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WAR CABINET.

WORLD ORGANISATION—POSITION OF SOUTHERN IRELAND.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS.

I feel that I ought to bring to the notice of my colleagues a point arising from the preparations which are being made for the United Nations Conference at San Francisco. I understand that it was agreed at the Crimea Conference that a hint should be given to certain neutral nations that, if they wanted to get on the band-wagon, they must declare war on Germany before the 1st March, and that, in fact, the United States have already been in touch with a number of South American countries, while we are approaching Egypt and Turkey, and may possibly also give a hint to Portugal. The question arises, should we do the same for Southern Ireland? My personal view is that we should not. Although the Southern Ireland Government has, in fact, helped us in a number of unobtrusive ways (see attached annex), her general policy of neutrality, her refusal to grant us bases and to remove the Axis Legations, and her unsatisfactory attitude over war criminals, put her quite out of court.

At the same time, I feel bound to warn my colleagues that this is a question that may well be raised by one or more Dominion Governments. We have to face the fact that their attitude with regard to Southern Ireland is very different from ours. Instances of this are Canada's criticisms of the United States and United Kingdom notes on the Axis Missions; as being too severe, and, more recently, the attitude of all Dominions alike on the question of Irish representation on an equality with other members of the Commonwealth at the Montreal and Chicago Conferences. I can only attribute this attitude on the part of the Dominions to an obscure feeling that, however ill-judged Southern Ireland's behaviour over the war has been, she was entitled, as a Dominion, to stay out, if she thought right. But, whatever the reason, we must, I am afraid, be prepared for a possible unfavourable reaction from the other Dominion Governments, if they consider that she is being worse treated than other neutrals. This does not, however, alter my view that it would be a mistake to take any such special action as is being taken in the case of Egypt and Turkey, both of whom have got rid of their Axis representatives, while Egypt has also helped us in many other ways.

A possible way out of the difficulty would be for the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary, in the coming debate in the House of Commons, to include some general sentence to the effect that nations who wish to be invited to the San Francisco Conference must take the necessary steps to render themselves eligible. We could then tell the Dominions, if they protested, that Southern Ireland, with the other nations concerned, had been fairly warned.

Dominions Office,
21st February, 1945.

C.
CLANBourNE

ANNEX

NOTE ON FACILITIES OBTAINED FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTHERN IRELAND.

1. In general, the Southern Irish Government have been willing to accord us any facilities which would not be regarded as overtly prejudicing their attitude of neutrality.

2. In particular, the following points may be mentioned:—

- (a) They agreed to our use of Lough Foyle for naval and air purposes. The ownership of the Lough is disputed, but the Southern Irish authorities are tacitly not pressing their claim in present conditions and are also ignoring any flying by our aircraft over the Donegal shore of the Lough, which is necessary in certain wind conditions to enable flying boats to take off from the Lough.
- (b) They have agreed to the use by our aircraft based on Lough Erne of a corridor over Southern Irish territory and territorial waters for the purpose of flying out to the Atlantic.
- (c) They have arranged for the immediate transmission to the United Kingdom Representative's Office in Dublin of reports of submarine activity received from their coast watching service.
- (d) They arranged for the broadcasting of reports by their Air Observer Corps of aircraft sighted over or approaching Southern Irish territory. (This does not include our aircraft using the corridor referred to in (b) above.)
- (e) They arranged for the extinction of trade and business lighting in coastal towns where such lighting was alleged to afford a useful land mark for German aircraft.
- (f) They have continued to supply us with meteorological reports.
- (g) They have agreed to the use by our ships and aircraft of two wireless direction-finding stations at Malin Head.
- (h) They have supplied particulars of German crashed aircraft and personnel crashed or washed ashore or arrested on land.
- (i) They arranged for staff talks on the question of co-operation against a possible German invasion of Southern Ireland, and close contact has since been maintained between the respective military authorities.
- (j) They continue to intern all German fighting personnel reaching Southern Ireland. On the other hand, though after protracted negotiations, Allied service personnel are now allowed to depart freely and full assistance is given in recovering damaged aircraft.
- (k) Recently, in connection with the establishment of prisoner of war camps in Northern Ireland, they have agreed either to return or at least intern any German prisoners who may escape from Northern Ireland across the border into Southern Ireland.
- (l) They have throughout offered no objection to the departure from Southern Ireland of persons wishing to serve in the United Kingdom Forces nor to the journey on leave of such persons to and from Southern Ireland (in plain clothes).
- (m) They have continued to exchange information with our security authorities regarding all aliens (including Germans) in Southern Ireland.
- (n) They have (within the last few days) agreed to our establishing a Radar station in Southern Ireland for use against the latest form of submarine activity.