



Source 3

Extract from the minutes of a meeting in 1911 of the Imperial Defence Committee setting out British Navy preparations for war

(Catalogue ref: CAB 18/19)

How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. There are details in this source that will help you to answer the key question. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- Does this document give the impression that the British regard Germany as a threat?
- Do you get the impression that the British government is expecting war with Germany - or simply being cautious?
- What was the navy planning to do if war broke out?
- What effect might this policy have on Germany?
- Does this document suggest that the navy has been thinking about war with Germany for some time?



Source 3

ADMIRALTY POLICY ON THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

The policy of the Admiralty on the outbreak of war with Germany would be to blockade the whole of the German North Sea coast. The important portions of this were the estuaries of the Elbe, Weser, and Jade. Naval plans for war.

We could not foretell where the German Fleet would be on the outbreak of war. Normally the first division was at Wilhelmshaven and the remainder at Kiel. At the moment the whole was in the Baltic. The German Dreadnought class could not pass through the Kiel Canal at present, but the remainder of the Fleet could, and the enlargement of the canal was to be completed in 1915. Owing to the Kiel Canal we should also be compelled to watch the entrance to the Baltic. We had no wish to prevent the German Fleet from coming out, but unfortunately, if we left them free to do so, their destroyers and submarines could get out also, and their exit it was essential to prevent. If possible we should maintain our watch upon the German coast-line with destroyers. They would, however, be 300 miles away from any British base, so that none of them could remain very long at a time on the station, and consequently the number present at any one moment would be reduced. At night a few only would be necessary; more in the daytime. Outside the destroyers would be the scouts and cruisers, and on these the destroyers would retire when driven off by the enemy's larger ships, whose own retirement would then, if possible, be intercepted. Engagements would constantly occur, and there would be losses upon both sides every night. How long this phase of the operations would continue depended upon the results of these minor actions. Influence of the Kiel Canal upon naval operations.

German light craft.

Inability of destroyers to remain long on stations far from their base. Forecast of early operations.