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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

by F. Navy

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CLS
11-29-62

April 3, 1937.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
x18

Will you please let me
have a memorandum on the possi-
bility of manufacturing torpedoes
at Mare Island in comparison
with Alexandria?

F. D. R.

x18-7B

x18-3

x18-R

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

DATE: 2/5/59

SIGNATURE: Carl L. Speca

MAR 31 1937

SECRET

MEMORANDUM

From: The Secretary of the Navy
To: The President.

Subject: Torpedo Situation.

1. The Bureau of Ordnance has prepared for me a study of the torpedo situation in the Navy which indicates:-

- (a) That the existing facilities for torpedo manufacture in the United States are inadequate.
- (b) That it is imperative to expand torpedo manufacture at the earliest practicable time in order to supply torpedoes to meet the needs of the present ship construction and for the planned program.
- (c) That it is vital to expand manufacturing facilities in order to be in a position to meet approved war plans.

2. The shortage in torpedoes will become increasingly serious until in July 1943 this shortage will amount to 2636 torpedoes. To eliminate this shortage we require about 1000 torpedoes per year until 1944. After 1944 the requirements will be about 400 torpedoes per year.

3. The Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, R. I., is the only plant now manufacturing torpedoes or equipped to manufacture them. Production is on an eight hour day, five day week schedule with the machining division working three eight hour shifts. The present force of 3100 men is the maximum which can be efficiently employed with the floor space and machine tool equipment available. From the point of view of national security it is not advisable to expand Newport. We already have too great a concentration there. The output at Newport has increased from 1.5 torpedoes per working day in 1935 to two torpedoes per working day on 1 July 1936 and 2.5 torpedoes per working day on 1 January 1937. This is considered to be the maximum production at Newport.

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4. The Naval Torpedo Station, Alexandria, Virginia, a war time plant built to assemble torpedoes from parts manufactured elsewhere, and later through failure to obtain parts equipped to manufacture complete torpedoes, did not actually get into production until after the Armistice.

5. The present buildings are in fairly good condition. Much of the machine tool equipment has been transferred to other yards and stations, and much of it is of obsolete design. To re-equip Alexandria as a modern plant, capable of manufacturing complete torpedoes, and to equip the proving range at Piney Point would cost approximately \$2,750,000. A labor market is available. Proximity to the Naval Gun Factory permits a leveling of peak loads and slack periods mutually valuable to both plants. It is estimated that if the money required were made available now, Alexandria assisted by the resources of the Naval Gun Factory could be in production in about two years at a maximum capacity production of about two torpedoes per working day and a minimum capacity of one torpedo per working day. The two-year time estimate given assumes normal ability to buy machine tools.

6. The only commercial plant in the United States with extensive torpedo experience is the E. W. Bliss Co. of Brooklyn, New York. Prior to 1922 Bliss built for the Navy about 5000 torpedoes and in 1918 reached the production rate of 150 torpedoes per month. The torpedo manufacturing facilities of this company have been almost completely depleted but the company is interested in resuming torpedo manufacture and has shown a willingness to negotiate to this end. From a recent inspection of their Brooklyn plant, it is estimated that rehabilitation for the manufacture of torpedoes would cost about \$1,750,000. This cost would make no provision for proof-ranging. Bliss estimates an additional \$410,000 to reestablish their proof range. This range, however, is not adequate for modern torpedoes and the proofing would have to be done at Newport, R. I., necessitating considerable expenditure of money to enlarge Newport's proofing facilities. The cost of the naval inspection force at the Bliss plant should be included in the cost of the torpedoes manufactured by that company.

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7. The superiority of torpedoes manufactured by the Navy has been thoroughly demonstrated by the record of the performance of these torpedoes during the past fifteen years.

8. It is recommended that authority be granted to reopen the torpedo station at Alexandria, Virginia, during the present fiscal year, for the manufacture of torpedoes and that funds in the amount of \$2,750,000 be made available for this project.

Claude A. Swanson

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DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- 2/5/59

Signature-

Carl L. Spicer