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Printed for the Cabinet March 1961

C.C. (61)
15th Conclusion

Copy No 47

CABINET

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at Admiralty House, S.W. 1,
on Tuesday, 21st March, 1961, at 10:30 a.m.*

Present

The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Prime Minister

The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, MP.,
Secretary of State for the Home
Department (*Items 1-7*)

The Right Hon. SELWYN LLOYD, Q.C., M.P.,
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Right Hon. JOHN MACLAY, MP.,
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Right Hon. IAIN MACLEOD, M.P.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies

The Right Hon. Sir DAVID ECCLES,
M.P., Minister of Education

The Right Hon. LORD MILLS, Pay-
master-General

The Right Hon. JOHN HARE, M.P.,
Minister of Labour

Dr. The Right Hon. CHARLES HILL,
M.P., Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT KILMUIR,
Lord Chancellor

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HAILSHAM,
Q.C., Lord President of the Council
and Minister for Science

The Right Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Commonwealth
Relations (*Items 1-8*)

The Right Hon. HAROLD WATKINSON, M.P.,
Minister of Defence

The Right Hon. PETER THORNEYCROFT, M.P.,
Minister of Aviation

The Right Hon. REGINALD MAUDLING, M.P.,
President of the Board of Trade

The Right Hon. EDWARD HEATH, M.P.,
Lord Privy Seal

The Right Hon. ERNEST MARPLES, M.P.,
Minister of Transport

The Right Hon. CHRISTOPHER SOAMES.
M.P., Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. JOHN PROFUMO, M.P..
Secretary of State for War (*Items 6-7*)

The Right Hon. MARTIN REDMAYNE,
MP., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

Secretariat:

The Right Hon. Sir NORMAN BROOK
Mr. F. A. BISHOP
Mr. M. REED

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N/B Only Minutes No 5 page 5 on Cameroons has been retyped below.

C.C. (61)
15th Conclusions.

5. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Prime Minister (C. (61) 36) about the future of the Southern Cameroons.

The Colonial Secretary said that, in the recent plebiscite on the future of the British Cameroons after the ending of our present trusteeship under the United Nations, the Northern Cameroons had voted for joining Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons for joining the Cameroun Republic.

The Cameroun Republic was disappointed at the result of the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons and intended to challenge its validity at the United Nations. It should be possible to rebut any allegations against the propriety of the voting, but the Republic would almost certainly be able to rally the support, not only of the other French Community States, but also of France herself.

Administratively, there would be little difficulty in transferring the Northern Cameroons to Nigeria and it was in our political and financial interest to complete the transfer as soon as the agreement of the United Nations could be obtained. The transfer of the Southern Cameroons to the Republic would give rise to more difficulty. While the Republic at present appeared willing to co-operate in the transfer, difficult problems would arise over the constitutional, financial and defence arrangements and the future staffing of the public services and the police. All these questions would need to be discussed with France, Nigeria and the Republic. While it was in our interest that the transfer should be completed with as little delay as possible, great care would be needed if we

were to avoid a breakdown in administration which could lead to a situation comparable to that in the Congo. The Colonial Secretary said that he proposed to consider with the Foreign Secretary how further discussions with the other Governments concerned could best be pursued.

Discussion showed that there was general agreement in the Cabinet with the course proposed by the Colonial Secretary. Further consideration should, however, be given as a mailer of urgency to the best and quickest methods of reducing our military and financial commitments in the Southern Cameroons.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Approved the proposals in C. (61) 36.
- (2) Invited the Colonial Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State for War, to bring before an early meeting of the Defense Committee detailed proposals for reducing our military commitments in the Cameroons.

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END