

ACC

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Regional Commissioners'
Aug 1944

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Regional Commissioners' Conference
Aug 1944

SECRETMINUTES OFREGIONAL COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCEheld on 23rd Aug 19440930 hrs.ACTIONThe Executive Commissioner presided,Opening Remarks.

1. The Executive Commissioner, Brig. M. S. Lush, opened the meeting by thanking Regional Commissioners for their good work and warned them of more difficult work ahead in the North of Italy. He outlined the procedure for manning the Northern Regions.

2. So far we had applied the principle that where there were Allied troops and installations we had to have AOC officers, but from the point of view of Sicily, and possibly later on, Southern Italy, there might come a time when we felt that we could hand the country back to the Italian authorities entirely. We must always keep in mind that the presence of Allied Military officers did help to maintain law and order.

3. Col. Hancock, (late Region I), was of the opinion that a gradual and complete withdrawal was feasible, leaving an AOC LO with HQ 56 Area. Brig. Carr, (Region I), agreed in principle. There were details such as issue and safeguarding of imported food to be considered. Col. Poletti, (Region III), saw no difference between Sicily and Southern Italy, from the point of view of government from Naples. He considered the time was coming when AOC ought to operate the whole area from Rome.

4. Executive Commissioner raised the point of contacts with Allied HQs and the collection of information. Mr. Antolini (Econ. Section), said the Arussi had to be considered but there was no reason why the Italians should not do it effectively. One liaison officer should be kept as a point of contact. Six experts were coming out from London who could work with the local governments. Mr. H. Caccia (Political Section) said that the handing over was entirely in line with our policy in so far as the Italian Government was able to carry the burden. But we must not put on the Italians anything beyond their strength which would lead to disorder. He asked if Sicily might not get out of hand supposing it was left in the hands of one senior officer comparable to a Regional Commissioner and only Liaison Officers with Allied installations, plus some civilian personnel on specialist jobs. Col. Hancock said occasional outbreaks were possible but no difficulties had yet arisen. Col. Temperley (R.C. designate, Southern Region) agreed with Col. Poletti on the absence of an Italian High Commissioner for Southern Italy.

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5. The Executive Commissioner asked R.C.'s Sicily, Sardinia and Southern Region to consider the matter and report in a month's time. The matter would also be re-examined at AOC HQ. Brig. Lush asked Col. Temperley to report as soon as possible on the early handing over of Naples Commune from AMG to Italian Government.

6. Executive Commissioner said he would like to underline General Matland Wilson's remarks the previous day on discipline among subordinate officers. Provincial Commissioners should be instructed to think deeply on the subject. It was almost inevitable where officers were living alone that they should lose some of the effects of military discipline and that those inexperienced in civil administration should tend to be over-impressed by the local aspect of affairs. Regional Commissioners in the Southern Regions should examine the question of transferring such officers. Brig. Lush congratulated Regional Commissioners on their monthly reports and sitreps. AFHQ had asked to be kept more fully in the picture and he believed that we had been able to do this. Col. Levin-Harris (G-5 AFHQ) agreed.

Planning for the Northern Regions:

7. Executive Commissioner announced that Col. Fiske and Col. Albright (HQ AOC) with Brig. Dunlop and Cols. Hancock and Feasey, would be responsible for planning for Regions 10, 11 and 12. By Sept. 1st officers were wanted to the scale of Appendix C from Sardinia, Sicily and Southern Region and also from Region V. An establishment had been created for 250 extra British officers. It was hoped also to get a few additional American officers. They would be sent on a short course of civil affairs and then to Regions V, VIII and IX, and the Americas, for experience. Southern Region would be activated on Aug. 28th.

8. Col. Albritton, (Establishment Officer) said we would have to take officers from Regions IV and VIII and a few from Region IX. An order was being issued immediately to Regions II, III and VII assigning all officers who would remain in Southern Regions. Exec. Commissioner drew the attention of Col. Levin-Harris (G-5 AFHQ) to the fact that the additional officers were wanted quickly. When pressed to give a figure of how many of the requisite 250 could be produced by Sept. 15th, Col. Levin-Harris said he thought probably 50 including the present attachment. Exec. Commissioner said that with 70 - 75 from the Southern Region this should provide about 120 officers.

9. Col. Poletti asked if inflated men waiting in the Replacement Pool could be used. Col. Levin-Harris said that if names were known they should be sent to G-5 AFHQ.

10. Executive Commissioner said he thought the scheme of following up the Army was successful. Brig. Dunlop supported it and hoped it would be possible to have the same arrangement in future. Exec. Commissioner said he was not prepared for disintegration in the North

R.C. Reg IV
RC/MG Sec.
Estab. Br.

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10. Executive Commissioner said he thought the scheme of following up the Army was successful. Brig. Dunlop supported it and hoped it would be possible to have the same arrangement in future. Exec. Commissioner said we must be prepared for disintegration in the North and the necessity of sending troops in very rapidly. Col. Fiske said the Army was alive to the dangers in the first days of taking over and that the question of command was still to be settled. He saw no reason why troops should not go forward with the entering troops. Executive Commissioner said that if it was a question of the Armies fighting their way any the present plan would be followed. If it was a question of collapse, we wanted a plan quickly from G-5.

Promotions:

11. Col. Albright said that American promotions to field grade were temporarily held up. He asked Col. Lewin-Harris to take the matter up. Company grade officers were not affected. Col. Farren (Executive Officer) said that British promotions were held up for

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Estab. Br.

two or three days while ALI were looking into the matter. Col. Albright said Company Commanders and admin. officers must not be changed without approval from this HQ.

Patriots.

12. Col. McCarthy referred to his talk at the previous day's Conference and to a history of the movement which he had prepared. At the meeting in Siena he was asked to produce information about the Po Valley installations. He had a list of places where damage and flooding could be caused and also a list of pumping stations for Patriots to protect.

13. He would like to stress that ALG's with Armies, and Regions should send back a weekly report from their Italian Patriot representatives.

14. On a discussion of present policy, Col. Kirkwood (Region VIII) said it was fundamentally on right lines but there were practical difficulties as the Patriots wanted to remain fighting.

15. Col. Marshall (Region V) said that Patriot representatives often arrived without proper identification cards and permits. A letter of appointment from AOC HQ to say that any Patriots arriving were accredited to the Commission was required. Col. McCarthy said they were now working on a scheme for getting transport from the Italian Government as they were only useful when mobile. Exec. Commissioner said that Patriot representatives NOT sent out at the request of the R.C.'s would be sent with transport, not to be charged against TE/WE. If requested by R.C.'s transport would have to be found by them.

Patriot Br.

16. The question of pay for Patriots was raised. It was agreed that the question should be re-examined with a view to paying Patriots from AOC funds in their advisory capacity.

Adm Sec
Patriot Br

17. Major Fielden (Public Relations Officer) replying to a question on Patriot publicity, said he needed permission for Italian correspondents to visit the areas where Patriots were.

RC/MG Sec

18. Col. McCarthy said that he was trying to get names of prominent Italians who could be used for Prefects in the North. The Communist Party would let us have information also. In a few days he should have a list to send to the Interior Sub-Commission.

Patriot Br

Refugees.

19. Col. Hulls (Italian Refugee Branch) explained that the Refugee Branch had to follow up behind the Armies and take in as many people as were passed to them. The line was now at Ancona where there was a large camp, but they could not keep an unlimited number of people

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20. He went on to explain that the Branch could not provide equipment for camps in Regions. Once the quota had been fixed the Prefects concerned had to take care of the refugees and billet them.

21. The aim was to get the people back to their homes as quickly as possible. Transit Camps would be necessary and personnel to man them. The Italian Government had been asked for 1,000 Italian Officers and men to do it. The Army Sub-Commission said personnel could not be found from the Italian Army and the possibility of using demobilized soldiers was discussed. The matter was left for further exploration with the suggestion that it might be possible to

Patriot Br.

Adm Sec
Patriot Br

RC/MG Sec

Patriot Br

All Regions

Refugee Br
Army S/C.

ACTION

pick men out of the transit camps to which these soldiers were sent prior to discharge and take them on a civilian pay roll on the spot.

22. Reference was made to an unauthorized movement of refugees back to their homes which had already started. AMHQ, ALI and PBS were taking notice of it. Exec. Commissioner asked R.C.'s to do their utmost with the Italian authorities to stop people moving and to issue orders that no AOC officers were to issue passes for this kind of movement.

All Regions

23. Col. Chapman said that 2,000 refugees had arrived at Naples station and had been there for two weeks. It was decided that half should be dispersed to Aversa Camp and half to Region IV.

Regs. III
& IV.

Establishment.

24. (a) Vehicle Maintenance. Col. Albright (Establishment Officer) stressed the responsibilities of senior officers in Regions. There was a lack of trained drivers and mechanics. Transportation Sub-Commission had set up a pool of maintenance officers who would be sent out to Regions to inspect and give advice.

(b) Vacations for civilian personnel. Col. Chapman raised the question of vacations for civilian personnel, and was informed that the matter was under discussion with ALI.

Etab. Br

(c) Civilian Drivers Regions. Col. Albright said that this question applied mostly to ALI Regions. Nations for civilian drivers and civilian specialists should be drawn in bulk through the Regional Supply Officers from civilian sources or through the Prefect in Italian Government Territory.

Regs. IV, V,
VIII & IX.
Adm Sec.
Econ Sec.
HQ Comdt AOC

(d) Officers Mess Account. Col. Farren reported that there was a considerable balance in the Officers Mess Account and it was agreed that 30,000 lire be allotted to Regions 10, 11 and 12. The residue to be used for the Officers Rest House at Fregene when opened.

Exec. Offr
HQ Comdt AOC

(e) Italian Drivers. The question of Italian drivers was raised and R.C.'s were instructed to send replacement drivers in charge of a N.C.O. with definite orders to report on arrival. R.C.'s should be very careful about the handing over of stores and vehicles, and give demand receipts.

Defascistization.

25. Col. Upjohn (Admin Section) referred to a new decree, of which all R.C.'s had copies. The system now was that in each Ministry one or more Commissions were set up, and they were responsible for the purge throughout the country of the persons which depended on that Ministry. For instance, the Commission in the Ministry of Justice was responsible for the purging of all judges throughout the country. We relied on R.C.'s letting us know if any obvious Fascists were at large. It

Etab.Br

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26. In addition there would be Provincial Commissions to deal with local bodies which depended on the Prefect. The Provincial Commissions would not be set up until the Prefects themselves had been purged. The Ministry of the Interior had been asked to expedite the purging of the Prefects, and Regional Commissioners would be informed as soon as this was done. In a letter of Aug. 18th R.C.'s were asked to send a pro-forma report on the progress of defascistization in the Provinces. Where the decree had been made effective, we ceased to operate defascistization ourselves, but in Military Government territory there was nothing to prevent a R.C. from removing an official on any ground.

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When an area had been turned over to Regional control the R.O. would normally leave it to the Italian Committee or refer a special case to HQ ACC.

Proclamations.

27. Col. Wilmer read the new preamble to Proclamation No. 1, which had been approved. To meet criticism of the notice containing curfew restrictions etc there would now be three versions of it to be used according to requirements. With regard to the declaration of cameras and wireless sets AAI had demanded that the restriction be retained. The new version of Proclamations 1, 2 and 4 would be distributed as soon as possible and used in future.

Carabinieri.

28. Col. Kirk, (Public Safety Sub-Comm) said that he was gravely concerned about the personnel situation. The ceiling had been fixed at 55,000, and ACC has asked for it to be lifted to 65,000 but the present strength was about 42,000. It was thought that the sources of manpower were improving as training was completed. One source was the recruitment of men who had been disbanded in territory occupied by the enemy. Information was that of 21,000 normally north of the line, approximately 14,000 had been removed to Germany. Another source was released POW from E. Africa, approximately 1,000 in September, and a prospect of a detachment from the Italian Army, which has been under discussion with MIA. Col. Kirk gave warning that he would have to skin Regions and urged forward areas to make conservative estimates.

29. From the point of view of an approach to AAI the Exec. Commissioner asked if there was a possibility of reaching the ceiling from existing manpower. Col. Kerr (MIA) thought we might take Carabinieri from Sicily or Sardinia. Asked what would be the result of removing 2,000 Carabinieri from Sicily from the point of view of grain collection, Col. Hancock said he thought it would mean complete disaster as they were now reduced to under 7,000.

30. The Exec. Commissioner strongly recommended that the Carabinieri be raised to the approved ceiling of 55,000 at once without regard to those we might or might not skin in the North.

31. It was stated that Carabinieri were being used for guarding military installations. Exec. Commissioner said this should be taken up on a high level. We would do our best to preserve Carabinieri strength in the Regions, at the same time fulfilling demands of Northern Regions.

Adm Sec

Control of Civilian Movement.

32. Major Ballance, (Public Safety Sub-Comm) explained the controls now operating. There were three zones: Army Zone (RED), where no civilian was permitted to enter unless in possession of

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Adm Sec

AMG 5 Army
" 8 Army
All R.C's
RC/AG Sec
Adm Sec

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33. Exec. Commissioner said that if movement was restricted completely food, supply, industry, etc., would be hindered. But movement must be restricted for military reasons.

Transport and Appointments of Prefects.

34. Col. Spicer (Interior Sub-Comm) said that the transportation question had been decided the day before at the Chief Commissioner's Conference. He appealed for cooperation by R.C.'s with Prefects who had difficult journeys to undertake. They were high ranking Italian officials and all the help that R.C.'s could give them would be appreciated.

35. Two very simple and clear directives had been prepared for the use of officers in the field, one for the Army areas and one for Regions.

36. There was no such title as "Acting Sindaco". It was proposed to promote 23 Vice-Prefects.

37. In the discussion which followed Col. Chapman said it was proposed by the C.M.I.C. at Benevento to requisition the Prefectorial Building. Executive Commissioner instructed him to take strong action in opposing this requisition. Civil Affairs Branch would take up with AAI.

38. Asked if Prefects were getting adequate direction from the Italian Government, the meeting agreed that the position was improving.

39. It was pointed out that only in Army areas was it necessary for HQ to be consulted before any change in Prefects was carried out. Executive Memorandum No. 70 would be followed as heretofore. SCMO's of Armies had the right to remove a man without reference back, but Regions must consult HQ first.

Civilian Transport.

40. (a) Schooner Traffic. Col. Adams, (Transportation Sub-Comm), reported that he had attended a Conference of MEDCO which had clarified many things. It had been agreed to double the allocation of tonnage to ACC for the month of September to 27,000 tons. It was emphasized that R.C.'s must inform Transportation Sub-Commission of their forecasts and details of commodities to be sent by schooner. In the South, where there were no ACC officers information should be passed through Italian channels to ACC. Otherwise the information should be passed through Provincial Officers and Regions to Transportation Sub-Commission. The Exec. Commissioner stated that if COGEMA was not working properly it should be reported to MEDCO. It was pointed out that the fortnightly traffic return, which could be obtained from local COGEMA agents, had only been returned by one Region. This return was a valuable check on COGEMA and contained necessary information for Headquarters: it must be rendered. The question was raised of the disposal of surplus commodities in Regions. Col. Leoni said a surplus and deficiency return should be made on the 30th of each month to HQ.

SCMO's
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Armies
All RC's

Reg. III.
RC/MG Sec

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(b) Railroad Transportation. Major Richardson, Railway Section, said it must be understood that the whole of this movement was over civilian lines in military trains, and that the bulk of the traffic was from East to West. The railroad was very bad and traffic very heavy. Time lag between bid and train movement was considerable and could not be avoided. When no ACC officer was available to handle bids the Italian channel was from railway stationmaster to railway Divisional Office and from there to Transportation Sub-Commission representatives. Food had priority over other commodities.

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(c) Road Transportation. Lt. Col. Bordassa explained that under a new decree civilian road haulage would come under one control, i.e., E.N.A.C. It would operate up to Army area. All movement by road would be allocated by E.N.A.C. Asked what was the plan for providing road haulage for the Northern Regions, Col. Adams said there would be local transport, plus the withdrawal of extra transport loaned to harvest Regions. Alternatively, it would be necessary to apply for additional Transport Coys. E.N.A.C. would be operating in 3 - 4 weeks time.

Econ Sec

POL for Forward Areas.

41. Shortage of POL in certain areas was discussed and Col. Eyles (AFHQ Petroleum Section) said that there had been a physical shortage but the situation was now easier. He undertook to investigate a specific difficulty raised by Region VII and the shortage of Diesel oil in Sicily. CIP representatives could be supplied to assist forward Regions and others also if necessary. Mr. Intolini undertook to coordinate transportation of POL from ports and a plan would be submitted to R.C.'s by end of week.

Econ Sec

Maintenance of Vehicles.

42. Lt. Col. Lord de Clifford (Q(AE) AFHQ) spoke of recent visits to Regions to inspect British vehicles. These he said were badly maintained and there was considerable tyre wastage. Reports and recommendations were being made to R.C.'s and he asked that they should let him know if the recommendations were not feasible. Exec. Commissioner said officer interest was necessary and R.C.'s must give personal attention to this serious situation. R.C.'s spoke of shortage of tools and maintenance equipment: this would be examined by Q(AE) AFHQ.

RC/MG
Sec.Ration Scales.

43. The difficulty of rationing Italian drivers when going on a long journey was further discussed. Col. Legg said that the question had been submitted to AA1 but Army rations could not be supplied for civilians under any circumstances. He had arranged for rations to be put up in a special pack for Italian personnel proceeding from HQ ACC. for the time of their journey plus a period of waiting up to five days. There was no beverage or bread element. The same applied to the movement of Italian Prefects, and for longer periods ration cards would have to be used.

All Regions
Econ Sec

44. Exec. Commissioner said that Italian drivers and officials travelling on a specific tour would be provided with basic ration packs for that tour: those going on assignment or attachment to any place would be provided with rations for the journey and five days. It was emphasised that the same ration scale applied for labour in both armies and their services.

Price of Wheat in the North.

Econ Sec

RQ/MC
Sec.

All Regions
Econ Sec

specific difficulty raised by Region VII and the shortage of Diesel oil in Sicily. CIP representatives could be supplied to assist forward Regions and others also if necessary. Mr. Antolini undertook to coordinate transportation of POL from ports and a plan would be submitted to R.C.'s by end of week.

Maintenance of Vehicles.

42. Lt.Col.Lord de Clifford (Q.C.E) (AFHQ) spoke of recent visits to Regions to inspect British vehicles. These he said were badly maintained and there was considerable tyre wastage. Reports and recommendations were being made to R.C.'s and he asked that they should let him know if the recommendations were not feasible. Execo. Commissioner said officer interest was necessary and R.C.'s must give personal attention to this serious situation. R.C.'s spoke of shortage of tools and maintenance equipment: this would be examined by Q(AE) (AFHQ).

Ration Scales.

43. The difficulty of rationing Italian drivers when going on a long journey was further discussed. Col. Legg said that the question had been submitted to ALI but Army rations could not be supplied for civilians under any circumstances. He had arranged for rations to be put up in a special pack for Italian personnel proceeding from HQ LOC. for the time of their journey plus a period of waiting up to five days. There was no beverage or bread element. The same applied to the movement of Italian Prefects, and for longer periods ration cards would have to be used.

44. Execo. Commissioner said that Italian drivers and officials travelling on a specific tour would be provided with basic ration packs for that tour: those going on assignment or attachment to any place would be provided with rations for the journey and five days. It was emphasised that the same ration scale applied for labour in both armies and their services.

Price of Wheat in the North.

45. Views were expressed by R.C.'s, Mr. Antolini and Mr. Wadleigh (Econ Section), and Col. Bain (Labour Sub-Comm). The meeting was roughly divided into those who considered the price of wheat should be 900 lire per quintal throughout Italy and those who maintained that in the North the price should be 500 lire per quintal without subsidy. Some were of the opinion that the latter price should carry a subsidy with it. The Execo. Commissioner thanked all speakers for their views which he said would be most helpful in further consideration of this difficult problem.

ACTION

-8-

War Material Disposal and Italian POW Sub-Commission.

46. (a) Lt.Col.Campbell, Director, said it should be known that it was now possible to repatriate any Italian POW providing he was required in a specific administrative position. The request for repatriation should be submitted through Italian channels. No requests should be received or forwarded by us.

(b) Attention was drawn to the necessity for collecting Jerry Cans (German or Italian petrol tins). The question of a penalty was under consideration.

Civilians accompanying officers on re-assignments.

47. Lt.Col.Bowman (Region IX) drew attention to the fact that officers on re-assignment were bringing with them a retinue of interpreters and the like. The Exec. Commissioner directed that this must cease.

Awards and Decorations.

48. Col. Fiske spoke of the necessity for having a uniform policy for Allied personnel. Generally speaking it was desirable that cases thought to be deserving of recognition should be recommended for Allied awards rather than Italian ones. The instructions sent out by this HQ in March last were being reviewed and a ruling with regard to the acceptance of honorary awards would be given in the near future.

Monthly Reports and Weekly Sitreps.

49. Lt.Col.Shipp (Civil Affairs Branch) pointed out the desirability when submitting the monthly reports of adopting the Part I and II method where possible. Part I to contain a broad review of the Regions' activity and Part II being detailed and prepared by Specialist officers. The recent instruction to R.O's on the subject of weekly sitreps was emphasised. It was desired to get more news for passing on to AFHQ, and punctuality was vital.

Conclusion.

50. In his concluding remarks the Executive Commissioner thanked those present for their attention and spoke of the difficult time that lay ahead for all and especially Northern Regions. Distances were becoming very great. It might be necessary to establish a small HQ Staff with HQ ALI, if and when it was moved forward. He felt sure that those present would wish him to convey their best wishes to Col. Zellars on leaving the organisation and to wish him God Speed.

The meeting closed at 1815 hrs.

ALL RC's

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The meeting closed at 1815 hrs.

MS/Lush.

M. S. LUSH,
Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

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