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Le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures au secrétaire aux Dominions
Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary

TELEGRAM 35

Ottawa, March 2, 1941

MOST SECRET. Part I. Following from Prime Minister for your Prime Minister, Begins. Since outbreak of the war we have, on the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, consistently followed a policy of sending all possible aid to the United Kingdom, despite the fact that this has necessarily involved the weakening of Canada's own defences. We have recently requested the Chiefs of Staff to review the state of home defences and to advise the Government whether any modification should be made in present policies in the light of their appreciation of the military situation. The text of the Chiefs of Staff appreciation of the present position is given, for your information, in my immediately following telegram. We should of course be glad to receive from time to time any appreciations of the war situation which may affect Canada or Canadian defence in any way and which has received the approval of your Cabinet.

2. Naval defences do not appear to be adequate to deal effectively with "tip and run" raids of the kind which must be regarded as a possibility with the coming of spring. Naval protection for the Atlantic Coast consists at present of one R.C.N. destroyer fit for service and more powerful units engaged from time to time in convoy duty to and from Canadian ports, and forces in the West Indies area.

3. On the Atlantic Coast we have now four bomber-reconnaissance squadrons, one of which can operate 600 miles from its base, capable of acting as a deterrent to raids by enemy naval units. Trained pilot personnel in these squadrons has been reduced to meet demands for instructors in the Air Training Plan.

4. Coast defences from the army viewpoint are reasonably strong except as regards anti-aircraft guns and equipment, in respect of which existing provision is inadequate.

5. Summary in the preceding paragraphs in respect of naval, air and Coast defence position of Eastern Canada should be read as supplementing memorandum of Chiefs of Staff Committee. Together they indicate a situation which has been causing War Committee of Cabinet a good deal of concern. We have, from the beginning, realized the serious implications in regard to home defence of sending you every possible assistance, naval, military and air. Our Chiefs of Staff believe the policy followed has been wise and justified by results. At the same time we cannot be unmindful of our direct responsibility for the defence of Canadian shores, and of the effect upon the common effort and Canadian morale should our coast and harbours be attacked and our defences prove inadequate to an emergency. In particular the importance of adequate protection for the convoy assembly port of Halifax and strategic approaches thereto cannot be too strongly emphasized. We should be very