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S E C R E T

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9TH MAY, 1944

MEETING OF PRIME MINISTERS

POST-WAR SHIPPING POLICY

Note of points to be made by the Minister of
War Transport

Post-war shipping policy must be considered in two stages;
(a) policy during the transitional period after the end of the war in Europe and while the war with Japan is in progress and
(b) the long term policy.

2. With regard to the transitional period, the United Kingdom Government has prepared, for discussion with Governments of the other United Nations, a plan for the control of shipping under all flags for so long as may be necessary to secure that the essential requirements of the United Nations are met in an orderly fashion. The plan would also enable the release of tonnage from control to be arranged on an orderly basis when the relaxation of control becomes possible. An outline of this plan has been communicated to other Governments of the Commonwealth.

3. As regards long term policy, we cannot yet envisage the post-war circumstances sufficiently clearly to formulate definite long-term shipping plans. It is clear, however, that there will be a number of problems of direct concern to the members of the British Commonwealth. Among these are:-

- (a) Control of shipping and ship-building facilities of ex-enemy countries.
 - (b) Utilisation of tonnage built during the war.
 - (c) Reconstitution of fleets of the maritime powers who have suffered severe losses during the war.
 - (d) Re-establishment of shipping services on an economic basis.
 - (e) General treatment of shipping in ports, etc.
- (a) Ex-enemy shipping and ship-building facilities.

Before the war, Germany, Japan and Italy fostered their shipping and ship-building by subsidies, exchange manipulation and other practices which gave them an unfair advantage in world competition. The war has shown that economic security may require that ship-building in ex-enemy countries should be prescribed, or at least severely restricted for a considerable number of years. It is proposed that during the transitional period, enemy shipping shall be put under the complete control of the United Nations, and it is felt that if the ex-enemy States are permitted to own and operate ships they should be required to subscribe to a code of rules of fair play in shipping which would prevent a recrudescence of their unfair competition of the past.