices of the War Cabinet,  
S.W.1.

24TH APRIL, 1944.

+ Annex C.

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ANNEX A

POSSIBLE MOVES OF AIRCRAFT CARRIERS.

FLEET CARRIERS.

1. VICTORIOUS will probably pass through the Mediterranean bound for the Far East about the 2nd week in May. Owing to the urgent need for this ship in the Far East it is doubtful if she could be delayed in the Mediterranean.

INDEFATIGABLE and FURIOUS will not be available.

ESCORT CARRIERS.

2. ATTACKER, STALKER, HUNTER and KHEDIVE

It is understood that these carriers, carrying SEAFIRES, are not required for operational use in Home Waters and could be sent to the Mediterranean. The first three are available now and the fourth at the end of May.

3. SEARCHER, PURSUER and EMPEROR.

These carriers are at present attached to the Home Fleet and will be used for implementing the threat to NORWAY and for attacks on shipping in NORWEGIAN waters. As far as the NORWEGIAN threat is concerned the C.-in-C. Home Forces has arranged for operations late in April and early May, culminating about 12th May. By this time this threat will, for a variety of reasons, have reached a climax and it is not considered that any further implementation will be required.

4. From the above it is concluded that seven escort carriers could be made available for the Mediterranean, three early in May and four towards the end of May.

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ANNEX BPASSAGE OF EXTRA LARGE CONVOY INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN  
ABOUT 27TH MAY.

This Annex discusses the possibility of passing a convoy or convoys totalling approximately 150 ships into the Mediterranean on a date about 27th May. The implications of delay to shipping, provision of escorts etc. have not been fully examined, but it is thought that the passage of a convoy of this size, if the practical difficulties can be overcome, would be of assistance to General Wilson if he desires it.

## CONVOYS CONCERNED

CONVOY	Approximate No. of SHIPS	DATE DUE GIBRALTAR AREA
A. U.S. to MEDITERRANEAN (CARGO)	80	MAY 30TH
B.1. U.K. to MEDITERRANEAN (CARGO)	30	" 26TH
B.2. U.K. to FREETOWN (Via GIB.) (CARGO)	15	" 26TH
C. FREETOWN to U.K. (Via GIB.) (CARGO)	20	" 30TH
D. U.S. to MEDITERRANEAN (PERSONNEL)	10	" 27TH

TOTAL NUMBER OF SHIPS 10 PERSONNEL  
 †Accurate numbers not known 145 CARGO  
 figures based on past averages. 155

To effect the passage of these 155 ships through the Straits of Gibraltar in one or more convoys on the same day the following requirements would need investigation:-

1. Adjustment of sailing dates and speeds to arrange for all convoys mentioned above to pass through the Straits on the same day.
2. Convoy C, which normally meets K.M.S. convoy in the Western approaches to GIBRALTAR, to enter the Mediterranean and proceed eastward to join this convoy in the Eastern approaches to GIBRALTAR, returning through the STRAITS by night and during non-moon hours.
3. Convoy B. 2, which normally drops the M.K.S in the Western approaches to GIBRALTAR, to enter the Mediterranean and carry out same movement as C, parting company from the K.M.S. convoy in the western approaches to GIBRALTAR and proceeding on its way to FREETOWN.

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ANNEX CDRAFT TELEGRAM

From: Air Ministry

To: A.F.H.Q. rptd. Britman, Washington (for U.S. Joint  
Chiefs of Staff)

Ref; MEDCOS No. 94. Plan BODYGUARD.

1. We appreciate your difficulties in maintaining threats with the forces at your disposal.
2. We have examined the possibilities of giving you actual reinforcements to assist your task, especially with regard to augmenting the threat to the South Coast of France immediately before and after OVERLORD D day and have reached the following conclusions:-

- (a) No British Military reinforcements are available and your suggested move of Br. Div. from India to M.E. is impracticable.
  - (b) There are seven escort carriers in Home Waters which might be made available to the Mediterranean. Three could possibly reach you early in May and four by the end of May.
  - (c) "Victorious" may be passing through Mediterranean en route for Eastern Fleet about the second week in May but for operational reasons delay in the Mediterranean is unacceptable.
  - (d) By readjustment of existing convoy programme it might be possible to rendezvous four convoys west of Gibraltar and pass about 150 ships in one or more convoys eastbound through the Straits in daylight on the same day, about 27th May. Of these about forty would join a homebound convoy from the Mediterranean and pass through the Straits again westbound under cover of darkness about twenty-four hours later. There may be considerable difficulties in implementing this plan. If, however, you consider it would materially assist your threat we will see what can be done.
3. Please reply urgently.

-6-

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C.S.A.(44) 38(O) (REVISED FINAL)

24TH APRIL, 1944.

WAR CABINET

PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS COMMITTEE

POTENTIALITIES OF AUSTRALIA AS A BASE  
(Previous reference C.O.S.(44)129 Meeting (Item 13))

Final Report to Chiefs of Staff

Our interim report on the potentialities of Australia as a base was limited to consideration of the necessity for sending Missions to Australia. We now set out in broad terms the information which we have so far been able to obtain, and such conclusions as can be drawn as to the practicability of maintaining the forces required for the Pacific strategy.

Navy

2. As we explained in our interim report, the Naval information requires augmentation before conclusions can be reached and for this we consider a Naval Mission to Australia is essential. Since writing our report, Admiral Daniel and the four officers accompanying him have been instructed to proceed which makes it all the more urgent that the nine officers from the U.K. should be permitted to leave.

Army

3. From the available information (Annex A) we are unable to arrive at a firm opinion whether the necessary base facilities can be provided in Australia particularly in relation to the time factor. But we have found no evidence to suggest that Australia would prove an inadequate base.

4. We confirm the provisional conclusion drawn in our interim report that an Army Mission must be sent, since, as will be seen from Annex A, much essential information is lacking, of such detail and variety that most of it could not be obtained telegraphically.

5. On the assumption that the necessary reconnaissance and detailed information will be provided by the Australians, the minimum Army party required would be nine officers. We would stress the time factor since apart from the necessity for an early strategic decision, as long time as possible is required for preparation and provision. A secondary advantage would result at a later stage, should the Pacific strategy be adopted, when the local experience and contacts gained by these officers in Australia would be of great value in London.

x C.S.A.(44) 33(O)

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Air Forces

6. As explained in our interim report, the Air Ministry have been able to obtain information on those aspects of the problem which are peculiar to the R.A.F.; they have been able to draw the broad conclusion that, assuming a favourable solution of problems common to the Army and R.A.F., the necessary base facilities could be developed there for air forces of the size envisaged.

7. The administrative implications, from the R.A.F. point of view, of the use of Australia as a base are briefly reviewed in Annex B.

8. In addition to the purely R.A.F. aspects there are subjects which are mainly the responsibility of the Army, but in which the R.A.F. has vital interests and on which adequate information is not available in London. These are:-

- (a) Movement and transportation.
- (b) Accommodation for personnel, storage and non-technical maintenance.
- (c) Land line of communications.
- (d) Storage and bulk distribution of Petrol and Oil.
- (e) Hospitalisation.

These points are referred to in Annex A.

9. In the event, therefore, of a decision to send an Army Mission, the Air Ministry would wish to be represented on it on behalf of their administrative services, having problems common to the Army and R.A.F., and to send representatives of certain Air Ministry Directorates, namely Organisation, Equipment, Servicing and Maintenance and Works.

Combined Operations

10. It is understood that two officers from C.O.H.Q. will go with the Army Mission, if one is sent.

Conclusion

11. We feel that we are not in a position, apart from the purely R.A.F. aspect, to give advice, which may influence such an important decision on strategy, without an examination being carried out in Australia.

Our investigations have led us to believe that Australia can be developed into a satisfactory base, but it is not possible in London to assess the time factor in relation to proposed operations.

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Recommendations

12. We recommend:-

- (a) The early despatch of the following 9 officers to join Admiral Daniel, and the four officers with him (representing 5th Sea Lord, E.M.C., D.of P.(Q), D.T.D., D.E.M.S.), as the Naval Mission:-

Representatives of

- (E. in C.
- (D.A.M.R.
- (D.C.O.M.
- (D.A.C.R.
- (D.A./S.W.
- (D.S.V.P.
- (D. of D. and D.N.C.
- (D. of D. and D.E.E.
- (Permanent Secretary.

- (b) The early despatch of an Army Mission, consisting of 9 officers, namely

Representatives of

- (D.A. & Q.M.G.
- (A.Q.M.G.
- (Movements
- (R. E.
- (Transportation
- (Supplies and Transport
- (Ordnance
- (Medical
- (R.E.M.E.

together with 4 R.A.F. officers, representing the Directorates of

Organisation  
Equipment  
Servicing and Maintenance  
Works.

(Signed) T.S. RIDDELL WEBSTER  
A.F.E. PALLISER  
G.L. COURTNEY  
S.F. STEWART

Offices of the War Cabinet,  
S.W.1.  
24TH APRIL, 1944.

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Subject (I)	Information Available (II)	Information to be obtained (III)	Remarks (IV)
<u>1. MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION</u>			
<u>A. Ports</u>			
(a) Port facilities available after allowing for use by Civil, AIF, USA and RN	A fair amount of standard port data is available (number of berths, depths of water, transit facilities etc) as contained in JCD. (Naval Port Directory), Lloyds Register and various reports.	(a) Information to ascertain whether surplus port capacity exists, or can be developed in the time available, in areas which are in other respects suitable for base development (e.g. Details of traffic situation; technical data re possible future development).	The selection of ports (including groups of ports for the mounting of complete formations on overseas operations) vitally affects base layout, also examination of the railway problem - especially on account of the different gauges used in the different States
(b) Any projected development			
(c) Selection of ports for the use of the additional forces, as governed by (a) and (b), and capacity which can be made available.		(b) Data to enable assessment to be made of the port construction and operating requirements (both of personnel and equipment) which will have to be provided from outside AUSTRALIA.	When the initial selection of ports for the additional forces involved has been made, detailed technical data will be needed for a full appreciation.
(d) If capacity in (c) is insufficient for size of force, what further development will be required? What can be done by Australian resources and what outside help will be necessary (including equipment and material, also U.K. technical units)			
<u>B. Railways (and other agencies) for clearance from and delivery to ports</u>			
(a) Railway capacity available on the different systems after allowing for current or proposed use by Civil, AIF and USA.	Detailed information on railway facilities is available.	(a) Current traffic figures and spare capacity for the additional forces involved.	Railway capacity will be governed in almost every instance, especially in Queensland and Western Australia, by the small quantity of engines and wagons in relation to route mileage.
(b) Development and operating considerations as for ports (1(d) above).	Assumptions as to capacity on individual routes, subject to loco and rolling stock considerations, can be made; but these will require local confirmation.	(b) Information for estimating additional engines, wagons and operating staff required, and whether the engines and wagons can be imported and erected in the time available.	The load on the railways for the additional force involved can only be determined when the depot and training areas have been selected and their distance inland is known. Depot and training areas depend primarily on the ports available, but the port and railway problems are interdependent.
(c) Facilities for movement by other transportation agencies from and to ports (coastal craft, road and air)		(c) Information regarding Col.1(c) is almost entirely lacking.	
<u>C. Shipping</u>			
The extent to which Australian tonnage could contribute to the requirements of the additional forces involved both in a military role and as a relief to the internal transportation system during the assembly and training of the additional forces involved.	A considerable volume of ocean going and coastal shipping - Australian, British and American - is more or less permanently based on Australia. This shipping is used to meet the following commitments:- (i) Australian local naval and military services. (ii) U.S. Army requirements on the Australian coast and in the Pacific Islands. (iii) Coastwise shipments of essential commodities (coal, iron, steel, stone etc.) Although the exact tonnages allocated to each of these commitments vary a good deal from time to time, it is known that, in general, the total requirements are barely being met. Additional coastal or other local requirements on British account would therefore involve the provision of additional ocean-going or coastal shipping unless accompanied by a corresponding reduction in U.S. Army requirements. This cannot be investigated further until the extent of the additional requirements is known.	To assess what local shipping resources can be made available for the additional forces involved.	

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Subject (I)	Information Available (II)	Information to be obtained (III)	Remarks (IV)
<p>2. <u>ACCOMMODATION</u></p> <p>(a) Type and extent of existing accommodation.</p> <p>(b) Locations of accommodation suitable for formations and for training.</p> <p>(c) Availability of accommodation for base installations, units and reinforcement personnel</p> <p>(d) Transit accommodation</p>	<p>Location of existing military accommodation facilities is known in broad outline.</p>	<p>Details regarding:-</p> <p>(a) Suitability of areas, which must be selected not only for their administrative advantages, but will also be those most convenient to the Australian authorities.</p> <p>(b) Availability of existing accommodation; dependent upon requirements of AIF and US forces.</p> <p>(c) Technical data concerning additional construction of this is required.</p>	<p>Mobilisation centres for re-organisation of formations will be required.</p>
<p>3. <u>TRAINING</u></p> <p>(a) Spare and potential training facilities for the following:-</p> <p>Jungle Training Areas Ranges CIC's Bridging Camps Air Portable Training Centres Schools and Development Centres Mobilisation Centres</p>	<p>Locations and capacities of existing training establishments are known.</p>	<p>(a) Availability of existing establishments.</p> <p>(b) Suitability of areas for additional facilities required.</p>	<p>Location of training areas and establishments must be related to accommodation plan, in order to minimise internal movement.</p>
<p>4. <u>ENGINEER</u></p> <p>(a) Extent and rate of supply of all local material and plant.</p> <p>(b) The most suitable type of new accommodation, from aspects of climate and local materials.</p> <p>(c) Existence, storage, distribution, filtration of water supplies.</p> <p>(d) Airfield construction</p> <p>(e) Road network and bridging</p> <p>(f) Electric power</p> <p>(g) Sewage</p> <p>(h) Technical units which would be available</p>	<p>(a) Information largely available (see Item 7 Col. II (a)).</p> <p>(b)(c)(d)(e) - Limited general information only; inadequate for an Engineer appreciation.</p> <p>(c) See Annex D, Paragraph 2</p> <p>(e) General information, from which it is understood that network is satisfactory but some bridging problems exist.</p> <p>(h) Nil</p>	<p>Information in Col. II is insufficient to enable the works programme and consequent import requirements to be assessed.</p> <p>Considerable additional detailed information is required on all subjects.</p>	<p>There is a surplus of airfield capacity which would be more than sufficient to accommodate the additional British air forces. Although the location of this surplus airfield capacity is known it is not known if these locations will be operationally acceptable. Nor is it yet known if they would be suitable in relation to the layout of the base as a whole.</p> <p>It is not therefore possible at this stage to assess what, if any, additional airfield construction will be necessary.</p>

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Subject (I)	Information available (II)	Information to be obtained (III)	Remarks (IV)
<b>5. SIGNALS</b>			
<p>(a) Examination of the general system of inter-communication.</p> <p>(b) Capacity for expansion of existing telephone and telegraph system.</p> <p>(c) Examination of available plant and skilled labour if expansion proves necessary.</p> <p>(d) Technical personnel who would be available.</p>	<p>(a) and (b) Information in broad outline</p> <p>(c) Information as to plant available (see item 7 Col. II (a)). Information as to availability of skilled labour as in Item 10, Col. II.</p> <p>(d) Nil</p>	<p>Additional data required to assess import of material and personnel.</p>	<p>It is essential to be able to ascertain to what extent the existing communications layout can be related to the layout of the base as a whole.</p>
<b>6. SUPPLIES AND TRANSPORT</b>			
<b>(a) Supplies</b>			
<p>(i) Examination of existing and potential facilities (including cold storage) ...</p> <p>(ii) Extent to which present and potential local production of Southern Dominions as a whole can be utilised.</p> <p>(iii) Examination of packaging and container problems involved.</p>	<p>(i) Information in broad outline but no details of what could be made available. Extent of civilian storage used for food export is known. No details of military installations.</p> <p>(ii) The Ministry of Food has adequate data to assess production of the Southern Dominions' present military and civil requirements; in addition sufficient data is available to enable them to assess potential output under specific conditions.</p> <p>(iii) Limited information available.</p>	<p>(a) <u>Supplies</u></p> <p>Additional data required as to storage facilities, and packaging and container problems.</p>	
<b>(b) Petrol, Oil and Lubricants</b>			
<p>Examination of the following questions:-</p> <p>(i) Ocean Bulk storage</p> <p>(ii) Inland Bulk storage</p> <p>(iii) Inland Distribution</p> <p>(iv) Container Filling Installations</p> <p>(v) Manufacture of containers</p> <p>(vi) Availability of technical equipment and personnel</p> <p>(vii) Availability of rail and road tankers</p> <p>(viii) Inland water transport facilities.</p>	<p>(b)</p> <p>Considerable information can be obtained, but the extent to which installations are being used and the residual capacity is not known.</p>	<p>(b)</p> <p>Additional information required on many of the items detailed in Col. 1</p> <p>In particular information regarding developments since the arrival of U.S. Forces is required.</p>	

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Subject (I)	Information available (II)	Information to be obtained (III)	Remarks (IV)
<p><u>7. ORDNANCE</u></p> <p>Examination of the following</p> <p>(a) Extent to which local production could be utilised or developed beyond its present commitments for the following:-</p> <p>    Ammunition     Clothing     Equipment     Stores     Vehicles     Laundries</p> <p>(b) Existing and potential facilities for maintenance of the above.</p> <p>(c) Available and potential storage accommodation for the ammunition and ordnance stores, vehicles and equipment.</p>	<p>(c) Ministries of Production and Supply have adequate data to assess production which is in excess of present military and civil requirements; in addition sufficient data is available to enable them to assess potential output under specific conditions.</p> <p>(b) as above</p> <p>(a) None</p>	<p>Additional information required on (c)</p>	
<p><u>8. REPAIR</u></p> <p>(a) Spare of potential workshop facilities for Armoured fighting vehicle equipment and guns.</p> <p>(b) Spare and potential vehicle assembly plants.</p> <p>(c) Extent to which workshop machinery etc. can be provided in Australia.</p>	<p>(a) Information scanty</p> <p>(b) and (c) Information available (see Item 7 Col. II (a)).</p>	<p>Complete data required for (a)</p>	
<p><u>9. MEDICAL</u></p> <p>(a) Availability, hospital accommodation and facilities for converting existing buildings.</p> <p>(b) Availability of convalescent establishments</p> <p>(c) Examination of movement facilities between ports and hospitals.</p> <p>(d) Spare and potential production of medical stores in Australia.</p>	<p>(a) and (b) Hospital schedule available but no information as to "bed state". It is, however, understood that these facilities have never been utilised to an extent approaching their capacity.</p> <p>(b) None</p> <p>(d) Information available (see Item 7 Col. II (a)).</p>	<p>Details of "bed State". Full data on (c).</p>	
<p><u>10. LABOUR</u></p> <p>(a) Examination of available civilian labour potential, both skilled and unskilled, for such construction as is required and for operating the base.</p> <p>(b) Extent to which any AMF labour would be available</p> <p>(c) If military or civilian labour has to be introduced an examination of the type and numbers is required.</p>	<p>(a) Statistical information of Australian labour resources can be obtained. It is not, however, possible to forecast what Australian labour will be available for our purposes.</p> <p>(b) Not known</p> <p>(c) No information except that it is understood that American forces utilise coloured uniformed labour, and that Australian labour has been used extensively in the construction of the USA base which is now nearing completion.</p>	<p>Sufficient information to enable an assessment to be made of the labour required for the works programme, and for maintenance.</p>	<p>It is known that there is an acute manpower shortage in Australia. The provision of labour required will be a difficult problem.</p>

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ANNEX B.POTENTIALITIES OF AUSTRALIA AS A BASE.AIR FORCES.ASSUMPTIONS.

The investigations have been made on the following assumptions:-

- (a) Germany is defeated by 1st October, 1944.  
 (b) The following R.A.F. Squadrons would be based on Australia:-

<u>No. of Squadrons</u>	<u>Type of Aircraft.</u>
20 Heavy Bombers	Lancaster
20 Tanker Bomber	Lancaster
15 Short Range Fighters	Spitfire
3 Reconnaissance (Ph. and Mapping)	Mosquito
4½ G.R./L.P. (medium)	Liberator
<u>62½</u>	

AIRFIELDS.

2. According to information obtained from Overseas Headquarters R.A.A.F. in London it is estimated that, subject to the provision of accommodation the following numbers of fully mobile Squadrons with the necessary ancillary units could be based on existing airfields.

48 S.E. Fighter
50 Medium Bomber or Fighter/Bomber
40 Heavy Bomber
<u>Total 138 Squadrons</u>

These facilities which are calculated on the basis of 1 Squadron per air strip are stated to be available over and above those at present in use by the R.A.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. In general these locations are near the coast and/or the main railway system. It is not possible at present to comment on the suitability of the locations of existing airfields and there may be a commitment for new construction. This subject is referred to in Annex A, paragraph 4.

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PERSONNEL ACCOMMODATION

3. The general problem of providing accommodation of a permanent or semi-permanent nature for R.A.F. personnel in Australia can only be considered as part of the joint Army and R.A.F. requirements. Pending the provision of permanent or semi-permanent accommodation it is accepted that temporary accommodation in the form of tentage would have to be provided for the R.A.F.

EQUIPMENT STORAGE.

4. It is considered that the storage facilities required behind the lighter types of Squadrons could probably be provided from existing and planned R.A.A.F. resources. The provision of the necessary storage space behind the 40 Heavy Bomber and Tanker Bomber Squadrons would require to be considered as part of the overall Army and Air Force requirements for the storage of equipment.

PETROL AND OIL STORAGE.

5. It is estimated that petrol and oil storage for 18 of the lighter types of Squadrons could be provided from existing R.A.A.F. resources. The bulk storage facilities required by the Heavy Bomber and G.R./L.P. (Medium) Squadrons do not exist in Australia and their provision would have to be co-ordinated between the various users of petroleum products in the theatre.

SERVICING, SALVAGE AND REPAIR.

6. The 62½ R.A.F. Squadrons would have to be despatched to Australia with personnel and equipment for the first, second, third and fourth line maintenance organisation excluding the major repair of Heavy Bomber airframes. The provision of major repair facilities for Heavy Bomber airframes has been excluded on the ground that they could not be set up in less than say 18 months. It is considered, however, that the Squadrons could be built up and maintained as fully operational units within 2 - 3 months of their arrival in the theatre, subject to the provision of accommodation for base repair facilities. The problems relating to accommodation for these purposes would have to be considered as part of the joint Army and R.A.F. requirements.

SIGNALS.

7. An air defence organisation including Radar warning and Air Observer Corps for the protection of major ports and bases already exists in Australia as well as an extensive system of navigational aids including H/F., V.H.F. and D/F Fixer Systems and Beacons. Since the Air Forces would ultimately operate from advanced bases it would be necessary to despatch a complete signals component of the force including base maintenance facilities for the Squadrons. It is not possible to estimate to what extent existing land-line facilities could be made available and the Squadrons would, therefore, have to be supported by Air Formation Signals Units.

MEDICAL.

8. Part of the necessary hospitalisation could be provided from existing R.A.A.F. resources in the Southern States of Australia, the balance would have to be provided by Mobile Field Hospitals.

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