

Memorandum, Franklin Roosevelt to Admiral Ernest King, July 7, 1942. Roosevelt's self-assurance in his role as Commander in Chief is evident in this July 1942 memo to Chief of Naval Operations Ernest King. Forwarding King a report about U-boat attacks off America's coast, FDR expresses impatience with the Navy's 'unconscionable' delays in establishing an effective convoy system for supply ships in U.S. coastal waters. 'We must speed things up,' he orders King.

RW
Deps

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 7, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

ADMIRAL KING

Please read the enclosed and return for my files.

This furnishes excellent proof of what I have been talking about for many weeks. You will note that in the Canada-Greenland area where very few merchant ships are sailing independently three were lost between May 17th and June 27th, and five sailing under escort were lost in the same period.

On the other hand, off the U. S. Atlantic coast, thirty-three merchant ships sailing independently were lost and only four were lost under convoy in the same period.

So also in the Gulf of Mexico -- thirteen ships sailing independently were lost and only one under ~~convoy~~ *escort*.

In the Caribbean sixty-nine sailing independently were lost and ten under escort.

The grand totals also bear out my constant pleas -- one hundred and eighteen ships sailing independently were lost as against twenty under escort.

I still do not understand the long delay in making all ships sail under escort.

I realize the problem of making up escorts for convoys but about three months have elapsed since we undertook it. I also realize that strict observance of convoy rules will slow up voyages of many ships but, frankly, I think it has taken an unconscionable time to get things going, and further I do not think that we are utilizing a large number of escort vessels which could be used, especially in the Summer time. We must speed things up and we must use the available tools even though they are not just what we would like to have.

F. D. R.

FDR