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SECRET

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C.C. (53)  
48th Conclusions

CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, 10th August, 1953, at 3 p.m.

Present :

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| The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer ( <i>in the Chair</i> )  |  |
| The Most Hon. the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, Lord President of the Council.   | The Right Hon. LORD SIMONDS, Lord Chancellor.  |
| The Right Hon. Sir DAVID MAXWELL FYFE, Q.C., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs. | The Right Hon. VISCOUNT WOOLTON, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.                   |
| The Right Hon. H. F. C. CROOKSHANK, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.  | The Right Hon. the EARL ALEXANDER OF TUNIS, Minister of Defence.                         |
| The Right Hon. VISCOUNT SWINTON, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.   | The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTTELTON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.             |
| The Right Hon. LORD LEATHERS, Secretary of State for Co-ordination of Transport, Fuel and Power.                              | The Right Hon. Sir WALTER MONCKTON, Q.C., M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service. |
| The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Minister of Housing and Local Government.  | The Right Hon. LORD CHERWELL, Paymaster-General.   |

The following were also present :

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| The Right Hon. ANTONY HEAD, M.P., Secretary of State for War.                | The Right Hon. LORD DE L'ISLE AND DUDLEY, Secretary of State for Air.                                  |
| The Right Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., Minister of Supply ( <i>Items 8-9</i> ). | The Right Hon. A. T. LENNOX-BOYD, M.P., Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation ( <i>Items 1-3</i> ). |
| The Right Hon. Sir DAVID ECCLES, M.P., Minister of Works ( <i>Item 9</i> ).  | The Right Hon. SELWYN LLOYD, Q.C., M.P., Minister of State ( <i>Items 1-7</i> ).                       |
| The Right Hon. the EARL OF HOME, Minister of State, Scottish Office.         | Mr. S. WINGFIELD DIGBY, M.P., Civil Lord, Admiralty.   |

Secretariat :

- The Right Hon. Sir NORMAN BROOK.  
Mr. G. MALLABY.

Canal Zone for a limited period for purposes unconnected with the right of international passage through the Canal. If we were now to argue that the base was necessary to the security of the Canal, we could hardly be content with an agreement of relatively short duration. Moreover, it would be most unwise to introduce a new and controversial element into the defence negotiations at this stage, if we could avoid doing so.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Authorised the Lord President to arrange for a further approach to be made to the United States Government on the lines proposed in paragraph 7 of C. (53) 227.
- (2) Invited the Lord President to arrange for the preparation of instructions to Her Majesty's Ambassador in Cairo against the possibility that the question of further guarantees regarding the freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal might have to be raised in the course of the current defence negotiations with the Egyptian Government.

New Hebrides.

4. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Lord President, the Commonwealth Secretary and the Colonial Secretary (C. (53) 225) recommending that an attempt should be made to reach an agreement with the French Government on a revision of the 1914 Protocol establishing the Anglo-French Condominium over the New Hebrides.

*The Colonial Secretary* said that the Condominium had never worked satisfactorily. In 1950 the Australian Government had suggested that our responsibilities in the territory might be transferred to them; but, before practical arrangements could be made for the transfer, they had asked that it should be deferred for at least two years. The Australians were not likely to accept this responsibility so long as the territory had to be administered on the basis of the existing Protocol. It was therefore proposed that we should seek to persuade the French Government to agree that the British and French resident Commissioners in the New Hebrides should, without commitment to either Government, jointly examine the revision of the Protocol, which at present seriously impeded effective administration. Meanwhile we should tell the Australian Government that we were making this approach to the French and should try to discover whether there was any likelihood of their being prepared in the future to take over our responsibilities in the territory.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Endorsed the proposals in C. (53) 225.
- (2) Invited the Lord President to suggest to the French Government that the British and French resident Commissioners in the New Hebrides should jointly examine, without commitment to either Government, the revision of the Protocol.
- (3) Invited the Commonwealth Secretary to inform the New Zealand and Australian Governments of this approach, and to try to find out if there was any likelihood that the Australian Government would be willing to take over United Kingdom responsibilities in the territory.

Israel.

5. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Lord President (C. (53) 228) covering a draft of a despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington instructing him to approach the United States Government about the rôle of Israel in the defence of the Middle East.

*The Lord President* explained that this draft had been prepared in pursuance of the conclusion, reached by the Defence Committee on 6th May, that we should hold secret discussions with the United States Government and seek to secure their support for our policy regarding the part to be played by Israel in the defence of the Middle East. He had, however, some doubts about the wisdom of making such an approach to the United States Government at the present time. If any of the Arab States should learn that we contemplated building up Israel's armed strength, this could not fail to prejudice our current negotiations with Egypt and might lose us the good will of the Arab States. We ourselves were not in a position to offer the financial and economic aid which Israel would need if she were to play the part designed for her in Middle East defence, and it was doubtful whether the Americans could be persuaded to accept fresh commitments in this area. In any event the facilities we should need in Israel could not be finally determined until the outcome of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations was known. In these circumstances he wondered whether it would not be wiser to hold up the suggested approach to the United States Government until further progress had been made with the defence negotiations with Egypt.

In discussion there was general agreement that, in spite of the value of a strong Israeli contribution to Middle East defence, it would be wiser to defer for the time being the suggested approach to the United States Government on this matter.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* emphasised the importance of avoiding any Exchequer commitment for economic or financial aid to Israel. He wished therefore to reserve his position on the form of the approach eventually made to the United States Government on this matter.

#### The Cabinet—

Agreed that the suggested approach to the United States Government on the rôle of Israel in Middle East defence should be deferred until further progress had been made in the defence negotiations with Egypt.

**Korea.**  
(Previous  
Reference:  
C.C. (53) 46th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 1.)

6. *The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that the report of the Unified Command in Korea had now been published, and certain newspapers were accusing the Government of bad faith in failing to disclose to Parliament, before it rose, the terms of the declaration regarding the possible consequences of a breach of the armistice.

*The Minister of State* said that, in accordance with the Cabinet's decision of 28th July, he had explained to the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Herbert Morrison the manner in which the warning declaration would be published and the circumstances which made it impossible to inform Parliament of its terms before the beginning of the recess. Neither had questioned the propriety of the procedure which was being followed.

#### The Cabinet—

Invited the Lord President to arrange for the Foreign Office to give the necessary guidance to the Press regarding the method of publication of the warning declaration on the possible consequences of a breach of the armistice in Korea.

**Civil Defence.**  
Man-Power.

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Labour (C. (53) 222) reporting the conclusions of a Ministerial Committee appointed by the Defence Committee to estimate the numbers of whole-time men needed by the police and



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