

*Connected with Agenda, Oct. 18*

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CABINET WAR COMMITTEE  
Document No. *884*

*Copy No 13*

October 16th, 1944.

TO CABINET WAR COMMITTEE.

re- Royal Canadian Air Force participation  
in the Japanese War.

In view of the misunderstandings which have occurred in Cabinet War Committee with respect to the Royal Canadian Air Force attitude in this matter, I should like to draw your attention to the following:

1. The first proposal concerning R.C.A.F. participation amounted to something like 93 squadrons and involved a manpower contribution of approximately 60,000 men. The cost for this overseas commitment would have been approximately \$986,000,000.

At the time this suggestion was made by the Rt. Honourable Captain Harold Balfour, Secretary of State for Air in the United Kingdom, it will be remembered that I personally submitted to War Committee my views as to our participation in the Japanese war, and was the first to suggest that we should not be bound to take part in any campaign alongside of the Royal Air Force and should leave ourselves free to choose the theatre of war in which Canada would operate, and the possibility of our Forces operating with the United States rather than with the British. This Aide-Memoire with some slight amendment was adopted by War Committee on the 9th of February 1944.

No commitment was then made as to the contribution of 93 squadrons.

2. Some time later in May the Prime Minister, on his return from overseas, handed to me a suggestion received from the United Kingdom government, and not from Canada, as has been alleged very frequently, that Canada's contribution should be on the basis of 58 squadrons. War Committee on June 19th, 1944, decided that communications be sent to the U.K. and U.S. governments, informing them of the government's views as to the manner in which Canadian forces were to be employed against Japan. It was also agreed that the proposal for employment of fifty-eight R.C.A.F. squadrons, after the German war be accepted tentatively, as a basis for planning and subject to review in relation to the whole Canadian contribution at that time, also on the distinct understanding that no commitments were implied as to the theatre or theatres in which these squadrons would be employed, decision in respect thereto to be determined by the Canadian government.

Minutes and Documents of the Cabinet War Committee,  
Volume XVI, July - December 1944, (R.G. 2, 7c, Volume 16)

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