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C.C. (61)
01st Conclusion

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CABINET

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at Admiralty House, S.W. 1,
on Tuesday, 13th June, 1961, at 1030 a.m.*

Present

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

The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P.,
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, M.P.,
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

Field-Marshal Sir FRANCIS FESTING,
Chief of the Imperial General Staff (*Item 7*)

Secretariat:

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

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N/B Only Minutes No 7 pages 6 -7 on Cameroons has been retyped below.

Cameroons

(Previous Reference:

C.C. (61) 15th

Conclusions.

Minute 5)

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Prime Minister (C. (61) 79) about the future of the Southern Cameroons.

The Prime Minister said that there was a serious danger that subversive forces in the Southern Cameroons, organized by Chinese Communists, would launch a campaign of terrorism when the territory became independent on 1st October and, in conformity with the result of the United Nations plebiscite, entered into some form of federation with the Cameroun Republic. Unless internal security could" be preserved, the administrative personnel, the great majority of whom were British, would leave the country, as would the representatives of British commercial interests there. It had therefore been suggested that the battalion of United Kingdom troops at present stationed in the Southern Cameroons should be allowed to remain, after 1st October, in order to

maintain internal security during the transitional period while the proposed federation was established and to allow time for an adequate local security force to be recruited and trained. It was also suggested that we should establish an Aid Mission, consisting in effect of the existing administrative personnel, who would be invited to remain under the aegis of the new Department of Technical Co-operation. These measures would be additional to our continuing to finance the budget deficit of the territory, including the cost of maintaining the locally recruited security force. In default of action on these lines, we might well be held to blame if there were a breakdown of administration in the Southern Cameroons and perhaps in the neighbouring Cameroun Republic, leading to the emergence of a Communist- dominated regime in this area which would be particularly dangerous to Nigeria.

There were, however, strong financial and military arguments against accepting these commitments. The cost of the proposed measures would amount to nearly £2 millions a year, and any addition to our oversea expenditure was particularly unwelcome at present. The responsibility for ensuring stability in the Southern Cameroons ought to be undertaken by the United Nations, and we had already stated publicly that the United Kingdom forces would be withdrawn when our trusteeship came to an end. There could be no question of leaving the battalion unless both the Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons, Mr. Foncha, and the Prime Minister of the Cameroun Republic, Mr. Ahidjo, agreed to request it; but even then there was no precedent for putting British troops under the command of a foreign Government in time of peace, and we would be likely in any case to be criticized for maintaining a military force in the territory. There was also a danger that relations between Mr. Foncha and Mr. Ahidjo would deteriorate, and that our troops might become involved in a personal struggle for power. Moreover, if terrorism broke out on an extensive "scale, a single battalion would be inadequate and would have to be reinforced; and this, in the light of our other commitments, would be extremely difficult.

United Kingdom representatives were to discuss the future of the territory at a meeting later that week with Mr. Foncha and Mr. Ahidjo, at which it was hoped that French military representatives would also be present. It was therefore necessary to decide whether to withdraw the United Kingdom battalion on 1st October and to confine our assistance to such modest financial support as we could afford, or to undertake these substantial additional responsibilities for the security and administration of the territory for some further time.

In discussion the following points were made:

{a) British investment in the territory amounted to nearly £20 millions; nevertheless these interests were not enough to warrant the continued

deployment of British forces after 1st October. The main issue was whether we could afford the risk of the dangerous growth of Communist influence in this area.

{b) The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that conditions in the territory would make it necessary to relieve United Kingdom troops every six months. It was very doubtful whether a local security force could be recruited and trained in a short time. There was no doubt that a single battalion would be inadequate to maintain order if serious terrorism broke out, and in that event it would be necessary to send two further battalions to reinforce it. In view of their interests - in the Cameroun Republic, it would be greatly preferable that the French should accept the responsibility for security, including the training of a local force.

(c) Even if the current Army recruiting objective were realised, it would not be possible to reinforce a battalion in the Southern Cameroons without losing our capacity to meet other military commitments which ought to have priority. For example, it would be of greater importance to provide reinforcements for Zanzibar.

(d) It was very desirable that the training of a local security force should be undertaken by the French authorities, on behalf of the Cameroun Republic. Although the French maintained that they could not accept additional commitments, they might be persuaded to undertake responsibility for security in the Southern Cameroons if they thought that we would in any case withdraw when our trusteeship came to an end.

(e) The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that if it were necessary to undertake further commitments in the Southern Cameroons, offsetting reductions would have to be made in oversea expenditure elsewhere. Nevertheless, he would agree that some modest contribution, up to £1/2 million, might be afforded as a final measure of assistance to the territory upon becoming independent.

The Prime Minister, summing up, said that it was the general view of the Cabinet that, on balance, it would not be justifiable to undertake the additional commitment which would be involved if a United Kingdom battalion were retained in the Southern Cameroons after independence. The United Kingdom representatives at the meeting with Mr. Foncha and Mr. Ahidjo should conduct their discussions on the basis that it was our intention to withdraw the United Kingdom battalion after 1st October. They should seek to ascertain what measures were contemplated by Mr. Foncha and Mr. Ahidjo for the maintenance of the administration and of internal security, and how far they were agreed about future arrangements for the territory and its association with

the Cameroun Republic. They could indicate that we would be prepared to provide financial assistance amounting to £1/2 million to the territory during the first year after independence, either to enable our expatriate officers to continue in the administration or to support the budget. It was to be hoped that, in the face of this attitude, the French authorities would realise that there was no alternative but for them to accept future responsibility for security in the Cameroons, as well as in the Cameroun Republic.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Agreed that the United Kingdom battalion in the Southern Cameroons should be withdrawn after 1st October, and that our support for the territory should thereafter be limited to financial assistance of not more than £1/2 million.
- (2) Invited the Lord Privy Seal to formulate instructions for the United Kingdom representatives at the meeting with the Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons and the Prime Minister of the Cameroun Republic on the lines indicated by the Prime Minister.

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