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MEMORANDUM

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CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

C-11-3-D

U.K.-U.S. PROPOSALS FOR INTERNATIONAL  
CONTROL OF MERCHANT SHIPPING AFTER  
CONCLUSION OF HOSTILITIES IN EUROPE

The Committee on Merchant Shipping Policy submits the following statement and recommendations with reference to proposals advanced by the U.K. and the U.S. for international control of merchant shipping after the conclusion of hostilities in Europe:

I. Wartime control of Shipping:

Since the beginning of the war control over British merchant shipping has been exercised by the British Ministry of War Transport. The U.S., after entering the war, established a similar agency, the War Shipping Administration. Coordination between these two organizations has been achieved by setting up the Combined Shipping Adjustment Boards composed solely of U.K. and U.S. representatives in London and Washington. The Canadian Shipping Board, set up in December 1939, exercises similar control of Canadian registered vessels. It is entirely independent of the British Ministry of War Transport, The War Shipping Administration and the Combined Shipping Adjustment Boards but has closely cooperated with these three agencies since their inception.

II. Terms of U.K. proposals.

The United Kingdom has informed Canada that it is proposed to hold an international conference in London to discuss the establishment of an International Maritime Administration to coordinate the use of merchant shipping during the period immediately following the termination of hostilities in Europe.

The United Kingdom plan provides that the supply of shipping for essential military and civilian requirements would be the common responsibility of the United Nations. Each nation would retain considerable control over its own shipping, directing tonnage to serve its own immediate needs, including shipping for coastal and short trades and for "the import requirements of territories for which its government has special shipping responsibilities." If there were insufficient tonnage for these needs, application would be made to the international body for more vessels; on the other hand, any excess tonnage would be placed at the disposal of the international body. Each nation would establish or maintain the controls needed to carry out the decisions of the international body.

Minutes and Documents of the Cabinet War Committee,  
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