

Witness Stark

Questions by: Mr. Clark

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That is all, Mr. Chairman.

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The Chairman: Congressman Clark.

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Mr. Clark: I believe some of the witnesses here, Admiral, probably including General Marshall, have testified that a surprise attack by air was considered the chief danger to Pearl Harbor.

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Do you agree with that?

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Admiral Stark: Yes, sir.

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Mr. Clark: In this message of the 27th, in which you referred to the possibility, or maybe likelihood, or an attack on the Philippines or the Kra Peninsula, and Borneo, and so forth, when you were undertaking to tell what the Japanese were likely to do, based on your information --

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Admiral Stark: Yes, sir, we stated "our information indicated".

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Mr. Clark: Yes.

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Now, if it had then occurred to you that a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was at all likely, you would have included that, perhaps?

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Admiral Stark: If we had expected it at that time I certainly would have included it. If I had been expecting it.

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Mr. Clark: You did not expect it?

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Admiral Stark: I was surprised. I was not expecting it. I was thinking of what was going on further west.



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2 Mr. Clark: Still the circumstances that existed then  
3 really created almost an ideal situation for such an attack,  
4 did they not?

5 Admiral Stark: As it existed, yes, sir; and we thought --

6 Mr. Clark: I am referring to the diversionary movement  
7 southward by the Japanese, the fact that traffic had been  
8 diverted to the north and south across the Pacific, and so  
9 forth. Wouldn't that indicate to a strategist an opportune  
10 moment for a surprise air attack?

11 Admiral Stark: Of course, in a surprise attack the  
12 other fellow had the initiative, and he took it and it proved  
13 that his estimate was correct, that it was a good time.

14 Mr. Clark: Now, may I ask you this, please, sir: At  
15 the time you were preparing this message as to what the Japs  
16 were doing, did you even then consider the likelihood of  
17 a surprise air attack, or had you dropped that consideration?

18 Admiral Stark: No, we hadn't dropped it. And with  
19 regard to the message of the 24th, my memory on that is very  
20 clear, although I didn't mention air attack, to include the  
21 words "in any direction", and if an attack had come on Hawaii,  
22 that would have been the most dangerous form.

23 It might have come that way. It might also have, of  
24 course, come from submarines. And, as I have already said,  
25 it might have come on the Pacific Coast. I was thinking of



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2 the broad Pacific, not only Hawaii but our other points of  
3 possible attack, at that time.

4 Mr. Clark: Well, I am completely ignorant of all matters  
5 military and some of my questions may sound rather silly to  
6 you, but I was trying to get at the time when you were framing  
7 this message to the man in charge of the Fleet out there, as  
8 to what the Japs were doing and what the Japs were likely to  
9 do, at which time they were making this movement to the  
10 southward, and did lead you actually to believe that is where  
11 they were going to strike.

12 Why did you not then consider the likelihood at that  
13 time of a surprise air attack?

(2) 14 Admiral Stark: Well, I think we did consider it to the  
15 extent that we gave a directive to take a deployment prepara-  
16 tory to putting a war plan into effect, a defensive deployment.  
17 That was what we intended it. It was a direct order to that  
18 effect.

19 Mr. Clark: Yes. I see that, Admiral. I appreciate that.

20 Admiral Stark: Perhaps my background on that could be  
21 explained, for not having diagnosed the thing as it did  
22 happen, and which I didn't, by stating that I wasn't expecting,  
23 in view of the magnitude of the attack which might come, and  
24 we expected it to come and it did come, much farther west,  
25 that they would strike all over the Pacific, practically.



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2 That is, as far as Hawaii, at that time. I just didn't expect  
3 it. I was surprised. I don't know that I can add much to it.  
4 I knew it was a possibility. I thought we had gone at the  
5 thing from every angle before.

6 If we had not thought of it being a possibility we  
7 could have just sent that message to Hart for action, but we  
8 included Kimmel in it, and thought -- we had intended to  
9 alert them against an attack, which we said might come anywhere,  
10 in the 24th and the war warning of the 27th.

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Now --

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Mr. Clark: If you will pardon me just a moment,  
Admiral. I thoroughly understand that. I heard you say it.  
My point was this, when in the later message you undertook  
to point out, as Chief of Naval Operations, where you thought  
they were likely to strike, and what you thought they were  
likely to do, you entirely omitted any likelihood or possi-  
bility of an air attack. Is that because you didn't think  
of it at that time or because you didn't think it likely or  
possible?

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Admiral Stark: I don't recall a discussion of an air  
attack on Hawaii at that time. Now, I was thinking only in  
general terms other than information we had.

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Mr. Clark: You mentioned specific points where the  
attack might go.



Witness Stark

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Admiral Stark: We had information indicating that.

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Mr. Clark: Yes, sir. You knew, of course, that there was a movement that way and that there was a set-up there that would be almost ideal for a surprise air attack, did you not?

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Admiral Stark: In Hawaii?

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Mr. Clark: Yes.

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Admiral Stark: That there the situation was ideal?

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Mr. Clark: Yes.

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Admiral Stark: I wouldn't call it ideal. I think there was a great deal of risk involved.

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Mr. Clark: Yes.

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Admiral Stark: Assuming that the radar stations had been in full effect, that Marshall's order to make reconnaissance had been in effect, that everything had been manned, and so forth, I think they might have given a right good account of themselves.

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Mr. Clark: I agree entirely with that, but I had in mind the movement of Japanese forces south, and, of course, you didn't know it, but it seemed to have been a fact that there was a report or reports being made from Hawaii that there was not any reconnaissance down there, the Japs seemed to have known that, although the Navy here didn't seem to know it; but taking those circumstances into account, I was



1 Witness Stark

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2 trying to find whether, as you framed that message, it passed  
3 into your mind at all that there might be a surprise attack  
4 on Pearl Harbor. I believe I have asked you that question.

5 Admiral Stark: I can only say that we always thought  
6 it possible but I was not looking for it at that time and I  
7 was surprised that it occurred.

8 Mr. Clark: You were as much surprised as Admiral Kimmel  
9 was, of the air attack?

10 Admiral Stark: I was surprised at the air attack. I also  
11 was surprised that there were no steps, or that certain steps  
12 had not been taken to intercept it and be on the lookout for  
13 it.

14 Mr. Clark: That brings me to another question that I  
15 would like to ask you, if it is a proper question:

16 As an experienced naval officer, having long and fine  
17 experience, if you had been in command at Pearl Harbor, with  
18 the equipment that was there, and had received the message  
19 that Admiral Kimmel did receive, of the 27th of November,  
20 exactly what would you have done?

21 Admiral Stark: Separating the answer from hindsight,  
22 it is so easy for me to say what I would have done which would  
23 have caught this attack.

24 Mr. Clark: I don't think it is a question of hindsight.  
25 I am asking you this simple, plain question, leaving hindsight



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1  
2 out of it.

3 Admiral Stark: Well, my thought is that I certainly  
4 would have started the radar going 24 hours a day.

5 Mr. Clark: Yes.

6 Admiral Stark: That I would have made an estimate, and,  
7 I believe estimates had been made, as to where an attack, if  
8 it came by air, might come, from what direction. I would  
9 have known, of course, he did know, how many planes he had  
10 that were usable for reconnaissance at that time, long distance  
11 reconnaissance. I would have assumed that that would have  
12 been put into effect.

13 I don't know just how many submarines he had available  
14 at that time, but I certainly think I would have used them  
15 to supplement my other means for getting early information of  
16 a possible attack.

17 As to the light forces, I don't know just what I would  
18 have done with them. The carriers. I don't know what orders  
19 he had given them. They were on an expedition to the westward.  
20 He may have given them orders, either by radio or before  
21 they went out, about sweeping and assisting in reconnaissance.  
22 If the carriers had been available to him he might have sent  
23 them out in a certain direction, supplementing his other  
24 efforts. In other words, used what he had as best he could  
25 to avoid being caught aback.



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Mr. Clark: One other question. It may be that I am anticipating and if so counsel will advise me and I will wait.

With regard to this message that divided up the harbor into sections, which you say you are not sure you saw, have you looked at that since?

Admiral Stark: Yes, sir.

Mr. Clark: Was it clipped?

Admiral Stark: Was it what?

Mr. Clark: Was it clipped?

Admiral Stark: I don't know. Most of those dispatches were burned, except the file copy. When you say have I looked at it since, I don't recall having seen the dispatch at all before. I have seen it. It has been photostated and copied from the file copy in the Navy Department. It was one of those things that in going through the mass of material, it was one of those dispatches that was picked out.

Mr. Clark: I didn't know whether the fact that it was or was not clipped might enable you to say whether you had seen it or not.

Admiral Stark: Well, there is nothing left clipped in the Navy Department now. I think all those dispatches have been burned except the file copy.

Mr. Clark: Who exactly would be the one to determine --



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1  
2 well, I will say, to clip the messages, as you referred to  
3 in your testimony?

4 Admiral Stark: They were clipped in Intelligence. And  
5 I think you have Captain McCullom down. There were two or  
6 three of them working there. McCullom, Krammer. Which one  
7 did the initial clipping I am not sure. And that booklet also  
8 would go on up to the head of Intelligence.

9 Mr. Clark: Now, just one other thing. It appears in  
10 the record here that there are some intercepts that were  
11 intercepted but not decoded and made available.

12 In other words, some, what we call magic, appear.

13 Admiral Stark: Yes, sir.

14 Mr. Clark: Intercepted but intercepted prior to December  
15 7 and not decoded until after that date. I was wondering  
16 whether after this situation reached the crucial stage, say  
17 the 24th, 25th, 27th of November, any effort was made to  
18 give priority to the decoding of these messages from Japan  
19 over the great mass of stuff that you have testified was  
20 intercepted.

21 Admiral Stark: I think that the people who actually handled  
22 that would be better qualified to answer that question than  
23 I could. My understanding is that they at times would look  
24 at a message and see right away that it wasn't particularly  
25 important and throw it aside and look for something more



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2 important and use the best judgment they had with the people  
3 they had available to get the maximum amount of important  
4 stuff into our hands. But they can tell you the procedure  
5 better than I. I am not familiar with just how they did it.

6 Mr. Clark: You did not yourself initiate any movement  
7 or give any direction to give priority so far as possible to  
8 decoding the Jap intercepts after, say, the 27th of November?

9 Admiral Stark: No, I did not. There were people working  
10 on that who I think fully realized the situation.

11 Mr. Clark: That is all I have, Mr. Chairman.

12 The Chairman: Senator Lucas.

13 Senator Lucas: Mr. Chairman, it is 4:25. I don't  
14 believe I can finish in five minutes with the Admiral.

15 I would like to recess at this time until tomorrow morning.

16 The Chairman: Not taking that as a precedent for any  
17 future recesses earlier than 4:30, the committee will recess  
18 until 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

19 (In response to request of Senator Ferguson at page 5470,  
20 Exhibit No. 92 reads as follows:)



## WAR SITUATION.

1  
2 Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do  
3 now adjourn."--(Mr. James Stuart.)

4 Mr. Stephen (Camlachie): May I ask whether, if a Vote  
5 of Confidence is to be put on the Paper, it will be in the  
6 hands of Members today?

7 The Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill): That will be for  
8 the next Sitting Day.

9 From time to time in the life of any Government there  
10 come occasions which must be clarified. No one who has read  
11 the newspapers of the last few weeks about our affairs at home  
12 and abroad can doubt that such an occasion is at hand.

13 Since my return to this country, I have come to the con-  
14 clusion that I must ask to be sustained by a Vote of Confidence  
15 from the House of Commons. This is a thoroughly normal, con-  
16 stitutional, democratic procedure. A Debate on the war has  
17 been asked for. I have arranged it in the fullest and freest  
18 manner for three whole days. Any Member will be free to say  
19 anything he thinks fit about or against the Administration or  
20 against the composition of personalities of the Government,  
21 to his heart's content, subject only to the reservation which  
22 the House is always so careful to observe about military  
23 secrets. Could you have anything freer than that? Could  
24 you have any higher expression of democracy than that? Very  
25 few other countries have institutions strong enough to sustain



1 such a thing while they are fighting for their lives.

2 I owe it to the House to explain to them what has led  
3 me to ask for their exceptional support at this time. It has  
4 been suggested that we should have a three days' Debate of  
5 this kind in which the Government would no doubt be lustily  
6 belaboured by some of those who have lighter burdens to carry,  
7 and that at the end we should separate without a Division.  
8 In this case sections of the Press which are hostile -- and  
9 there are some whose hostility is pronounced -- could declare  
10 that the Government's credit was broken, and, it might even be  
11 hinted, after all that has passed and all the discussion there  
12 has been, that it had been privately intimated to me that I  
13 should be very reckless if I asked for a Vote of Confidence  
14 from Parliament.

15 And the matter does not stop there. It must be remembered  
16 that these reports can then be flashed all over the world, and  
17 that they are repeated in enemy broadcasts night after night in  
18 order to show that the Prime Minister has no right to speak for  
19 the nation and that the Government in Britain is about to col-  
20 lapse. Anyone who listens to the fulminations which come from  
21 across the water know that that is no exaggeration. Of course,  
22 these statements from foreign sources would not be true, but  
23 neither would it be helpful to anyone that there should be any  
24 doubt about our position.

25 There is another aspect. We in this Island for a long



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21 across the water know that that is no exaggeration. Of course,  
22 these statements from foreign sources would not be true, but  
23 neither would it be helpful to anyone that there should be any  
24 doubt about our position.

25 There is another aspect. We in this Island for a long



1 time were alone, holding aloft the torch. We are no longer  
2 alone now. We are now at the centre and among those at the  
3 summit of 26 United Nations, comprising more than three-quarters  
4 of the population of the globe. Whoever speaks for Britain at  
5 this moment must be known to speak, not only in the name of the  
6 people -- and of that I feel pretty sure I may -- but in the  
7 name of Parliament and, above all, of the House of Commons.  
8 It is genuine public interest that requires that these facts  
9 should be made manifest afresh in a formal way.

10 We have had a great deal of bad news lately from the Far  
11 East, and I think it highly probable, for reasons which I shall  
12 presently explain, that we shall have a great deal more.  
13 Wrapped up in this bad news will be many tales of blunders and  
14 shortcomings, both in foresight and action. No one will pre-  
15 tend for a moment that disasters like these occur without  
16 there having been faults and shortcomings. I see all this  
17 rolling towards us like the waves in a storm, and that is  
18 another reason why I require a formal, solemn Vote of Confi-  
19 dence from the House of Commons, which hitherto in this  
20 struggle has never flinched. The House would fail in its  
21 duty if it did not insist upon two things, first, freedom of  
22 debate, and, secondly, a clear, honest, blunt Vote thereafter.  
23 Then we shall all know where we are, and all those with whom  
24 we have to deal, at home and abroad, friend or foe, will know  
25 where we are and where they are. It is because we are to



1 have a free Debate, in which perhaps 20 to 30 Members can  
2 take part, that I demand an expression of opinion from the  
3 300 or 400 Members who will have sat silent.

4 It is because things have gone badly and worse is to  
5 come that I demand a Vote of Confidence. This will be placed  
6 on the Paper to-day, to be moved at a later stage. I do not  
7 see why this should hamper anyone. If a Member has helpful  
8 criticisms to make, or even severe corrections to administer,  
9 that may be perfectly consistent with thinking that in respect  
10 of the Administration, such as it is, he might go farther and  
11 fare worse. But if an hon. Gentleman dislikes the Government  
12 very much and feels it in the public interest that it should  
13 be broken up, he ought to have the manhood to testify his con-  
14 victions in the Lobby. There is no need to be mealy-mouthed  
15 in debate. There is no objection to anything being said,  
16 plain, or even plainer, and the Government will do their  
17 utmost to conform to any standard which may be set in the  
18 course of the Debate. But no one need to be mealy-mouthed  
19 in debate, and no one should be chicken-hearted in voting.  
20 I have voted against Governments I have been elected to sup-  
21 port, and, looking back, I have sometimes felt very glad that  
22 I did so. Everyone in these rough times must do what he  
23 thinks is his duty.

24 Mr. Shinwell (Seaham): A free vote?

25 The Prime Minister: A vote under all the conditions



1 which hitherto have made the conduct of Parliamentary govern-  
2 ment possible. Surely the hon. Gentleman is not the man to  
3 be frightened of a Whip? The House of Commons, which is at  
4 present the most powerful representative Assembly in the world,  
5 must also -- I am sure, will also -- bear in mind the effect  
6 produced abroad by all its proceedings. We have also to  
7 remember how oddly foreigners view our country and its way of  
8 doing things. When Rudolf Hess flew over here some months  
9 ago he firmly believed that he had only to gain access to  
10 certain circles in this country for what he described as "the  
11 Churchill clique"--

12 Mr. Thorne (Plaistow): Where is he now?

13 The Prime Minister: Where he ought to be -- to be thrown  
14 out of power and for a Government to be set up with which  
15 Hitler could negotiate a magnanimous peace. The only impor-  
16 tance attaching to the opinions of Hess is the fact that he  
17 was fresh from the atmosphere of Hitler's intimate table.  
18 But, Sir, I can assure you that since I have been back in this  
19 country I have had anxious inquiries from a dozen countries,  
20 and reports of enemy propaganda in a score of countries, all  
21 turning upon the point whether His Majesty's present Govern-  
22 ment is to be dismissed from power or not. This may seem  
23 silly to us, but in those months abroad it is hurtful and mis-  
24 chievous to the common effort. I am not asking for any  
25 special, personal favours in these circumstances, but I am



1 sure the House would wish to make its position clear; there-  
2 fore I stand by the ancient, constitutional, Parliamentary  
3 doctrine of free debate and faithful voting.

4 Now I turn to the account of the war, which constitutes  
5 the claim I make for the support and confidence of the House.  
6 Three or four months ago we had to cope with the following  
7 situation. The German invaders were advancing, blasting their  
8 way through Russia. The Russians were resisting with the  
9 utmost heroism. But no one could tell what would happen,  
10 whether Leningrad, Moscow or Rostov would fall, or where the  
11 German winter line would be established. No one can tell  
12 now where it will be established, but now the boot is on the  
13 other leg. We all agree that we must aid the valiant Russian  
14 Armies to the utmost limit of our power. His Majesty's  
15 Government thought, and Parliament upon reflection agree with  
16 them, that the best aid we could give to Russia was in sup-  
17 plies of many kinds of raw materials and of munitions, par-  
18 ticularly tanks and aircraft. Our Forces at home and abroad  
19 had for long been waiting thirstily for these weapons. At last  
20 they were coming to hand in large numbers. At home we have  
21 always the danger of invasion to consider and to prepare  
22 against. I will speak about the situation in the Middle  
23 East presently. Nevertheless we sent Premier Stalin -- for  
24 that I gather is how he wishes to be addressed; at least, that  
25 is the form in which he telegraphs to me -- exactly what he



1 asked for. The whole quantity was promised and sent. There  
2 has been, I am sorry to say, a small lag due to bad weather,  
3 but it will be made up by the early days of February. This  
4 was a decision of major strategy and policy, and anyone can  
5 see that it was right to put it first when they watch the  
6 wonderful achievements, un hoped for, undreamed of by us  
7 because we little knew the Russian strength, but all the more  
8 glorious as they seem -- the wonderful achievements of the  
9 Russian Armies. Our munitions were of course only a contri-  
10 bution to the Russian victory, but they were an encouragement  
11 in Russia's darkest hour. Moreover, if we had not shown a  
12 loyal effort to help our Ally, albeit at a heavy sacrifice  
13 to ourselves, I do not think our relations with Premier Stalin  
14 and his great country would be as good as they are now. There  
15 would have been a lack of comradeship, and the lack of com-  
16 radeship might have spread reproaches on all sides. Far from  
17 regarding what we did for Russia, I only wish it had been in  
18 our power -- but it was not -- to have done more.

19 Three or four months ago, at a time when the German  
20 advance was rolling onwards, we were particularly concerned  
21 with the possibility of the Germans forcing the Don River,  
22 the capture of Rostov and the invasion of the Caucasus, and  
23 the reaching of the Baku oil wells before the winter by the  
24 Panzer spearheads of the German Army. Everyone who has been  
25 giving careful study and independent thought to this war, knows



1 how deep an anxiety that was in all our breasts three or four  
2 months ago. Such an advance would not only have given the  
3 Germans the oil which they are beginning seriously to need, but  
4 it would have involved the destruction of the Russian Fleet  
5 and the loss of the command of the Black Sea. It would have  
6 affected the safety of Turkey, and it would, in due course,  
7 have exposed to the gravest dangers Persia, Iraq, Cyria and  
8 Palestine, and beyond those countries, all of which are now  
9 under our control, it would have threatened the Suez Canal,  
10 Egypt and the Nile Valley. At the same time as this menace  
11 defined itself with hideous and increasing reality as it seemed,  
12 General von Rommel, with his army of 10 German and Italian  
13 divisions entrenched in his fortified positions at and behind  
14 the Halfaya Pass, was preparing to make a decisive attack on  
15 Tobruk as a preliminary to a renewed advance upon Egypt from  
16 the West. The Nile Valley was therefore menaced simultaneously  
17 by a direct attack from the West and by a more remote but in  
18 some ways more deadly attack from the North. In such circum-  
19 stances it is the classical rule of war, reinforced by endless  
20 examples -- and some exceptions -- that you prepare to fight  
21 a delaying action against one of the two attacks and concen-  
22 trate, if possible, overwhelming strength against the other and  
23 nearer attack. We therefore approved General Auchinleck's  
24 plans for building up a delaying force in the vast region from  
25 Cyprus to the Caspian Sea, along what I may call the Levant-



1 Caspian front, and preparing installations, airfields and com-  
2 munications upon which larger forces could be based, as time  
3 and transport allowed. On the other flank, the Western  
4 flank, we prepared to set upon Rommel and try to make a good  
5 job of him. For the sake of this battle in the Libyan Desert  
6 we concentrated everything we could lay our hands on, and we  
7 submitted to a very long delay, very painful to bear over here,  
8 so that all preparations could be perfected. We hoped to  
9 recapture Cyrenaica and the important airfields round Benghazi.  
10 But General Auchinleck's main objective was more simple. He  
11 set himself to destroy Rommel's army. Such was the mood in  
12 which we stood three or four months ago. Such was the broad  
13 strategical decision we took.

14 Now, when we see how events, which so often mock and  
15 falsify human effort and design, have shaped themselves, I am  
16 sure this was a right decision.

17 General Auchinleck had demanded five months' preparation  
18 for his campaign, but on 18th November he fell upon the enemy.  
19 For more than two months in the desert the most fierce, con-  
20 tinuous battle has raged between scattered bands of men, armed  
21 with the latest weapons, seeking each other dawn after dawn,  
22 fighting to the death throughout the day and then often long  
23 into the night. Here was a battle which turned out very dif-  
24 ferently from what was foreseen. All was dispersed and con-  
25 fused. Much depended on the individual soldier and the



1 junior officer. Much, but not all; because this battle would  
2 have been lost on 24th November if General Auchinleck had not  
3 intervened himself, changed the command and ordered the ruth-  
4 less pressure of the attack to be maintained without regard to  
5 risks or consequences. But for this robust decision we  
6 should now be back on the old line from which we had started,  
7 or perhaps further back. Tobruk would possibly have fallen,  
8 and Rommel might be marching towards the Nile. Since then  
9 the battle has declared itself. Cyrenaica has been regained.  
10 It has still to be held. We have not succeeded in destroying  
11 Rommel's army, but nearly two-thirds of it are wounded,  
12 prisoners or dead.

13 Perhaps I may give the figures to the House. In this  
14 strange, sombre battle of the desert, where our men have met  
15 the enemy for the first time -- I do not say in every respect,  
16 because there are some things which are not all that we had  
17 hoped for -- but, upon the whole, have met him with equal  
18 weapons, we have lost in killed, wounded and captured about  
19 18,000 officers and men, of whom the greater part are British.  
20 We have in our possession 36,500 prisoners, including many  
21 wounded, of whom 10,500 are Germans. We have killed and  
22 wounded at least 11,500 Germans and 13,000 Italians -- in all  
23 a total, accounted for exactly, of 61,000 men. There is also  
24 a mass of enemy wounded, some of whom have been evacuated to  
25 the rear or to the Westward -- I cannot tell how many. Of



1 the forces of which General Rommel disposed on 18th November,  
2 little more than one-third now remain, while 852 German and  
3 Italian aircraft have been destroyed and 336 German and  
4 Italian tanks. During this battle we have never had in action  
5 more than 45,000 men, against enemy forces -- if they could  
6 be brought to bear -- much more than double as strong. There-  
7 fore, it seems to me that this heroic, epic struggle in the  
8 desert, though there have been many local reverses and many  
9 ebbs and flows, has tested our manhood in a searching fashion  
10 and has proved not only that our men can die for King and  
11 country -- everyone knew that -- but that they can kill.

12 I cannot tell what the position at the present moment is  
13 on the Western front in Cyrenaica. We have a very daring and  
14 skillful opponent against us and, may I say across the havoc  
15 of war, a great General. He has certainly received reinforce-  
16 ments. Another battle is even now in progress, and I make it  
17 a rule never to try and prophesy beforehand how battles will  
18 turn out. I always rejoice that I have made that rule. (AN  
19 HON. MEMBER: "What about the Skaggerak?") That was hardly a  
20 battle. Naturally, one does not say in a case like that that  
21 we have not a chance, because that is apt to be encouraging  
22 to the enemy and depressing to our own friends. In the general  
23 upshot, the fact remains that, whereas a year ago the Germans  
24 were telling all the neutrals that they would be in Suez by  
25 May, when some people talked of the possibility of a German



1 descent upon Assiut, and many people were afraid that Tobruk  
2 would be stormed and others feared for the Nile Valley, Cairo,  
3 Alexandria and the Canal, we have conducted an effective offen-  
4 sive against the enemy and hurled him backward, inflicting upon  
5 him incomparably more -- well, I should not say incomparably,  
6 because I have just given the comparison, but far heavier  
7 losses and damage -- than we have suffered ourselves. Not  
8 only has he lost three times our losses on the battlefield,  
9 approximately, but the blue waters of the Mediterranean have,  
10 thanks to the enterprise of the Royal Navy, our submarines and  
11 Air Force, drowned a large number of the reinforcements which  
12 have been continually sent. This process has had further  
13 important successes during the last few days. Whether you call  
14 it a victory or not, it must be dubbed up to the present,  
15 although I will not make any promises, a highly profitable  
16 transaction, and certainly is an episode of war most glorious  
17 to the British, South African, New Zealand, Indian, Free French  
18 and Polish soldiers, sailors and airmen who have played their  
19 part in it. The prolonged, stubborn, steadfast and successful  
20 defence of Tobruk by Australian and British troops was an  
21 essential preliminary, over seven hard months, to any success  
22 which may have been achieved.

23 Let us see what has happened on the other flank, the  
24 Northern flank, of the Nile Valley. What has happened to  
25 Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Persia? There we must thank Russia.



1 There the valour of the Russian Armies has warded off dangers  
2 which we saw and which we undoubtedly ran. The Caucasus and  
3 the precious oilfields of Baku, the great Anglo-Persian  
4 oilfields, are denied to the enemy. Winter has come. Evi-  
5 dently we have the time to strengthen still further our Forces  
6 and organisations in those regions. Therefore, sir, I pre-  
7 sent to you, in laying the whole field open and bare and  
8 surveying it in all its parts, for all are related, a situa-  
9 tion in the Nile Valley, both West and East, incomparably  
10 easier than anything we have ever seen, since we were  
11 deserted by the French Bordeaux-Vichy Government and were  
12 set upon by Italy. The House will not fail to discern the  
13 agate points upon which this vast improvement has turned.  
14 It is only by the smallest margin that we have succeeded so  
15 far in beating Rommel in Cyrenaica and destroying two-thirds  
16 of his forces. Every tank, every aircraft squadron was  
17 needed. It is only by the victories on the Russian flank on  
18 the Black Sea coast that we have been spared the overrunning  
19 of all those vast lands from the Levant to the Caspian,  
20 which in turn give access to India, Persia, the Persian Gulf,  
21 the Nile Valley and the Suez Canal.

22 I have told the House the story of these few months,  
23 and hon. Members will see from it how narrowly our resources  
24 have been strained and by what a small margin and by what  
25 strokes of fortune -- for which we claim no credit -- we have



1 survived -- so far. Where should we have been, I wonder, if  
2 we had yielded to the clamour which was so loud three or four  
3 months ago that we should invade France or the Low Countries?  
4 We can still see on the walls the inscription, "Second Front  
5 Now." Who did not feel the appeal of that? But imagine  
6 what our position would have been if we had yielded to this  
7 vehement temptation. Every ton of our shipping, every flo-  
8 tilla, every aeroplane, the whole strength of our Army would  
9 be committed and would be fighting for life on the French  
10 shores or on the shores of the Low Countries. All these  
11 troubles of the Far East and the Middle East might have sunk  
12 to insignificance compared with the question of another and  
13 far worse Dunkirk.

14 Here, let me say, I should like to pay my tribute to one  
15 who has gone from us since I left this country, Mr. Lees-Smith,  
16 who, I remember, spoke with so much profound wisdom on this  
17 point at a moment when many opinions were in flux about it.  
18 His faithful, selfless and wise conduct of the important work  
19 which he discharged in this House was undoubtedly of great  
20 assistance to us all, not only to the Government but to us all,  
21 in the various stages of the war. His memory as a distinguished  
22 Parliamentarian will long find an honoured place in the recol-  
23 lection of those who had the fortune to be his colleagues.

24 Sometimes things can be done by saying, "Yes," and some-  
25 times things can be done by saying "No." Yet I suppose there



1 are some of those who were vocal and voluble, and even clamant,  
2 for a second front to be opened in France, who are now going  
3 to come up bland and smiling and ask why it is that we have  
4 not ample forces in Malaya, Burma, Borneo and the Celebes.  
5 There are times when so many things happen, and happen so  
6 quickly, and time seems to pass in such a way that you can  
7 neither say it is long or short, that it is easy to forget what  
8 you have said three months before. You may fail to connect  
9 it with what you are advocating at the particular moment.  
10 Throughout a long and variegated Parliamentary life this con-  
11 sideration has led me to try and keep a watchful eye on that  
12 danger myself. You never can tell. There are also people who  
13 talk and bear themselves as if they had prepared for this war  
14 with great armaments and long, careful preparation. But that  
15 is not true. In two and a half years of fighting we have  
16 only just managed to keep our heads above water. When I was  
17 called upon to be Prime Minister, now nearly two years go,  
18 there were not many applicants for the job. Since then, per-  
19 haps, the market has improved. In spite of the shameful  
20 negligence, gross muddles, blatant incompetence, complacency,  
21 and lack of organising power which are daily attributed to  
22 us -- and from which chidings we endeavour to profit -- we  
23 are beginning to see our way through. It looks as if we were  
24 in for a very bad time, but provided we all start together,  
25 and provided we throw in the last spasm of our strength, it



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1 also looks, more than it ever did before, as if we were going  
2 to win.

3       While facing Germany and Italy here and in the Nile  
4 Valley we have never had any power to provide effectively for  
5 the defence of the Far East. My whole argument so far has  
6 led up to that point. It may be that this or that might have  
7 been done which was not done, but we have never been able to  
8 provide effectively for the defence of the Far East against an  
9 attack by Japan. It has been the policy of the Cabinet at  
10 almost all costs to avoid embroilment with Japan until we were  
11 sure that the United States would also be engaged. We even  
12 had to stoop, as the House will remember, when we were at our  
13 very weakest point, to close the Burma Road for some months.  
14 I remember that some of our present critics were very angry  
15 about it, but we had to do it. There never has been a moment,  
16 there never could have been a moment, when Great Britain or  
17 the British Empire, single-handed, could fight Germany and  
18 Italy, could wage the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the  
19 Atlantic and the Battle of the Middle East -- and at the same  
20 time stand thoroughly prepared in Burma, the Malay Peninsula,  
21 and generally in the Far East against the impact of a vast  
22 military Empire like Japan, with more than 70 mobile divisions,  
23 the third navy in the world, a great air force and the thrust  
24 of 80 or 90 millions of hardy, warlike Asiatics. If we had  
25 started to scatter our forces over these immense areas in the



1 Far East, we should have been ruined. If we had moved large  
2 armies of troops urgently needed on the war fronts to regions  
3 which were not at war and might never be at war we should have  
4 been altogether wrong. We should have cast away the chance,  
5 which has now become something more than a chance, of all of  
6 us emerging safely from the terrible plight in which we have  
7 been plunged.

8 We therefore have lain -- I am putting it as bluntly as  
9 I can -- for nearly two years under the threat of an attack  
10 by Japan with which we had no means of coping. But as time  
11 has passed the mighty United States, under the leadership of  
12 President Roosevelt, from reasons of its own interest and  
13 safety but also out of chivalrous regard for the cause of free-  
14 dom and democracy, has drawn ever nearer to the confines of  
15 the struggle. And now that the blow has fallen it does not  
16 fall on us alone. On the contrary, it falls upon united forces  
17 and unified nations, which are unquestionably capable of  
18 enduring the struggle, of retrieving the losses and of pre-  
19 venting another such stroke ever being delivered again.

20 There is an argument with which I will deal as I pass  
21 along to pursue my theme. It is said by some, "If only you  
22 had organised the munitions production of this country  
23 properly and had had a Minister of Production (and that is  
24 not a question which should be dogmatised upon either way) it  
25 would have made everything all right. There would have been



1 enough for all needs. We should have had enough supplies  
2 for Russia, enough well-equipped squadrons and divisions to  
3 defend the British Islands, to sustain the Middle East and to  
4 arm the Far East effectively." But that is really not true.  
5 As a matter of fact, our munitions output is gigantic, has for  
6 some time been very large indeed, and it is bounding up in a  
7 most remarkable manner. In the last year, 1941, although we  
8 were at war in so many theatres and on so many fronts, we have  
9 produced more than double the munitions equipment of the United  
10 States, which was arming heavily, though of course a lap behind  
11 on the road. This condition will naturally be rapidly removed  
12 as the full power of American industry come into full swing.  
13 But, Sir, in the last six months, thanks to the energies of  
14 Lord Beaverbrook and the solid spadework done by his prede-  
15 cessors and the passage of time -- he particularly asks me to  
16 say that -- (An HON. MEMBER: "Who did?")--Lord Beaverbrook;  
17 I should have said it anyway -- our munitions output has  
18 risen in the following respects: We are producing more than  
19 twice as many far more complicated guns every month than we  
20 did in the peak of 1917-18 war period, and the curve is  
21 rising. The guns are infinitely more complicated. Tank  
22 production has doubled in the last six months. Small arms pro-  
23 duction is more than twice what it was six months ago. Filled  
24 rounds of ammunition have doubled in the last six months. I  
25 could go on with the catalogue, but these are not doublings



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1 from early very small totals, they are doublings from the  
2 totals we boasted about, as far as we dared six months ago.  
3 There has been an immense leap forward. In aircraft produc-  
4 tion there is a steady increase not only in the numbers but  
5 also in the size and quality of the aircraft, though I must  
6 say there has not been all the increase which I had hoped for.

7 But all this has nothing to do with the preparations it  
8 was open to us to make in Malaya and Burma and generally in  
9 the Far East. The limiting factor has not been troops or  
10 even equipment. The limiting factor has been transport, even  
11 assuming we had wished to take this measure and had had this  
12 great surplus. From the time that this present Government was  
13 formed, from the moment it was formed I may say, every scrap  
14 of shipping we could draw away from our vital supply routes,  
15 every U-boat escort we could divert from the Battle of the  
16 Atlantic, has been busy to the utmost capacity to carry troops,  
17 tanks and munitions from this Island to the East. There has  
18 been a ceaseless flow, and as for aircraft they have not only  
19 been moved by sea but by every route, some very dangerous and  
20 costly routes, to the Eastern battlefields. The decision was  
21 taken, as I have explained, to make our contribution to Russia,  
22 to try to beat Rommel and to form a stronger front from the  
23 Levant to the Caspian. It followed from that decision that  
24 it was in our power only to make a moderate and partial pro-  
25 vision in the Far East against the hypothetical danger of a



1 Japanese onslaught. Sixty thousand men, indeed, were concen-  
2 trated at Singapore, but priority in modern aircraft, in tanks,  
3 and in anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery was accorded to  
4 the Nile Valley.

5 For this decision in its broad strategic aspects, and  
6 also in its diplomatic policy in regard to Russia, I take the  
7 fullest personal responsibility. If we have handled our  
8 resources wrongly, no one is so much to blame as me. If we  
9 have not got large modern air forces and tanks in Burma and  
10 Malaya to-night no one is more accountable than I am. Why  
11 then should I be called upon to pick out scapegoats, to throw  
12 the blame on generals or airmen or sailors? Why, then,  
13 should I be called upon to drive away loyal and trusted col-  
14 leagues and friends to appease the clamour of certain sections  
15 of the British and Australian Press, or in order to take the  
16 edge off our reverses in Malaya and the Far East, and the  
17 punishment which we have yet to take there? I would be  
18 ashamed to do such a thing at such a time, and if I were capable  
19 of doing it, believe me, I should be incapable of rendering  
20 this country or this House any further service.

21 I say that without in the slightest degree seeking to  
22 relieve myself from my duties and responsibility to endeavour  
23 to make continual improvements in Ministerial positions. It  
24 is the duty of every Prime Minister to the House, but we have  
25 to be quite sure that they are improvements in every case, and



1 not only in every case but in the setting. I could not pos-  
2 sibly descend to, as the German radio repeatedly credits me  
3 with, an attempt to get out of difficulties in which I really  
4 bear the main load by offering up scapegoats to public dis-  
5 pleasure. Many people, many very well-meaning people, begin  
6 their criticisms and articles by saying, "Of course, we are  
7 all in favour of the Prime Minister because he has the people  
8 behind him. But what about the muddles made by this or that  
9 Department; what about that general or this Minister?" But I  
10 am the man that Parliament and the nation have got to blame  
11 for the general way in which they are served, and I cannot  
12 serve them effectively unless, in spite of all that has gone  
13 wrong, and that is going to go wrong, I have their trust and  
14 faithful aid.

15 I must linger for a moment on our political affairs, because  
16 we are conducting the war on the basis of a full democracy and a  
17 free Press, and that is an attempt which has not been made before  
18 in such circumstances. A variety of attacks are made upon the  
19 composition of the Government. It is said that it is formed  
20 upon a party and political basis. But so is the House of  
21 Commons. It is silly to extol the Parliamentary system and then,  
22 in the next breath, to say, "Away with party and away with  
23 politics." From one quarter I am told that the leaders of  
24 the Labour party ought to be dismissed from the Cabinet. This  
25 would be a return to party Government pure and simple. From



1 opposite quarters it is said that no one who approved of  
2 Munich should be allowed to hold office. To do that would be  
3 to cast a reflection upon the great majority of the nation at  
4 that time, and also to deny the strongest party in the House  
5 any proportionate share in the National Government, which  
6 again, in turn, might cause inconvenience. Even my right hon.  
7 Friend the leader of the Liberal party--(An HON. MEMBER: "Who  
8 is he?")--the Secretary of State for Air, whose help to-day I  
9 value so much and with whom, as a lifelong friend, it is a  
10 pleasure to work, even he has not escaped unscathed. If I  
11 were to show the slightest weakness in dealing with these  
12 opposite forms of criticism, not only should I deprive myself  
13 of loyal and experienced colleagues, but I should destroy the  
14 National Government and rupture the war-time unity of Parlia-  
15 ment itself.

WARD & BYRD WASHINGTON, D. C.

16 Other attacks are directed against individual Ministers.  
17 I have been urged to make an example of the Chancellor of the  
18 Duchy of Lancaster, who is now returning from his mission in  
19 the Far East. Thus, he would be made to bear the blame for  
20 our misfortunes. The position of the Chancellor of the Duchy  
21 of Lancaster at the head of the Council which he had been  
22 instructed to form at Singapore was rendered obsolete by the  
23 decision which I reached with the President of the United  
24 States to set up a Supreme Commander for the main fighting  
25 zone in the Far East. The whole conception of a Supreme



1 Commander is that, under the direction of the Governments he  
2 serves, he is absolute master of all authorities in the region  
3 assigned to him. This would be destroyed if political func-  
4 tionaries representing the various nations -- for it is not  
5 only this country which would be represented; others would  
6 have to be represented as well as ours -- were clustered round  
7 him. The function of the Chancellor of the Duchy was there-  
8 fore exhausted by the appointment of General Wavell to the  
9 Supreme Command. I may say that regret was expressed at his  
10 departure by the New Zealand and Australian Governments, and  
11 still more by the Council he formed at Singapore, which, in a  
12 localised and subordinate form, it has been found necessary  
13 to carry on. When I am invited, under threats of unpopularity  
14 to myself or the Government, to victimise the Chancellor of  
15 the Duchy, and throw him to the wolves, I say to those who  
16 make this amiable suggestion, I can only say to them, "I much  
17 regret that I am unable to gratify your wishes,"--or words to  
18 that effect.

19 The outstanding question upon which the House should form  
20 its judgment for the purposes of the impending Division is  
21 whether His Majesty's Government were right in giving a  
22 marked priority in the distribution of the forces and equip-  
23 ment we could send overseas, to Russia, to Libya, and, to a  
24 lesser extent, to the Levant-Caspian danger front, and whether  
25 we were right in accepting, for the time being, a far lower



1 standard of forces and equipment for the Far East than for  
2 these other theatres. The first obvious fact is that the  
3 Far Eastern theatre was at peace and that the other theatres  
4 were in violent or imminent war. It would evidently have  
5 been a very improvident use of our limited resources -- as I  
6 pointed out earlier -- if we had kept large masses of troops  
7 and equipment spread about the immense areas of the Pacific  
8 or in India, Burma and the Malay Peninsula, standing idle,  
9 month by month and perhaps year by year, without any war  
10 occurring. Thus, we should have failed in our engagements  
11 to Russia, which has meanwhile struck such staggering blows  
12 at the German Army, and we should have lost the battle in  
13 Cyrenaica, which we have not yet won, and we might now be  
14 fighting defensively well inside the Egyptian frontier. There  
15 is the question on which the House should make up its mind.  
16 We had not the resources to meet all the perils and pressures  
17 that came upon us.

18 But this question, serious and large as it is by itself.  
19 cannot be wholly decided without some attempt to answer the  
20 further question -- what was the likelihood of the Far Eastern  
21 theatre being thrown into war by a Japanese attack? I have  
22 explained how very delicately we walked, and how painful it  
23 was at all times, how very careful I was every time that we  
24 should not be exposed single-handed to this onslaught which  
25 we were utterly incapable of meeting. But it seemed irrational



1 to suppose that in the last six months -- which is what I am  
 2 principally dealing with -- the Japanese, having thrown away  
 3 their opportunity of attacking us in the autumn of 1940, when  
 4 we were so much weaker, so much less well-armed, and all  
 5 alone, should at this period have plunged into a desperate  
 6 struggle against the combined Forces of the British Empire and  
 7 the United States. Nevertheless, nations, like individuals,  
 8 commit irrational acts, and there were forces at work in  
 9 Japan, violent, murderous, fanatical and explosive forces,  
 10 which no one could measure.

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WARD & LAWYERS WASHINGTON, D. C.

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1           On the other hand, the probability, since the Atlantic  
2 Conference, at which I discussed these matters with Mr. Roose-  
3 velt, that the United States, even if not herself attacked,  
4 would come into a war in the FarEast, and thus make final  
5 victory sure, seemed to allay some of these anxieties. That  
6 expectation has not been falsified by the events. It fortified  
7 our British decision to use our limited resources on the actual  
8 fighting fronts. As time went on, one had greater assurance  
9 that if Japan ran amok in the Pacific, we should not fight  
10 alone. It must also be remembered that over the whole of  
11 the Pacific scene brooded the great power of the United States  
12 Fleet, concentrated at Hawaii. It seemed very unlikely that  
13 Japan would attempt the distant invasion of the Malay Peninsula,  
14 the assault upon Singapore, and the attack upon the Dutch East  
15 India, while leaving behind them in their rear this great  
16 American Fleet. However to strengthen the position as the  
17 situation seemed to intensify we sent the "Prince of Wales"  
18 and the "Repulse" to form the spear-point of the considerable  
19 battle forces which we felt ourselves at length able to form  
20 in the Indian Ocean. We reinforced Singapore to a considerable  
21 extent and Hong Kong to the extent which we were advised would be  
22 sufficient to hold the island for a long time. Besides this  
23 in minor ways we took what precautions were open to us. On 7th  
24 December the Japanese, by a sudden attack, delivered while their  
25 envoys were still negotiating at Washington, crippled for the



1 time being the American Pacific Fleet, and a few days later  
2 inflicted very heavy naval losses on us by sinking the "Prince  
3 of Wales" and the "Repulse."

4 For the time being, therefore, naval superiority in the  
5 Pacific and in the Malaysian Archipelago has passed from the  
6 hands of the two leading naval Powers into the hands of Japan.  
7 How long it will remain in Japanese hands is a matter on which  
8 I do not intend to speculate. But at any rate it will be long  
9 enough for Japan to inflict very heavy and painful losses on all  
10 of the United Nations who have establishments and possessions  
11 in the Far East. The Japanese no doubt will try to peg out  
12 claims and lodgments over all this enormous area, and to or-  
13 ganise, in the interval before they lose command of the seas,  
14 a local command of the air which will render their expulsion  
15 destruction a matter of considerable time and exertion.

16 Here I must point out a very simple strategic truth. If  
17 there are 1,000 islands and 100 valuable military key points  
18 and you put 1,000 men on every one of them or whatever it may  
19 be, the Power that has the command of the sea and carries with  
20 it the local command of the air, can go around to every one of  
21 these places in turn, destroy or capture their garrisons,  
22 ravage and pillage them, ensconce themselves wherever they  
23 think fit, and then pass on with their circus to the next place.  
24 It would be vain to suppose that such an attack could be met by  
25 local defence. You might disperse 1,000,000 men over these



1 immense areas and yet only provide more prey to the dominant  
2 Power. On the other hand, these conditions will be reversed  
3 when the balance of sea power and air power changes, as it will  
4 surely change.

5 Such is the phase of the Pacific war into which we have now  
6 entered. I cannot tell how long it will last. All I can tell  
7 the House is that it will be attended by very heavy punishment  
8 which we shall have to endure, and that presently, if we perse-  
9 vere, as I said just now about the Russian front, the boot will  
10 be on the other leg. That is why we should not allow ourselves  
11 to get rattled because this or that place has been captured,  
12 because, once the ultimate power of the United Nations has been  
13 brought to bear, the opposite process will be brought into play,  
14 and will move forward remorselessly to the final conclusion,  
15 provided that we persevere, provided that we fight with the  
16 utmost vigour and tenacity, and provided, above all, that we  
17 remain united.

18 Here I should like to express, in the name of the House,  
19 my admiration of the splendid courage and quality with which  
20 the small American Army, under General MacArthur, has resisted  
21 brilliantly for so long, at desperate odds, the hordes of  
22 Japanese who have been hurled against it by superior air power  
23 and superior sea power. Amid our own troubles, we sent out  
24 to General MacArthur and his soldiers, and also to the Fili-  
25 pines, who are defending their native soil with vigour and



1 courage, our salute across those wide spaces which we and the  
2 United States will presently rule again together. Nor must I  
3 fail to pay a tribute, in the name of the House, to the Dutch,  
4 who, in the air and with their submarines, their surface craft,  
5 and their solid fighting troops, are playing one of the main  
6 parts in the struggle now going on in the Malaysian Archipelago.

7 We have to turn our eyes for a moment to the hard-fought  
8 battle which is raging upon the approaches to Singapore and in  
9 the Malay Peninsula. I am not going to make any forecast about  
10 that now, except that it will be fought to the last inch by the  
11 British, Australian and Indian troops, which are in the line  
12 together, and which have been very considerably reinforced.  
13 The Hon. Member for the Eye Division of Suffolk (Mr. Granville)  
14 had a very sound military idea the other day, when he pointed  
15 out the importance of sending reinforcements of aircraft to  
16 assist our ground forces at Singapore and in Burma. I entirely  
17 agree with him. In fact, we anticipated his suggestion. Before  
18 I left for the United States, on 12th December, the moment,  
19 that is to say, when the situation in Singapore and Pearl Harbour  
20 had disclosed itself, it was possible to make a swift redis-  
21 tribution of our Forces. The moment was favourable. General  
22 Auchinleck was making headway in Cyrenaica; the Russian front  
23 not only stood unbroken but had begun the advance in a magnificent  
24 counter-attack, and we were able to order a large number of  
25 measures, which there is no need to elaborate, but which will



1 be capable of being judged by their results as the next few  
2 weeks and the next few months unfold in the Far East.

3 When I reached the United States, accompanied by our prin-  
4 cipal officers and large technical staffs, further important  
5 steps were taken by the President, with my cordial assent, and  
6 with the best technical advise we could obtain, to move from  
7 many directions everything that ships could carry and all air  
8 power that could be flown transported and serviced to suitable  
9 points. The House would be very ill-advised to suppose that  
10 the seven weeks which have passed since 7th December have been  
11 weeks of apathy and indecision for the English-speaking world.  
12 Odd as it may seem quite a lot has been going on. But we must  
13 not nourish or indulge light and extravagant hopes or suppose  
14 that the advantages which the enemy have gained can soon or  
15 easily be taken from him. However, to sum up the bad and the  
16 good together, in spite of the many tragedies past and future,  
17 and with all pity for those who have suffered and will suffer,  
18 I must profess my profound thankfulness for what has happened  
19 throughout the whole world in the last two months.

20 I now turn for a short space -- I hope I am not unduly  
21 wearying the House, but I feel that the war has become so wide  
22 that there are many aspects that must be regarded -- to the  
23 question of the organisation, the international, inter-Allied,  
24 or inter-United Nations organisation, which must be developed  
25 to meet the fact that we are a vast confederacy. To hear some



1 people talk, however, one would think that the way to win the  
2 war is to make sure that every Power contributing armed forces  
3 and every branch of the these armed forces is represented on all  
4 the councils and organisations which have to be set up, and  
5 that everybody is fully consulted before anything is done. That  
6 is in fact the most sure way to lose a war. You have to be  
7 aware of the well-known danger of having "more harness than  
8 horse," to quote a homely expression. Action to be suc-  
9 cessful must rest in the fewest number of hands possible.

10 Nevertheless, now that we are working in the closest partnership  
11 with the United States and have also to consider our Alliance  
12 with Russia and with China, as well as the bonds which unite  
13 us with the rest of the 26 United Nations and with our Dominions,  
14 it is evident that our system must become far more complex than  
15 heretofore.

16 I had many discussions with the President upon the Anglo-  
17 American war direction, especially as it affects this war against  
18 Japan, to which Russia is not yet a party. The physical and  
19 geographical difficulties of finding a common working centre  
20 for the leaders of nations and the great staffs of nations  
21 which cover the whole globe are insuperable. Whatever plan  
22 is made will be open to criticism and many valid objections.  
23 There is no solution that can be found where the war can be  
24 discussed from day to day fully by all the leading military  
25 and political authorities concerned. I have, however, arranged



1 with President Roosevelt that there should be a body in Washington  
2 called the Combined Chiefs of the Staff Committee, consisting of  
3 the three United States Chiefs of the Staff, men of the highest  
4 distinction, and three high officers representing and acting  
5 under the general instructions of the British Chiefs of the  
6 Staff Committee in London. This body will advise the Presi-  
7 dent, and in the event of divergence of view between the British  
8 and American Chiefs of the Staff or their representatives, the  
9 difference must be adjusted by personal agreement between him  
10 and me as representing our respective countries. We must also  
11 concert together the closest association with Premier Stalin  
12 and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek as well as with the rest of  
13 the Allied and Associated Powers. We shall, of course, also  
14 remain in the closest touch with one another on all important  
15 questions of policy.

16 In order to wage the war effectively against Japan, it was  
17 agreed that I should propose to those concerned the setting-up  
18 of a Pacific Council in London, on the Ministerial plane,  
19 comprising Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the Dutch  
20 Government. Assisted by the British Chiefs of the Staff and  
21 the great staffs organisations beneath them, I was to try to  
22 form and focus a united view. This would enable the British  
23 Commonwealth to act as a whole and form part of plans -- plans  
24 which are at present far advanced -- for collaboration at the  
25 appropriate levels in the spheres of defence, foreign affairs



1 and supply. Thus the united view of the British Commonwealth  
2 and the Dutch would be transmitted, at first, on the Chiefs of  
3 the Staff level, to the combined Chiefs of the Staff Committee  
4 sitting in Washington. In the event of differences between the  
5 members of the Pacific Council in London, dissentient opinions  
6 would also be transmitted. In the event of differences between  
7 the London and Washington bodies, it would be necessary for the  
8 President and me to reach an agreement. I must point out  
9 that it is necessary for everybody to reach an agreement, for  
10 nobody can compel anybody else.

11 The Dutch Government, which is seated in London, might be  
12 willing to agree to this arrangement, but the Australian Govern-  
13 ment desired and the New Zealand Government preferred that this  
14 Council of the Pacific should be in Washington, where it would  
15 work alongside the Combined Chiefs of the Staff Committee. I  
16 have therefore transmitted the views of these two Dominions to  
17 the President, but I have not yet received, nor do I expect  
18 for a few days to receive, his reply. I am not, therefore,  
19 in a position to-day to announce, as I had hoped, the definite  
20 and final arrangements for the Pacific Council.

21 I should like to say, however, that underlying these structu-  
22 ral arrangements are some very practical and simple facts upon  
23 which there is full agreement. The Supreme Commander has as-  
24 sumed control of the fighting areas in the South-West Pacific  
25 called the "A.B.D.A." area -- A. B. D. A. -- called after the



1 countries which are involved, not the countries which are in  
2 the area but the countries which are involved in that area,  
3 namely, America, Britain, Dutch and Australasia. We do not  
4 propose to burden the Supreme Commander with frequent instruc-  
5 tions. He has his general orders, and he has addressed him-  
6 self with extraordinary bouyancy to his most difficult task, and  
7 President Roosevelt and I, representing, for my part, the British  
8 Government, are determined that he shall have a chance and a  
9 free hand to carry it out. The action in the Straits of Macassar  
10 undertaken by forces assigned to this area apparently has had  
11 very considerable success, of the full extent of which I am  
12 not yet advised. The manner in which General Wavell took up  
13 his task, the speed with which he has flown from place to place,  
14 the telegrams which he has sent describing the methods by which  
15 he was grappling with the situation and the forming of the  
16 central organism which was needed to deal with it -- all this  
17 has made a most favourable impression upon the high officers,  
18 military and political, whom I met in the United States. This  
19 is all going on. Our duty, upon which we have been constantly  
20 engaged for some time, is to pass reinforcements of every kind,  
21 especially air, into the new war zone, from every quarter and  
22 by every means, with the utmost speed.

23 In order to extend the system of unified command which  
24 has been set up in the "A.B.D.A." area -- that is to say, the  
25 South-West Pacific -- where the actual fighting is going on,



1 in order to extend that system to all areas in which the forces  
2 of more than one of the United Nations -- because that is the  
3 term we have adopted -- will be operating, the Eastward approaches  
4 to Australia and New Zealand have been styled the Anzac area,  
5 and are under United States command, the communications between  
6 the Anzac area and America are a United States responsibility,  
7 while the communications across the Indian Ocean and from India  
8 remain a British responsibility. All this is now working, while  
9 the larger constitutional, or semi-constitutional, discussions  
10 and structural arrangements are being elaborated by telegrams  
11 passing to and fro between so many Governments. All this is  
12 now working fully and actively from hour to hour, and it must  
13 not, therefore, be supposed that any necessary military action  
14 has been held up pending the larger structural arrangements which  
15 I have mentioned.

16 Now I come to the question of our own Empire or Common-  
17 wealth of Nations. The fact that Australia and New Zealand  
18 are in the immediate danger zone reinforces the demand that  
19 they should be represented in the War Cabinet of Great Britain  
20 and Northern Ireland. We have always been ready to form an Im-  
21 perial War Cabinet containing the Prime Ministers of the four  
22 Dominions. Whenever any of them have come here they have  
23 taken their seats at our table as a matter of course. Unhappily,  
24 it has not been possible to get them all here together at once.  
25 General Smuts may not be able to come over from South Africa,



1 and Mr. MacKenzie King could unfortunately stay only for a  
2 short time. But Mr. Fraser was with us, and it was a great  
3 pleasure to have him, and we had a three months' visit from Mr.  
4 Menzies, which was also a great success, and we were all very  
5 sorry when his most valuable knowledge of our affairs and the  
6 war position, and his exceptional abilities, were lost. For  
7 the last three months we have had Sir Earle Page representing  
8 the Commonwealth Government at Cabinets when war matters and  
9 Australian matters were under discussion and also, in similar  
10 circumstances upon the Defence Committee. As a matter of fact  
11 this has always been interpreted in the most broad and elastic  
12 fashion. The Australian Government have now asked specifically,  
13 "that an accredited representative of the Commonwealth Govern-  
14 ment should have the right to be heard in the War Cabinet in  
15 the formulation and the direction of policy." We have of course  
16 agreed to this. New Zealand feels bound to ask for similar  
17 representation, and the same facilities will of course be  
18 available to Canada and South Africa. The presence at the  
19 Cabinet table of Dominion representatives who have no power to  
20 take decisions and can only report to their Governments evi-  
21 dently raises some serious problems but none, I trust, which  
22 cannot be got over with good will. It must not, however, be  
23 supposed that in any circumstances the presence of Dominion  
24 representatives for certain purposes could in any way affect the  
25 collective responsibility of His Majesty's Servants in Great



1 Britain to Crown and Parliament.

2 I am sure we all sympathise with our kith and kin in  
3 Australia now that the shield of British and American sea power  
4 has, for the time being, been withdrawn from them so unexpectedly  
5 and so tragically and now that hostile bombers may soon be within  
6 range of Australian shores. We shall not put any obstacle to  
7 the return of the splendid Australian troops who volunteered  
8 for Imperial service to defend their own homeland or whatever  
9 part of the Pacific theatre may be thought most expedient. We  
10 are taking many measures in conjunction with the United States  
11 to increase the security of Australia and New Zealand and to  
12 send them reinforcements, arms and equipment by the shortest  
13 and best routes. I always hesitate to express opinions about  
14 the future, because things turn out so very oddly, but I will go  
15 so far as to say that it may be that the Japanese, whose game is  
16 what I may call "to make hell while the sun shines," are more  
17 likely to occupy themselves in securing their rich prizes in  
18 the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies and the Malayan Archi-  
19 pelago and in seizing island bases for defensive purposes for  
20 the attack which is obviously coming towards them at no great  
21 distance of time -- a tremendous onslaught which will character-  
22 ise the future in 1942 and 1943. (An HON. MEMBER: "1944  
23 and 1945?") No, I do not think we can stretch our views beyond  
24 those dates, but, again, we must see how we go. I think they  
25 are much more likely to be arranging themselves in those dis-



1 triots which they have taken or are likely to take than to  
2 undertake a serious mass invasion of Australia. That would  
3 seem to be a very ambitious overseas operation for Japan to  
4 undertake in the precarious and limited interval before the  
5 British and American navies regain -- as they must certainly  
6 regain, through the new building that is advancing, and for  
7 other reasons -- the unquestionable command of the Pacific Ocean.  
8 However, everything in human power that we can do to help  
9 Australia, or persuade America to do, we will do; and meanwhile  
10 I trust that reproaches and recriminations of all kinds will  
11 be avoided, and that if any are made, we in Britain will not  
12 take part in them.

13 Let me, in conclusion, return to the terrific changes  
14 which have occurred in our affairs during the last few months  
15 and particularly in the last few weeks. We have to consider  
16 the prospects of the war in 1942 and also in 1943, and, as I  
17 said just now, it is not useful to look further ahead than that.  
18 The moment that the United States was set upon and attacked  
19 by Japan, Germany and Italy -- that is to say, within a few days  
20 of December 7, 1941 -- I was sure it was my duty to cross the  
21 Atlantic and establish the closest possible relationship with  
22 the President and Government of the United States, and also to  
23 develop the closest contacts, personal and professional, between  
24 the British Chiefs of Staff and their trans-Atlantic deputies,  
25 and with the American Chiefs of Staff who were there to meet them.



1           Having crossed the Atlantic, it was plainly my duty to  
2 visit the great Dominion of Canada. The House will have read  
3 with admiration and deep interest the speech made by the Prime  
4 Minister of Canada yesterday on Canada's great and growing  
5 contribution to the common cause in men, in money, and in ma-  
6 terials. A notable part of that contribution is the financial  
7 offer which the Canadian Government have made to this country.  
8 The sum involved is one billion Canadian dollars, about  
9 \$225,000,000. I know the House will wish me to convey to the  
10 Government of Canada our lively appreciation of their timely  
11 and most generous offer. It is unequalled in its scale in  
12 the whole history of the British Empire, and it is a convincing  
13 proof of the determination of Canada to make her maximum contri-  
14 bution towards the successful prosecution of the war.

15           During those three weeks which I spent in Mr. Roosevelt's  
16 home and family, I established with him relations not only of  
17 comradeship, but, I think I may say, of friendship. We can  
18 say anything to each other, however painful. When we parted  
19 he wrung my hand, saying, "We will fight this through to the  
20 bitter end, whatever the cost may be." Behind him rises the  
21 gigantic and hitherto unmobilised gigantic power of the people  
22 of the United States, carrying with them in their life and  
23 death struggle the entire, or almost the entire, Western hemi-  
24 sphere.

25           At Washington, we and our combined staffs surveyed the entire



1 scene of the war, and we reached a number of important prac-  
2 tical decisions. Some of them affect future operations and  
3 cannot, of course, be mentioned, but others have been made  
4 public by declaration or by events. The vanguard of an American  
5 Army has already arrived in the United Kingdom. Very consider-  
6 able forces are following as opportunity may serve. These  
7 forces will take their station in the British Isles and face  
8 with us whatever is coming our way. They impart a freedom  
9 of movement to all forces in the British Isles greater than we  
10 could otherwise have possessed. Numerous United States fighter  
11 and bomber squadrons will also take part in the defence of  
12 Britain and in the ever-increasing bombing offensive against  
13 Germany. The United States Navy is linked in the most inti-  
14 mate union with the Admiralty, both in the Atlantic and the  
15 Pacific. We shall plan our Naval moves together as if we were  
16 literally one people.

17 In the next place, we formed this league of 26 United Nations  
18 in which the principal partners at the present time are Great  
19 Britain and the British Empire, the United States, the Union  
20 of Socialist Soviet Republics of Russia, and the Republic of  
21 China, together with the stout-hearted Dutch, and the represen-  
22 tatives of the rest of the 26 Powers. This Union is based on the  
23 principles of the Atlantic Charter. It aims at the destruction  
24 of Hitlerism in all its forms and manifestations in every corner  
25 of the globe. We will march forward together until every ves-



1 tige of this villainy has been extirpated from the life of the  
2 world.

3 Thirdly, as I have explained at some length, we addressed  
4 ourselves to the war against Japan and to the measures to be  
5 taken to defend Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands East  
6 Indies, Malaya, Burma, and India against Japanese attack or  
7 invasion.

8 Fourthly, we have established a vast common pool of  
9 weapons and munitions, of raw materials and of shipping, the  
10 outline of which has been set forth in a series of memoranda  
11 which I have initialled with the President. I had a talk with  
12 him last night on the telephone, as a result of which an  
13 announcement has been made in the early hours of this morning  
14 in the United States, and I have a White Paper for House  
15 which will be available, I think, in a very short time. Many  
16 people have been staggered by the figures of prospective  
17 American output of war weapons which the President announced  
18 to Congress, and the Germans have affected to regard them with  
19 incredulity. I can only say that Lord Beaverbrook and I were  
20 made acquainted beforehand with all the bases upon which these  
21 colossal programmes were founded, and that I myself heard  
22 President Roosevelt confide their specific tasks to the chiefs  
23 of American industry and I heard these men accept their prodigious  
24 tasks and declare that they would and could fulfil them.  
25 Most important of all is the multiplication of our joint tonnage



1 at sea. The American programmes were already vast. They  
2 have been increased in the proportion of 100 to nearly 160.  
3 If they are completed, as completed I believe they will be, we  
4 shall be able to move across the ocean spaces in 1943 two,  
5 three or even four times as large armies as the considerable  
6 forces we are able to handle at sea at the present time.

7 I expect -- and I have made no secret of it -- that we  
8 shall both of us receive severe ill-usage at the hands of the  
9 Japanese in 1942, but I believe we shall presently regain the  
10 naval command of the Pacific and begin to establish an affective  
11 superiority in the air, and then later on, with the great basic  
12 areas in Australasia, in India and in the Dutch East Indies, we  
13 shall be able to set about our task in good style in 1943. It is  
14 no doubt true that the defeat of Japan will not necessarily  
15 entail the defeat of Hitler, whereas the defeat of Hitler would  
16 enable the whole forces of the united nations to be concentrated  
17 upon the defeat of Japan. But there is no question of re-  
18 garding the war in the Pacific as a secondary operation. The  
19 only limitation applied to its vigorous prosecution will be  
20 the shipping available at any given time.

21 It is most important that we should not overlook the enor-  
22 mous contribution of China to this struggle for world freedom  
23 and democracy. If there is any lesson I have brought back  
24 from the United States that I could express in one word, it would  
25 be "China." That is in all their minds. When we feel the



1 sharp military qualities of the Japanese soldiery in contact  
2 with our own troops, although of course very few have as yet  
3 been engaged, we must remember that China, ill-armed or half-  
4 armed, has, for four and a half years, single handed, under its  
5 glorious leader Chiang Kai-Shek, withstood the main fury of  
6 Japan. We shall pursue the struggle hand in hand with China,  
7 and do everything in our power to give them arms and supplies,  
8 which is all they need to vanquish the invaders of their native  
9 soil and play a magnificent part in the general forward move-  
10 ment of the United Nations.

11 Although I feel the broadening swell of victory and liber-  
12 ation bearing us and all the tortured peoples onwards safely to  
13 the final goal, I must confess to feeling the weight of the war  
14 upon me even more than in the tremendous summer days of 1940.  
15 There are so many fronts which are open, so many vulnerable  
16 points to defend, so many inevitable misfortunes, so many shrill  
17 voices raised to take advantage, now that we can breathe more  
18 freely, of all the turns and twists of war. Therefore, I feel  
19 entitled to come to the House of Commons, whose servant I am,  
20 and ask them not to press me to act against my conscience and  
21 better judgment and make scapegoats in order to improve my own  
22 position, not to press me to do the things which may be clamoured  
23 for at the moment but which will not help in our war effort, but,  
24 on the contrary, to give me their encouragement and to give me their  
25 aid. I have never ventured to predict the future. I stand by my original programme, blood,



1 toll, tears and sweat, which is all I have ever offered, to which  
2 I added, five months later, "many shortcomings, mistakes and  
3 disappointments." But it is because I see the light gleaming  
4 behind the clouds and broadening on our path, that I make so  
5 bold now as to demand a declaration of confidence of the House  
6 of Commons as an additional weapon in the armoury of the united  
7 nations.

8  
9 (Whereupon, at 4:25 p.m., an adjournment was taken until  
10 10:00 a.m., Thursday, January 3, 1946.)