

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR ON THE
PROPOSALS OF THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF FOR SO
ORGANIZING THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE EMPIRE AS TO
INSURE THEIR EFFECTIVE CO-OPERATION IN THE EVENT
OF WAR.

In laying these proposals before the Members of the Conference the War Office is well aware that the representatives of the Over-sea Dominions cannot at the Conference pledge their Governments, or undertake in any way to bind the officers and men composing Over-sea Dominion forces to engagements beyond the shores and boundaries of their own countries. It is hoped, however, in view of the great importance of organizing on identical principles and with a common purpose, that this fact will not prevent full consideration being given at the Conference to the objects proposed.

To organize local forces so that in a time of supreme emergency they may concentrate and act together as one army in any part of the Empire does not lessen but actually tends to increase the efficiency of these forces for the local defence of their homes.

No one can predict the time or place where concentration for the protection of some threatened part of the Empire may be required. It is only by considering in time of peace and, so far as local political conditions render this possible, working out practicable plans for general mobilisation that the military forces of the Empire as a whole can be made really effective.

R. B. HALDANE.

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INTRODUCTION.

1. The British Empire extends over more than a fifth of the earth's surface, and the King's subjects number more than a fifth of the inhabitants of the globe.

The military forces of the British Empire, including the Indian Army, the troops of the Over-sea Dominions, and the garrisons of colonies and stations all over the world, amount to-day to a total of nearly 1,200,000 officers and men who can be called to arms in the event of war; but of these troops the Native Army of India is to a great extent localised by political and military considerations, while the Territorial Force at home and the forces of the Over-sea Dominions are only liable to serve within their own areas, though, if they volunteer to serve in time of war outside those areas, their offer may be accepted by His Majesty. Moreover, the British Regular Army has to provide a large garrison for India, and smaller garrisons for defended ports and naval bases abroad. Consequently, not only is the aggregate military force of the Empire small in proportion to the extent, population, and defence of requirements of the Empire, but the force available by its terms of service for expeditionary action in any part of the world, whether offensive or defensive in its nature, is almost insignificant when compared with the vast armies of the Continental Powers and Japan.

2. To produce an army which will be an effective instrument of war, so far as its numerical strength admits, its component parts should be organized and trained on a system which will render them capable of combined action in war. To produce an army which can promptly bring its full power to bear at the decisive point, its component parts should, as far as possible, be capable of employment in time of war in any theatre of operations where their services may be required. Only a fraction of the Military Forces of the Empire at present fulfils these conditions.

It is believed that the necessity for co-operation between the Over-sea Dominions and the Mother Country in case of a war threatening the integrity of the Empire is fully realised by all concerned, and definite proposals are sub-