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C.C. (61)
36th Conclusion

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CABINET

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at Admiralty House, S.W. 1,
on Tuesday, 29th June, 1961, at 11:00 a.m.*

Present

The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Prime Minister	The Right Hon. VISCOUNT KILMUIR, Lord Chancellor
The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, MP., Secretary of State for the Home Department (<i>Items 1-7</i>)	The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HAILSHAM, Q.C., Lord President of the Council and Minister for Science
The Right Hon. SELWYN LLOYD, Q.C., M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer	The Right Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (<i>Items 1-8</i>)
The Right Hon. JOHN MACLAY, MP., Secretary of State for Scotland	The Right Hon. HAROLD WATKINSON, M.P., Minister of Defence
The Right Hon. IAIN MACLEOD, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies	The Right Hon. PETER THORNEYCROFT, M.P., Minister of Aviation
The Right Hon. Sir DAVID ECCLES, M.P., Minister of Education	The Right Hon. REGINALD MAUDLING, M.P., President of the Board of Trade
The Right Hon. LORD MILLS, Pay- master-General	The Right Hon. EDWARD HEATH, M.P., Lord Privy Seal
The Right Hon. JOHN HARE, M.P., Minister of Labour	The Right Hon. ERNEST MARPLES, M.P., Minister of Transport
Dr. The Right Hon. CHARLES HILL, M.P., Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster	
The Right Hon. CHRISTOPHER SOAMES. M.P., Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. JOHN PROFUMO, M.P., Secretary of State for War (<i>Items 6</i>)	The Right Hon. MARTIN REDMAYNE, MP., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury
Mr. GILMOUR LEBURN, M.P., Joint Parlia- mentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (<i>Item 7</i>)	Mr. GEOFFREY RIPPON, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Aviation (<i>Item 7</i>)

Secretariat:

The Right Hon. Sir NORMAN BROOK
Mr. F. A. BISHOP
Mr. M. REED

CONTENTS

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	Parliament.....	3
2	Succession to Peerages	3
3	Middle East	3
	Kuwait	
4	South-East Asia Treaty Organisation.....	4
	Laos	
5	South Africa.....	5
	Supply of Arms and Military Equipment	
6	Cameroons.....	6
7	Tourism	7
8	Germany	8
	Defence Facilities in the United Kingdom	

N/B Only Minutes No 6 pages 6 & 7 on Cameroons has been retyped below.

Cameroons

(Previous
Reference:
C.C.(61) 31st
Conclusions,
Minute 7)

6. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Lord Chancellor (C. (61) 86) about the future of the Southern Cameroons.

The Lord Chancellor said that the United Kingdom representatives who had taken part in recent discussions in Buea had found that there were serious differences between the Prime Minister of the Cameroun Republic, Mr. Ahidjo, and the Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons, Mr. Foncha, about the relationship between the two territories when the United Kingdom trusteeship came to an end on 1st October. It had not therefore been possible to discuss the establishment of a Southern Cameroon security force to be trained by the authorities of the Cameroun Republic, and it did not seem likely that Mr. Ahidjo would agree that there should be a separate Southern Cameroon force. In accordance with the Cabinet's previous conclusions the United Kingdom representatives had announced that the British battalion would be withdrawn on 1st October; and, although a formal request for the retention of the battalion had been made, it had subsequently become clear that Mr. Ahidjo would not favour

this course. It was likely that, when it was realised that the British battalion was to be withdrawn on that date, officials of the present Administration, including expatriate police officers, would begin to leave and most expatriate employees of British firms would probably do the same. In these circumstances it would not be practicable for us to provide an Aid Mission.

As a result of their discussions, the United Kingdom representatives had recommended that military action should be taken before 1st October against one camp of 200 terrorists which had been located in an isolated area, that a consular post should be opened at Buea on 1st October, and that the decision to withdraw the British battalion should be announced immediately so that the expatriate officers and employees who wished to leave might have reasonable time to make their arrangements. These recommendations had since been approved by the Colonial Policy Committee. The Committee had rejected a further suggestion that the British battalion might be kept in the coastal area for a further year. There were serious military objections to this proposal which, in any case, would have involved the risk that British forces might become involved in disputes between Mr. Foncha and Mr. Ahidjo. The Committee had also decided that we should offer £1/2 million aid to the Southern Cameroons, to meet their immediate needs on the termination of our trusteeship, and that we should proceed with transitional arrangements for the ending of Commonwealth preferences in order to assist the Southern Cameroons over the period during which alternative markets for their products could be developed.

The Colonial Policy Committee had also considered the possibility that Mr. Foncha, if he were unable to compose his differences with Mr. Ahidjo, might appeal to the United Nations to extend our trusteeship beyond 1st October. It had been suggested that it might be in our interests to encourage Mr. Foncha to make such an appeal, so as to provide a further period in which to work out transitional arrangements to prevent conditions in the territory from developing in a manner favourable for Communist exploitation. It had, however, been pointed out that if this possibility were raised in the United Nations it would arouse criticism and suspicions of our intentions. In any event there was no certainty that at the end of an extension of our trusteeship the situation in the Southern Cameroons would have become less difficult.

The Colonial Secretary said that, although it was highly probable that, with the withdrawal of the British battalion and the departure of expatriate officials and employees, the Administration in the Southern Cameroons would collapse, thus providing an opportunity for Communist exploitation, there seemed no alternative but to accept these risks in view of the serious military and financial objections to continuing our presence in the Southern Cameroons. It would, however, be worth examining a further proposal that had now been made, that

during the period before their withdrawal the British battalion should train, so far as possible, an additional security force of some 120 reliable Africans which it was now thought it might be possible to recruit.

The Secretary of State for War said that the British force commander was prepared to undertake the military action which had been proposed against a camp of 200 terrorists. In view of the local conditions, the chances that this operation would achieve worthwhile results were not great. It should only be authorised on the understanding that it would not prejudice a firm decision to withdraw the British battalion in any event on 1st October, and provided that a careful explanation of the limited nature of the operation was given to the troops involved.

In discussion there was general agreement that the decision to withdraw the British battalion on 1st October should be confirmed. It was also agreed that it would not be in our interests to encourage Mr. Foncha to seek an extension of the trusteeship status of the Southern Cameroons. The proposal that in the meantime the British battalion might train a small locally recruited force of reliable Africans should, however, be further examined.

As regards the proposed operation against the terrorists* camp, it was suggested that it might be inadvisable to risk arousing strong terrorist reactions with which we were not prepared to deal after 1st October. It was explained that the operation would be more in the nature of a police action, and was more likely to result in the dispersal of the terrorists than in their capture. It was also pointed out that we had been asked to deal with this concentration of terrorists by the present Administration; and that, in view of our current responsibilities as the trustee Power, the request could not easily be refused. It would be unwise to pursue the operation if this involved risking a serious number of British casualties, and it should only proceed subject to the conditions mentioned by the Secretary of State for War. The operational instructions should be subject to his personal approval and that of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Approved the recommendations made in paragraph 10(a) of C. (61)86.
- (2) Invited the Secretary of State for War to arrange that the operational instructions for the attack on the terrorists' camp should be subject to his personal approval and that of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
- (3) Invited the Colonial Secretary to arrange for further examination of

the proposal that the British battalion, before 1st October, should train a small locally recruited force of reliable Africans.

- (4) Agreed that the Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons should not be encouraged to seek an extension of the trusteeship status of that territory.

END