

SECRET

MINUTE SHEET.

Allied Joint Declaration

Reference G245/4 A/41

COFY

H.E.

It would seem from the revised text of the "Joint Declaration" that it is now intended that this should be signed not only on behalf of the Governments of countries which are actually fighting the Axis powers or are in enemy occupation, but by those Central American Governments which have quite recently declared war.

If this is a fact then it would seem that the case for allowing the Free French to be associated in some way with the Declaration is still stronger.

In the first place, it seems altogether illogical that the Free French, who have been fighting the Germans for over two years and are now actually fighting in Libya, should not be allowed to be associated with the Declaration while the Central American countries, who are never likely to take any serious part in actual hostilities and who, in fact, may have declared war largely in order to get financial assistance and armaments from the U.S. should be parties to the Declaration.

Secondly, deliberately to exclude the Free French when they were allowed to take part in the St. James's Palace Conference several months ago will not only greatly discourage the Free French but, I am afraid, will convince them

- (a) that the U.S. are hostile to the Free French cause, and
- (b) that the U.K. is not prepared to stand up for them either.

Coming on top of the St. Pierre and Miquelon trouble the effect on the Free French Movement generally and on the relations between General de Gaulle and the British authorities may well be serious.

The trouble seems to arise largely from the fact that the U.S.G. or rather the State Department persist in regarding de Gaulle as being the creature of the U.K. Government alone and as of no interest or value to the general war effort or to the other countries fighting Germany. This is altogether a wrong picture. Quite apart from the actual resistance which the Free French troops and navy may be rendering in the Battle of Libya and the defence of Great Britain - both of which are of importance to the war effort - the fact that French Equatorial Africa is in friendly hands and not in the hands of Vichy is of the greatest importance to our communications across Africa. The advantages accrue to the U.S. as well as to ourselves. If anything should happen which would make it impossible for allied aircraft to fly across French Equatorial Africa the U.S. would suffer almost as much as ourselves. Furthermore the fact that Noumea and New Caledonia are in Free French hands may prove to be of considerable importance for the U.S. in the Pacific. Had these Colonies still been in the hands of Vichy, there is no knowing that they might not have

FRHM:HS

followed/

followed the example of Indo-China and by this time have been in Japanese hands.

I hope therefore that despite Mr. Welles's discouraging attitude yesterday you, or perhaps the Prime Minister, may feel able to make yet a further effort to secure the inclusion of the Free French in the signature of the Joint Declaration.

*Jr*

28th December, 1941.

*Mr. G. A. ...*

*Pho ...*

*Jr*

20.11

