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War Records Far East - Anglo USA Staff Conversations regarding the Far East 1940-1941 General.

26

A

No. Far East

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

War Records.

Subject: Far East: Anglo U.S.A. Staff conversations
regarding the Far East 1940-1941

571.

General

See separate file for Tropic S.S.A. cables.

Including Anglo-U.S.A. Dutch Staff

conversations Singapore 1941

NOT TO BE REMOVED FROM FILE.

No. in File _____

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SUBJECT : _____

32871

Last Paper

Action
Complete

Index

Next Paper

Anglo-USA Staff Com Singapore

ABDA CO-OPERATION : EARLY STAGES.



Staff Talks and Liaison Officers.

In November 1940 Anglo-Dutch staff talks were held in Singapore (Minute of Defence Committee, 21st January 1941) and in February 1941 Anglo-Dutch Australian staff conversations were held also in Singapore (War Cabinet Agendum 49/41), while in March the Chief of the Netherlands' General Staff visited Australia to confer with Australian Chiefs-of-Staff. As a result of these conversations preliminary plans were made for despatch of Australian troops and aircraft to Koepang and Ambon (2/41 to Batavia) plans which were eventually put into operation shortly before the outbreak of War with Japan. Technical officers and stores had been sent some time before (2/41 to Batavia).

2. Staff talks relating to Pacific area were held in Washington at the end of March and beginning of April 1941 between United Kingdom and United States representatives.

3. A further conference was convened at Singapore in April to prepare detailed plans for conducting military operations in the Far East. Australian and New Zealand representatives were present and plans were made on two hypotheses -

- (1) The Axis at War with both the Allies and the United States.
- (2) The Axis at War with the Allies, the United States being neutral.

These plans included naval co-operation, provision of aircraft for troop convoys, protection of troop movements from Australia to Ambon and Koepang, protection of supply routes in the Indian

mean and a route to the United Kingdom via Panama, re-organization of naval convoys, and defence of ports in the New Guinea-Fiji area (War Cabinet Agendum 135/1941).

4. These talks were supplemented by the appointment of service Liaison Officers between Australia and the United States and between Australia and the Netherlands-East Indies (See Cable from Consul-General, Batavia 6th. May 1941, S5329 of Dept. of the Army etc.) Planning was hampered by the fact that no political commitment had been entered into for joint action in any defined eventuality by either the British, the Dutch or the United States Governments.

Proposed Political Commitments (Cabinet Memo. of 27th May 1941).

5. In March 1941 consideration was given by the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Governments to the issue of a joint declaration by the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands to the effect that an attack on the Netherlands-East Indies or British possessions in the Far East would be regarded as a casus belli by all three.

6. The United States Government at first appeared willing to enter into such a commitment and the Australian Minister at Washington was instructed to press for a joint declaration. The United States did not respond to the proposal, and the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Governments considered it inadvisable to proceed to a public declaration without the assurance of United States 'support (328 to D.O.). A modified undertaking of assistance in the event of attack was however,

3.

given to the Netherlands Government by the United Kingdom while the United States Government made clear through diplomatic channels that Japan "would be unwise to believe that the United States had lost interest in events in the Pacific area" (M 93).

FILE COPY

Anglo-USA Staff copy
Annual

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

MOST SECRET

2784.

Sent 17th October, 1941.
12.25 a.m.
Recd. 17th October, 1941.

DECYPHER FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

No. 865. MOST SECRET.

I saw Admiral Turner director of Anglo-American plan United States Navy October 14th. On my asking for his views on the possibility of Japanese undertaking southward offensive he said he thought it would take the Japanese considerable time to make the necessary large scale preparations. Their belief was that there were only about 40,000 Japanese in Indo-China and that work on Camranh Bay and on air fields in Indo-China were long way from completion. Recent Japanese trend was towards the reinforcing of their forces in Manchuria even at the expense of their forces in China and not towards the south.

On the other hand Japanese had chain of stepping stones (with air fields) in islands southward from Tokyo and were working hard on Saipan 50 miles north of Guam. There was also Japanese air strength at Palau island.

On my telling him of the President's tentative suggestion that R.A.A.F. might consider operating from North Borneo he suggested that R.A.A.F. might even consider the possibility of using air fields in the Phillipines although he admitted that this was a matter for U.S. Army.

In senior American service quarters here there is fear that Japan may attack Russia shortly. General belief is that the United States would maintain neutrality in such an event so long as American and British interests were not also attacked.

I visited several officials in the State Department today. No news or views worth reporting other than that Russian Government and diplomatic missions are leaving Moscow and that the Japanese embassy officials expect new Japanese Government to be a reconstructed Konoye Government.

British ambassador was told by secretary of State on October 15th that as regards conversations with Japan he was "gretty near the end of his tether".

British Ambassador here is seeing Japanese Ambassador tonight. CASEY.

Copies -War Cabinet
Defence Co-ord
War Advisory Council.

3 copies



FILE COPY

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

Most Secret

Date sent 11th Oct. 1941
8.42
Received 12th Oct. 1941



DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN LEGATION
WASHINGTON.

No. 847. Most Secret. For Chief of Naval Staff from
Naval Attache. Tropic 94.

^K As a result of a long conversation held between Admiral Dannebergwerts and Admiral Turner regarding United States-British disagreement on the subject of A.D.B. report at which the former was armed with your views as expressed in CNSNA 32 and 48, situation is as follows:

2. United States authorities are now not to reply to Admiralty communication of which sense was passed to you in Tropic 70 but simply to let the matter stand as it is.
3. Chief stumbling block is still United States objections to Naval dispositions proposed in Annex 1 of A.D.B. and as a consequence the United States authorities reiterated their decision, withdrew permission granted to United States Asiatic Fleet to operate under British strategic direction in the Far East area. (See last sentence of paragraph (2)(d) of tropic 46). Consequently the position in the Far East now is that the Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet and the Commander-in-Chief, China, are free to co-operate and they are in fact doing so.
4. In the course of discussion regarding the possibility that dispositions proposed in A.D.B. would be altered as a result of the conference to be based on A.D.B.2, Admiral Turner stated that it was clear to him that whatever dispositions Commander-in-Chief, China, in exercise of his functions as supreme strategical directing authority in the whole of the Far-Eastern theatre might propose, Australian Commonwealth Naval Board could maintain their veto on removal of any Australian forces from Australian waters and therefore in fact Commander-in-Chief, China, as a co-ordinating authority was a mirage. He also considered same remarks applied in some degree to movements of British Naval Forces from East Indies Station to the Far Eastern Area.
5. Admiral Turner again refused to commit any United States Naval Forces specifically to the task of supporting British Naval Forces in "shaded area" between 155° East and 180° but merely stated that United States Forces operating to south-west of Honolulu and perhaps based on such places as Pago Pago and Rabaul would, if they were available carry out this task.
6. ^K Admiral Dannebergwerts failed to obtain any details of operations proposed by United States Pacific Fleet against the Marshalls and Carolines but Admiral Turner made it quite clear that reference M.180 days in plan Rainbow 5 is only to complete expedition for capturing, garrisoning and holding a number of places in these Islands. He stated that the United States Pacific Fleet would start operations at the beginning of hostilities in which they would hope to interrupt Japanese sea communications, deny the use of

/Japanese

Japanese bases in the Marshalls and engage any Japanese Naval Forces that tried to interfere in their operations and that these were the sort of operations which in his opinion would reduce scale of Japanese attack in Australian Focal areas.

7. It is considered imperative that the matters should not be allowed to stand as they are and that some official expression of United States views is required; to this end an attempt is being made to arrange in the near future a meeting of heads of the joint staff mission with Chief of Naval operations and Chief-of-the-Staff with Bailey and myself in attendance (a) to crystallize United States objections to A.D.B. 2, (b) to discuss possible means of overcoming United States objections (c) to discuss what procedure should be followed if A.D.B. 2 is to be dropped, e.g. what modifications and amplifications should be made to A.B.C.1 as affecting the Far East.

Copies to: P.M.
Min. E.A.
C.N.S. (teleprint)

13/10/41.

CABLEGRAM. 20554

IMP 192/82
Sent - 11th October, 1941. 7.10 p.m.
Received - 12th October, 1941.



DECYPHER FROM:
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

CIRC. M. 320. MOST SECRET.

**MOST
SECRET**

My immediately preceding telegram.

The following is text of instructions referred to in paragraph 4.

1. Reference C.O.S.F.E.8 dated 17th May, paragraph 6. Necessity for collective action. We cannot lay down in advance what action by the Japanese Government should be regarded as constituting an act of war and therefore automatically bringing appropriate counter measures into force.

2. The procedure at paragraph 3 below, designed to reduce to a minimum the time involved by the necessity of inter-governmental consultation, will be brought into operation forthwith.

3. Any authority in the Far East mentioned in paragraph 4 below who receives information from any of the territories with which he is concerned that action on the part of the Japanese is either impending or has taken place which in his view is such as to necessitate immediate counter measures, will send to his own higher authority in London and to the other authorities mentioned in paragraph 4, an enclair telegram marked "MOST IMMEDIATE" (consisting of the first code word contained in my immediately following telegram). This warning message (receipt of which will be at once acknowledged by the London authority, telegraphing the second word in my immediately following telegram) means that the sender considers that the facts reported in a succeeding message in cypher prefixed by the first code word, call for immediate consideration by the Governments concerned of the nature of military counter measures to be taken. This cypher telegram will also be repeated to the authorities mentioned in paragraph 4.

See Reference Code Message to our friends in Japan 17 Nov

4. The authorities concerned in these arrangements are the four Commanders-in-Chief to whom this telegram is addressed, the British Ambassadors at Washington, Tokyo, Chungking and Shanghai; British Minister at Bangkok and the Governors of Burma, Hong Kong and Fiji.

5. You should repeat to the Governments of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa any telegrams you may send under instructions in paragraph 3 above. These Governments are being invited to consider the introduction of similar arrangements to ensure that information of the kind described in paragraph 3 would be communicated to them without delay and would be furnished by them to us and to our various authorities as in that paragraph. The Netherlands and United States Governments also are being asked to arrange that their respective superior authorities in the Far East will ensure that information received by them would be sent to London and repeated to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, through the most appropriate channels.

Copy - Service Ministers
Mr. Shedden
Min. & Dept. E.A.
13/10/41.

CABLEGRAM.

I. 20533

DECYPHER FROM :
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

Dated - 11th October, 1941.

5.45 p.m.

Received - 12th October, 1941.



**MOST
SECRET**

CIRCULAR M. 319.

MOST SECRET.

My Circular M. 295 of 6th September.

We have been considering whether there are any means whereby, in the event of a move by Japan which falls or seems likely to fall within paragraph 24 of the Report of the conversations at Singapore between the British and Dutch representatives in February 1941, machinery for inter-Governmental consultations can be expedited.

2. It is generally agreed that it is not feasible to lay down in advance what precise action by the Japanese should be regarded as an act necessitating active military counter measures.

3. We feel, however, that it should be possible to make special provision in advance for reducing to a minimum the time involved in such circumstances in necessary inter-Governmental consultations. One of the most important points would seem to be to ensure that all authorities concerned are immediately advised as soon as information becomes available that action on the part of the Japanese such as may necessitate immediate military counter-measures is either impending or has taken place.

4. The United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff are therefore sending to the Commander-in-Chief of the Far East, the Commander-in-Chief China, the Commander-in-Chief East Indies and the Commander-in-Chief India the instructions contained in my immediately following telegram. Similar instructions are being sent to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Washington, Tokyo, and Chungking, and His Majesty's Embassy at Shanghai; to His Majesty's Minister Bangkok and to the Governments of Burma, Hong Kong and Fiji. His Majesty's Representatives in the United States, Japan and China mentioned above would, of course, maintain closest touch with their Dominion colleagues.

5. We are making arrangements here to ensure that on receipt in London of such a telegram at any hour of the day or night, a meeting of Ministers may be speedily held to consider what, if any, counter measures should be taken.

6. It will be seen that recipients of these instructions have been asked to repeat direct to His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions any telegrams which they may address to London in accordance with these special arrangements. We should be grateful if His Majesty's Governments in Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa could similarly make arrangements themselves to consider, on receipt of such a telegram, whether in the circumstances of time and if necessary, subject to confirmation of the Japanese move, that move should be met by counter measures. We should hope that the Dominion Governments would inform us of their views immediately they were in a position to do so whether or not they had by then learnt our views on the issue. We would suggest that the views of each of the Dominion Governments should be repeated by them direct to the other Dominion Governments.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

I. 205233
REC'D
14 OCT 1941
AFFAIRS

7. We should also be grateful if the Dominion Governments would, in addition, consider issuing instructions to any authority whom they may have in the Far East and to whom necessary means of most secret communication are available to report similarly to them should he receive information of the kind described in paragraph 3 of this telegram; and if each Dominion Government would telegraph to London and to the Commanders-in-Chief and the other authorities mentioned in paragraph 4 of this telegram, should information of this kind reach them from any source. It would be convenient if, in such an event, similar procedure to that prescribed in the telegram to our Commanders-in-Chief could be adopted.

-----THE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Service Ministers

Mr. Shedden

Minister and E.A. 2/10/41.

REFERRED.

[Signature]
SECRETARY



BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BATAVIA (CENTRUM),
P. O. BOX N° 37.

August 18th, 1941.

SECRET.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of July 23rd on the subject of an intercepted broadcast from Tokyo quoting an Associated Press message purporting to come from Batavia, I have the honour to enclose herewith a translation of a letter from the Netherlands Indian Government, with whom I immediately took up the matter, maintaining that the report in question did not emanate from the Netherlands East Indies.

2. Should other indications occur of leakage of information ascribable to the Netherlands East Indies, I shall be very pleased to take up the matter again with the Netherlands East Indian Government.

I have the honour to ne,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

H. Waldh.

His Majesty's Consul-General.

The Minister for External Affairs,
CANBERRA.

Copy & copy encl. to
ARMY 19/9/41.
(c/w previous correspondent)

*Copies to Army
with ref. earlier
correspondence
(SM 8090
of 10 July 1941)*

J. B. Boston

9/3 / 2

TRANSLATION.

Batavia- Centrum,
August 13th, 1941.

No. 271/A/B/Secret.

Sir,

With reference to your secret letter of August 1st, I have the honour to inform you, by direction of His Excellency the Governor-General, that the report referred to therein concerning the establishment of Australian troops at Ambon appears, upon investigation, to have been sent out from Manila, and in all probability emanates from a correspondent of the Associated Press who was formerly employed in Java and is now stationed in Singapore.

It would appear that this correspondent, being well aware that neither the British nor the Netherlands Indian Censorship authorities would allow such news to go through, asked some contact to communicate it to the Editor of Associated Press at Manila. In order further to camouflage its origin he entitled it "an Associated Press message from Batavia".

From the foregoing you will see that there is no question of indiscretions on the part of the Netherlands Indian press. The original source of the news is not known. It can however be declared with certainty that it was not derived from any report in the press in this country, as the local press gave no publicity to this matter either before or after its publication elsewhere.

As soon as the report in question came to knowledge in this country, "Aneta" announced that it did not emanate from any place in the Netherlands Indies.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration.

Signed: J. M. KIVERON.

General Secretary.

*Anglo USA Staff cons
General*

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

MOST SECRET

I.17097

CABLEGRAM. CE 41

DATED 6th September, 1941.
7.30 p.m.

RECEIVED 7th September, 1941.

DECYPHER FROM -

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

*Inter-Governmental consultations in the event
of a move by Japan see SSCable 47319 of
11-10-41*

Circular telegram M.295.

MOST SECRET.

see Japan Sheward Act



My circular M,215 of 6th August.

We now feel in a position to reply formally to the note presented by the Netherlands' Minister in June making certain proposals regarding the "ratification" of reports of the Staff talks held at Singapore in February and March last between the British, Dutch and United States representatives. This affords opportunity of placing on formal record the oral communication made to the Netherlands' Minister by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on 1st August and will serve to allay the uncertainty which the Netherlands' authorities have shown on several occasions regarding our attitude towards the Netherlands Staff talks. In the circumstances the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is addressing to the Netherlands' Minister a note which explains that the term "ratification," which has a technically diplomatic sense, is not altogether appropriate to the present question and suggests that all that is required is approval or confirmation by the Governments concerned of the recommendations made by their representatives.

The note then explains that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are not yet in a position to give their approval in the case of the conversations at Singapore at which the United States were represented since the United States Service Authorities have proposed certain modifications which are now being discussed.

The note then states that we see no reason why this should delay action in regard to conversation at Singapore at which the United States were not formally represented and that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is therefore authorized to inform the Netherlands' Government that His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom give their general approval to the recommendations resulting from these latter conversations as basis for preparation of further plans.

The note then points out that the recommendations were specifically stated to involve no political commitment but that nevertheless the delegates expressed the view that any action against one of the parties was of vital importance for the others and emphasized the importance of an agreement between the Governments concerned to co-operate fully in the event of any one of them being forced to take military action to counter Japanese aggression.

Furthermore the report of the conversations of February last define a number of circumstances which would in the view of the conference necessitate immediate military counter action. The note proceeds as follows.

CABLEGRAM.

-2-

I.17097

"On these political matters I have already explained to Your Excellency the attitude of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in our interview of 1st August. Briefly it is that they consider themselves to have already assumed the duty of safe-guarding and restoring the possessions and rights of the Netherlands to the best of their ability during the war and at the peace. It follows therefore that an attack upon the Netherlands East Indies would lead them to do the utmost in their power to this end. His Majesty's Government must however remain the sole judge of what action or military measures on their part are practical and likely to achieve the common purpose.

Your Excellency will appreciate therefore that it is not possible for His Majesty's Government to agree at this stage and Ø arm action should automatically be taken in the eventualities mentioned in paragraph 24 of the report of conference of 22nd-25th February. They agree however, that eventualities of that nature should be the subject of most immediate consultation between the Governments concerned, and they are impressed with the importance of working out a procedure to facilitate and expedite such consultation. They are themselves taking steps to improve the machinery in this respect between the Governments of the British Commonwealth and they would welcome the co-operation of the Netherlands Government also in this matter. If the Netherlands Government are agreeable details could no doubt most conveniently be discussed direct between the Chiefs of Staff and the Service Authorities of the Netherlands Government in London."

Ø as received.

Copy - War Cabinet
Defence Co-Ord.
E.A.

8.9.41

Anglo-USA Staff Com. Secret

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

SECRET

I. 15676

CE62/246

DATED 22nd August 1941

CABLEGRAM.

RECEIVED 22nd August 1941



DECYPHER FROM-
The Prime Minister,
NEW ZEALAND. WELLINGTON.

237. MOST SECRET.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be glad to know whether you can now give your formal concurrence to the arrangements set out in my Telegram 161 of 16 June, 1941.

Information from the New Zealand Naval Liaison Officer in Washington gives us to understand that detailed arrangements are now being made on the basis of New Zealand Naval Board being the sole authority with whom the Commandant of 12th United States Naval district at San Francisco will communicate with regard to routing of Trans-Pacific ships to and from Australia and New Zealand.

2. The Admiralty have approved the appointment of Commander Wilson Consular Shipping Adviser at San Francisco as adviser.

Copy sent to - Defence (advice)
Dept. of Navy & Minister
E. A.

23. 8. 41

TELEPRINT

The Secretary,
Dept. of External Affairs.

Referred.

Secretary
Secretary.

Anglo-USA Staff Comm



LRM/ra

SYDNEY. N.S.W.

23rd July, 1941.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that on 1st/2nd July last the following broadcast from Tokyo was intercepted by the Commonwealth Military Authorities:

"Tokyo. An Associated Press message from Batavia featured by evening editions of metropolitan papers reports that the Netherlands East Indies, Australian and British Malaya, fearing further Japanese moves southward, have agreed for the joint use of naval and air bases including Singapore and bases in the Netherlands East Indies in case of emergency. The reported agreement emanating from well-informed quarters in the Dutch Colonial capital provides, among other things, for the despatch of Australian infantry troops to Amboina (N.E.I.)".

*Article to Dept
Packed*

It is considered from this example and others of a similar nature that leakages of information which give rise to these broadcasts are occurring through indiscretions of the Netherlands East Indies press.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

F. H. STEWART

Minister for External Affairs.

His Britannic Majesty's
Consul-General,
British Consulate-General,
BATAVIA.

Secretary,
(Dept. of External Affairs)

J
4/7/41



Anglo-USA Staff Comm



ONES :
M: 440.
CENTRAL 7185.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY.

MELBOURNE, S.C.I.

No. *Am. 8090*

MEMORANDUM for:-

SECURITY

10 JUL 1941

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

ALLEGED BRITISH - NETHERLANDS EAST
INDIES DEFENCE AGREEMENT

I desire to inform you of the nature of a broadcast from Tokio, intercepted by Army Signals, July 1/2nd 1941, a quotation from which is as follows:-

"Tokyo. An Associated Press message from Batavia featured by evening editions of metropolitan papers reports that the Netherlands East Indies, Australian and British Malaya, fearing further Japanese moves southward, have agreed for the joint use of naval and air bases including Singapore and bases in the Netherlands East Indies in case of emergency. The reported agreement emanating from well-informed quarters in the Dutch Colonial capital, provides, among other things, for the despatch of Australian infantry troops to Amboina (N.E.I.

2. It is considered from this example and others of a similar nature that leakages of information which give rise to these broadcasts are occurring through indiscretions of the N.E.I. press.

? /
not seen by WPH
[Signature]

Recd in Records
24/7/41

[Signature]
G. T. FITZGERALD
Secretary.

JH

CABLEGRAM.

1810

SECRET

DECYPHER FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.

No. 510.

Date Sent: 6.50 p.m. - 10/7/41.
Date Recd: 11th July, 1941.

Addressed to Canberra No. 510, repeated to London

No. 76.

United States press almost unanimously in favour of Iceland occupation and accept the fact that United States Naval policing of North-West Atlantic now necessary and desirable. Congress shows relief that useful forward movement has been taken on Presidential responsibility thus relieving them from necessity of political shadow sparring.

SECRET

There is general belief in high quarters that the Iceland incident and public acceptance of it represents United States having turned the last corner with their involvements Admiralty expediting immediate plans for Naval arrangements in North Atlantic that will appreciably relieve the Royal Navy. CASEY.

Copies to:

War Cabinet & Defence Co-ord. (teleprinted through P.M.'s Dept.)
11/7/41.

2

Anglo-USA Staff Conv General

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

I. 11069.

CABLEGRAM.

DECIPHER FROM
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

Sent 27th June, 1941, 4.35 p.m.

Received 28th June, 1941.

440. MOST SECRET.

Your telegram 332 of 19th June:

We have fully in mind the views of the Commonwealth Government regarding the minimum force which the United States should be asked to maintain in the Pacific and the reply which has been addressed to the naval authorities as summarized in my telegram of 18th June 422 was designed to give effect to the object which we understand the Commonwealth Government have in mind. The United States movement which has now been completed will leave in the Pacific forces considerably in excess of those which we had previously considered to be adequate and we have discouraged the United State authorities from further transfers from the Atlantic until more United States capital ships become available and our own capital ship strength is restored.

As regards the third paragraph of your telegram, the present position as regards the suggested declaration in respect of the Netherlands East Indies is set out in my Circular M. 115 of 20th June. We are, however, keeping under constant review the possibility of persuading the United States Government to join with us in a declaration on the lines contemplated, and will maintain close touch with you on the subject.

You will have seen from my Circular M. 120 of 23rd June that the United States Government have authorized their Ambassador at Tokyo to give private warning to Japan if occasion offers.

Copy sent to Minrs. for Navy, Air, Army, E.A.,
Mr. Shedden, Col. Hodgson.

28/6/41

TELEPRINTED TO PRIME MINISTER SYDNEY.

F

Aug 16. USA Staff Comd General

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER TO
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DOMINION AFFAIRS, LONDON.

19th June, 1941.

No. 382.

MOST SECRET.

Your cable No. 422 regarding movement of United States warships into the Pacific. Hope that view previously expressed by us relating to the minimum force which United States should be asked to retain in the Pacific will not be overlooked.

In the absence of a firm joint statement to Japan in which the United States fully participates any reduction of United States Pacific Fleet below the point dictated by Naval prudence remove most powerful deterrent to Japanese action and might even encourage it.

I would appreciate advice as to how the discussions with the United States regarding joint declaration are proceeding. As I came through Washington I found both President and Cordell Hull receptive on this matter, but with a slight reservation about going the full distance.

I hope that urgent and real emphasis is being given to this question. MENZIES.

DECYPHER TO HIGH COMMISSIONER, LONDON. Sent 19th June, 1941.
No. 3114.

Please see my tel. No. 382 to S.O.S. Dominion Affairs. MENZIES.
Copy sent to - P.M., Mins. for Navy, Army & Air, Mr. Shedden
19.6.41.

*Anglo-USA Staff comm
General*

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

**MOST
SECRET**

I.6376

W 61 CABLE 43/24
DATED 25th April, 1941.
6.20 p.m.
RECEIVED 26th April, 1941.

DECYPHER FROM:
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

IMPORTANT. MOST SECRET.

Addressed to the Commonwealth of Australia 287, repeated to New Zealand 158.

Repeated to the Commander in Chief, Far East. My telegram C. of A. 268, N.Z. 146 of 17th April.

We have now heard from the United States Government that they are against publicity being given to the Conference.

We feel that the United States attitude may be influenced more by United States public opinion than by possible Japanese reaction and in these circumstances we do not think that it would in any case serve a useful purpose for us to approach the United States Government again. It is, however, being pointed out to the Commander in Chief, Far East, that it might be possible for him to suggest to the United States delegation that they should put the point to their Government, but meanwhile, of course, the Conference will remain a matter of secrecy.

COPY - Service Ministers
Mr. Sinclair (attention)
26/4/41.

TELEPRINT TO SYDNEY.

J

*Anglo-US Staff
conversations*

**MOST
SECRET**

DECYPHER FROM -
ACTING PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND,
WELLINGTON

I.10103
CE 23
DATE SENT 16th June, 1941
5.5p.m.
RECEIVED 16th June, 1941

MOST SECRET.

161. Repeated to the Secretary of State for Dominion
Affairs, 227.

Your telegram 216.

It has already been observed in paragraph 4 of
telegram 252 of 31st May from High Commissioner for the
United Kingdom in Wellington that the New Zealand Government are
of the opinion that the present system whereby the New Zealand
Naval Board routes all shipping leaving New Zealand ports must
continue. They therefore concur in the proposal that
the New Zealand Naval Board should be the sole authority
with whom the Commandant of the 12th United States Naval district,
San Francisco, should communicate with regard to routeing.

2. It is proposed that routeing instructions given to all
trans Pacific ships from Australia not calling at New Zealand
Ports should be signalled by the Australian Commonwealth Naval
Board to New Zealand Naval Board. Similarly the New Zealand
Naval Board would receive routeing instructions for all
westbound traffic and would pass the information to the Australian
Commonwealth Naval Board as necessary.

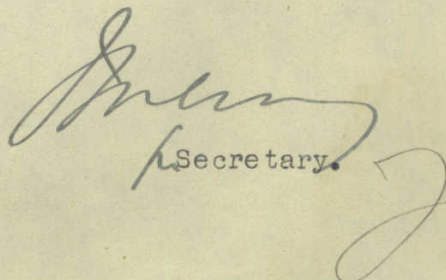
Copy sent to - Defence (attention)
Navy & Minister.
External Affairs.

17.6.41

TELEPRINTED 1852;
17.6.41

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs.

Referred.


Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

SECRET

1498.

Date sent 12th June, 1941.
4.47 p.m.

Received 12th June, 1941.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
TOKYO.

No. 289.

My telegram No. 288. As it is important to give extremist elements no excuse for picking a quarrel with the Netherlands East Indies, particularly on basis allegations of encirclement, I urge that no public statement be made at present offering or suggesting Australian support or assistance to Netherlands East Indies and that press should exercise great discretion.

LATHAM.

Copies to: War Cabinet.
Defence.

13/6/41.

2

DECYPHER FROM **CABLEGRAM.** CE 67THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.DATED 22nd May, 1941
4-40 p.m.

RECEIVED 22nd May, 1941

CIRCULAR M. 93. MOST SECRET

Following for the Prime Minister.

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES.

Following further developments have now taken place since my message of 29th April, regarding the question of a declaration concerning the Netherlands East Indies.

(a) Mr. Hull informed the Australian Minister in Washington on 28th April that, in the circumstances then prevailing in Japan and the United States, the United States Government believed that any more public declarations would do more harm than good, but that they had and were taking every opportunity through diplomatic channels to make it clear to the Japanese Government that the latter would be unwise to believe the United States had lost interest in events in the Pacific area.

(b) Mr. Hull informed His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington on 3rd May, of his conversation at (a) and said that what he thought would be most useful in the immediate future, would be to arrange for some further United States naval movements to take place. Pending some such action, he did not feel that a declaration would be of any real value, though he did not rule out the possibilities of a declaration at a later stage, and he thought that if and when such a proposal took shape, the declaration should be on parallel lines and need not necessarily be made privately.

(c) M. Van Kleffens, the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a farewell broadcast on leaving the Netherlands East Indies, on 6th May, while disclaiming all aggressive or challenging intentions, promised a resolute reaction to any threat and declared the willingness of the Dutch to fight if necessary and to fight in alliance. He mentioned that the British Commander-in-Chief of the Far East, whom he had recently met at Manila, had indicated in a conversation with the press, that a line running from Singapore to Australia via the Netherlands East Indies, must be treated as one unit and M. Van Kleffens said that an attack from outside on any point situated on this line must thus be considered and dealt with as an attack on the whole line, and an attack which concerned all affected parties alike. He concluded by saying that something similar would also be felt by the British Empire, and that all knew that America would give help to those who showed themselves willing to assist in the struggle against unprovoked aggression.

II In the meantime, the staff conference at Singapore with the United States and the Netherlands participation has made considerable progress. The Netherlands Government, however, have drawn attention to the absence of any prior commitment or understanding on our part, and while they are ready to ratify the conclusions of the Singapore Conference, they would clearly welcome an assurance that the plans drawn up at Singapore will, in fact, be fulfilled on our side, should the Netherlands East Indies be attacked.

CABLEGRAM.

III It may be argued that we should be running a risk by entering into any commitment, since, in the event of war resulting from Japanese aggression in the Netherlands East Indies, the whole of our lines of communication from British territory in the Pacific to the Middle East and the United Kingdom, would be open to attack by the Japanese navy, and, in the absence of United States assistance, adequate forces could not be spared in the present circumstances to counter this attack. On the other hand, the Defence Committee of Cabinet, who have considered this question, felt that it was most improbable that the United States would not assist in the situation contemplated.

IV The Defence Committee felt, moreover, that it was unthinkable for us to hold back in such circumstances. Our alliance with the Netherlands and the necessity of safeguarding our own communications, would leave us with no choice but to make common cause with the Netherlands East Indies. Arguments in favour of a declaration to that effect are:-

(a) A response to M. Van Kleffens' broadcast is likely to satisfy the Netherlands Government as to our intentions and so facilitate solution of the questions left outstanding for political decision by the Singapore Conference. Failure to respond is likely to raise doubts in the minds of the Netherlands Government as to our attitude and to weaken the will of the Dutch to resist.

(b) Help which the Netherlands East Indies can give to us in the air and on the sea is by no means negligible, and their air strength is increasing.

(c) We have hitherto been unwilling to enter into a commitment without some prior evidence of support from the United States. But the action of M. Van Kleffens in coming out into the open, introduces a new element into the situation, and evidence of firm determination on the part of ourselves and the Netherlands Government is more likely than anything else, to induce the United States Government to take corresponding action.

V. The Defence Committee considered the possibility of private assurance, but feels that a public statement, by making the position clear, may have the additional advantage of deterring Japan and encouraging not only the peoples of the Netherlands East Indies, but the peoples of other countries threatened by Japan. It will show, also, that our attitude is purely defensive, whereas a private assurance, if its existence leaked out, might be distorted and misrepresented by the Japanese Government.

VI We therefore propose, subject to the concurrence of the Dominion Governments that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make a statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, corresponding as closely as possible to that of M. Van Kleffens.

CABLEGRAM.

I. 8,254

- 3 -

VII Such a statement would welcome the determination of the Netherlands East Indies to resist attack, emphasising that we, like the Netherlands Government, have no aggressive intentions, but that we have an interest in any move likely to prejudice the security of the line which runs from Malaya to New Zealand through the Netherlands East Indies and that we agree that any attack on any part of that line equally concerns all affected parties, and must be dealt with as an attack on the whole line.

VIII It seems clear that the statement should be made very shortly, so that it may come as soon as possible after that of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs.

IX If the Dominion Governments agree, it would be valuable if, when the statement is made, they would be prepared to give it some kind of public endorsement.

COPY TO - ~~HOME CABINET~~
DEFENCE CO.
E.A.
23.5.41.

TELEPRINT MELBOURNE

CE 67

DECIPHER FROM

CABLEGRAM.DATED 22nd May, 1941
4-40 p.m.THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

RECEIVED 22nd May, 1941

CIRCULAR M. 93. MOST SECRET

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CABLEGRAM.

- 2 -

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- 2 -

CABLEGRAM.

- 3 -

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COPY TO - FULL CABINET
DEFENCE CO.
E.A.
23.5.41.

TELEPRINT MELBOURNE

*Joint Declaration
in 1941 - U.K.*

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

O. 7637
CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER TO
THE RT. HON. S.M. BRUCE,
HIGH COMMISSIONER,
LONDON.

Recd 11/6/4
Sent 7th June, 1941.

Following telegram was received from Casey, numbered 406, on 4th June -

"My telegram No. 384 and Prime Minister's telegram No.55:

British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has telegraphed the British Ambassador at Washington to the effect that they regard it important that a public statement should be made and no mere private undertaking.

Minister of British Embassy called on Sumner Welles and Secretary of State today in the above connection. Neither has any objection to a public statement provided language not provocative, although they admit Japanese extremists will do their best to make any such statement appear provocative.

I still hold strongly to the advisability of a private undertaking and not a public statement.

I have reason to believe that, although the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs would prefer a public statement, he would be satisfied with a confidential assurance provided it was made clear confidentially in Tokyo that such an assurance had been given. He realizes the possibility of repercussions in Japan of a public statement with which the United States was not joined. He also realizes that it is most unlikely in the circumstances that the United States would join in any such public statement."

To this I have today sent the following reply --

"I entirely agree that a private undertaking communicated without publicity to Japanese Government is adequate. I expressed that view in London. I will ask Bruce to advise the Foreign Office in that sense."

Will you please therefore pass the above to the Foreign Office.

MENZIES.

O. 7638.

DECYPHER TO
THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Sent 7th June, 1941.

58.

Your telegram 406 of 4th June. I entirely agree that a private undertaking communicated without publicity to Japanese Government is adequate. I expressed that view in London. I will ask Bruce to advise the Foreign Office in that sense. MENZIES.

(P)
COPY SENT TO WAR CABINET, DEF. CO-ORD., E.A. 9/6/41.

✓ War Cabinet

FOR CABINET.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Agenda No.
Copy No.

UNITED KINGDOM-NETHERLANDS DECLARATION.

With a view to checking Japanese southward movement, the question of a declaration by the United Kingdom, U.S.A. and the Netherlands to the effect that an attack on the Netherlands East Indies or on British possessions in the Far East would be regarded as a casus belli, has been in mind for some time.

It took concrete shape on March 5th, when the possibility of a joint declaration was mentioned by the British Ambassador to Mr. Hull. In view of previous failures to obtain any declaration or commitment on Far Eastern and Pacific issues from the United States, it came as a surprise to Lord Halifax when Mr. Hull indicated his readiness to do something on these lines.

2. The Commonwealth Government attached great importance to the proposed declaration, and after it had exchanged telegrams with Mr. Menzies and Sir John Latham, instructed the Australian Minister at Washington on 22nd April to press for the joint declaration. The position in the Middle East made the matter one of urgency and importance.

When, however, the question was raised with Mr. Hull by the Australian Minister on 28th April, and by Lord Halifax on 3rd May, it was clear that the United States would not respond to the proposal at the moment.

3. The United Kingdom Government, vide telegram M.93 of 22nd May, now proposes, subject to the concurrence of the Dominion Government, to make a statement corresponding as closely as possible to the one of Dr. Van Kleffens in the Netherlands East Indies on 3th May.

4. The relevant portions of this statement are as follows

"Our position cannot be considered apart from that of other territories with which by the mere fact of our geographical position we are inseparably joined. The British Commander-in-Chief in East Asia, whom I recently had the pleasure of meeting again at Manila, mentioned in a talk to the press a few days ago the undeniable fact that from a political and military point of view the line running from Singapore through the Netherlands East Indies to Australia must be regarded as a unity. An attack from outside on any point situated on this line must therefore be considered and treated as an attack on the whole line, and this affects all those concerned equally. That seems to be a comprehensible observation that deserves to be taken to heart.

It is far from my intention here to speak in a challenging manner. That is not Dutch but it would also not be Dutch to allow doubt to exist about our determination to fight, if necessary, and that our readiness to do so, if circumstances and the views of others should warrant it, in Allied co-operation. That something of this kind is also felt by the British Empire according to the utterance of Sir Robert Brooke-Popham is a matter for rejoicing."

In/

In a footnote to his despatch, the Consul-General for Batavia observes, in regard to the underline -

"In the abridged version of the speech in English issued to the foreign press this is given as 'if circumstances and the concurrent determination of others warrant it.' This is more forcible than the Dutch text."

5. The attitude of the Dutch to the Japanese question, and the circumstances under which the Dutch would fight, was discussed freely between Sir Frederick Stewart and Dr. Van Kleffens during the recent visit to Australia. Dr. Van Kleffens was very definite on the following important points :-

- (a) The Dutch would fight if attacked, and fight alone, if necessary, but of course preferred to fight with Allies.
- (b) He did not expect any open declaration from the United Kingdom about assistance to the Netherlands East Indies, as he knew that Mr. Churchill, after Poland, Finland, Norway and Rumania, was unalterably opposed to entering into new commitments while there were doubts as to the extent and degree of effective British assistance.
- (c) The Netherlands Government were firmly convinced that irrespective of any prior commitment in the event of attack on the Netherlands East Indies, the British Commonwealth would regard it as an attack on their own vital interests and would intervene automatically.
- (d) The Netherlands Government believed there was little hope of persuading the United States to enter into any commitment as regards the Far East.

6. It will be seen, therefore, that these views largely discount the reasons advanced by the United Kingdom Government in M.93 for making the proposed unilateral declaration.

Further, it is doubtful whether South Africa and Canada would be prepared to concur in the proposal.

It would seem that no real purpose would be served by such a declaration at the present time, especially in view of the general military situation. The Japanese are well aware that various political conversations and naval talks have taken place between British and Dutch authorities. The absence of any American declaration at this stage may do real harm, in that it might indicate no political agreement had been reached or that the United States was not prepared to interfere with Japan's further southward moves.

7. In view of all these considerations, it is suggested that the United Kingdom Government should be informed that the Commonwealth Government does not consider the time opportune to make a declaration of the kind proposed, for the reasons indicated in this memorandum, and that no declaration should be made until the United States is prepared to join in. In the meantime, the Commonwealth Government would be prepared to agree to a private assurance being given to the Netherlands Government.

F. STEWART.

MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

27.5.41.

Anglo-USA Staff comm

FILE COPY

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

1345

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

CABLEGRAM.

Date sent: 29th May, 1941.
6.48 p.m.
Received: 30th May, 1941.

No. 393.

Acting Prime Minister's telegram No. 49.

After having been shown your telegram under reference Group Captain Isitt still adheres to the views reported in paragraph 4 my telegram No. 355, with regard to reports from Washington to the New Zealand Government.

(2) In this opinion he is supported by Mr. Coats who has sent a telegram to his Government in which the following opinions are expressed inter alia:

Appointment of a New Zealand officer (if possible a naval officer) to Washington desirable to ensure that New Zealand Chiefs of Staff are kept informed of all developments and, that in the discussions, in which New Zealand is interested, their views would be represented. In the meantime Group Captain Isitt should act as channel of information.

(3) In view of the foregoing it is not intended in the absence of further instructions to send any reports direct to New Zealand and Australian Chiefs of Naval Staff may continue to supply New Zealand with such reports from Naval Attaché as are considered necessary.

Copies to:

- Prime Minister
 - Minister E.A.
 - Chief of Naval Staff
(teleprinted through Defence)
- 31.5.41.

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.

Date:

No.

Your No. 384. Our reply to United Kingdom
Government's proposal for declaration regarding Netherlands
East Indies being repeated to you through Prime Minister's
Department.

CABLEGRAM.

O. 7178.

DECYPHER TO
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

Sent 30th May, 1941.

No. 328.
MOST SECRET.

Your telegram M.93: Commonwealth Government has given full consideration to your proposal for declaration by United Kingdom Government concerning Netherlands East Indies.

We are strongly impressed, however, by the objection that the absence of a corresponding and simultaneous declaration by United States Government might in present circumstances do real harm in that it might be held to indicate that no political agreement between United Kingdom and United States and the Netherlands had been reached or that the United States was not prepared to interfere with Japan's further southward move. From all information available we take it as a fact that such a declaration would not be forthcoming from United States Government at present.

Further, in his conversation while in Australia, Netherlands Foreign Minister let it appear that he did not in fact expect any open declaration from the United Kingdom regarding assistance to the Netherlands East Indies as he knew that the United Kingdom Government, in the light of European events, might reasonably be opposed to entering into new public commitments. Dr. Van Kleffens appears, however, fully satisfied that, irrespective of any prior commitments, the British Commonwealth in the event of attack on the Netherlands East Indies would regard it as an attack on its own vital interests and would intervene automatically.

For these reasons Commonwealth Government feels that on the whole no useful purpose would be served by an open declaration at the present time, especially in view of general military situation.

At the same time, it is considered that a certain value would attach to a private assurance to the Netherlands Government in the same sense as that proposed for the public declaration. Dr. Van Kleffens in discussion here gave the impression of being quite definite that the Netherlands East Indies would fight if attacked and if necessary would fight alone. This impression is borne out by the public statements made by Van Kleffens while in Australia and in Netherlands East Indies. Further the stage reached in staff conversations in Singapore would appear to render it desirable that plans drawn up should now be based on clear political understanding. This is a point noted in paragraph 2 of your telegram under reference.

Commonwealth Government therefore for its part would welcome and endorse private assurance to the Netherlands Government, in lieu of proposed open declaration, to the effect that Netherlands East Indies in resistance to an attack on its territories could count on active assistance of British Commonwealth. Actual terms and extent of such assurance would naturally be linked with agreed strategical basis of Singapore conversations. Commonwealth Government would hope that it would be possible to obtain corresponding private assurance from the United States and suggests that an approach to this end might be made in Washington. If it appeared unlikely however that United States would agree, we would not for that reason wish United Kingdom declaration to be unduly delayed.

Copy sent to War Cabinet.
Def. Co-ord., E.A. 31/5/41.

L.H.M.

R. J. W. S. W.

CABLEGRAM.

1321

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Date sent 27th May, 1941.
6.14 p.m.
Received 28th May, 1941.

No. 384.

Repeated to Tokyo No.22.

My telegram No.373. SECRET.

Information contained in my telegram No.373⁶ was conveyed to the Secretary of State in a form that irritated him considerably and caused him to tell the British Ambassador quite abruptly that he did not appreciate being lectured by the British Government on how to conduct himself. The incident will take at least a few days to blow over.

(2) The British Ambassador meanwhile has received instructions from London to the effect that, following on the speech of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs on May 6th and subject to the concurrence of the Dominion Governments concerned he should inform the United States Government confidentially that the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposed to make a public statement closely corresponding to that of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs and saying in effect that we will join with the Dutch in defending the line from Malaya through the Netherlands East Indies to New Zealand.

I have discussed the above proposal with the British Ambassador and I agreed with him that in view of the first paragraph above it would be inexpedient to say this to the Secretary of State at this moment as it would be likely to be interpreted as arising out of the above incident and to indicate the decision to go our own way in the Pacific independent of the United States which might have unfortunate results.

The British Ambassador has telegraphed the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs suggesting that he (Halifax) should call the Secretary of State's attention to the speech of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the fact that the Dutch have been pressing His Majesty's Government for a statement of the intention to defend the Netherlands East Indies and that the British Government believe that they must in the near future give the Dutch the assurances they seek. Halifax suggests then asking for the views of the United States Government as to whether such assurances should be public or confidential.

There is also this point. It is well known to Japanese that United States, Dutch and ourselves have been in active discussion on the Far East problems. If we now announced defensive agreement with Dutch, Japan may well make capital out of non-participation of strongest party.

I believe, therefore, that a confidential understanding with the Dutch is preferable at the present stage to a public statement. Approach suggested in your telegram No.47 from the Acting Prime Minister has been delayed for the reason given in the last sentence, para.(8) my telegram No.373. I believe that the State Department may be ready to talk by June 2nd. I will, of course, co-ordinate views with British Embassy and make joint approach with them. CASEY.

Copy to - War Cabinet and Def. Co-ordination. 29.5.41.

Japanese approach to the United States for mediation in the Sino-Japanese dispute suggesting that Japan tried to doublecross Britain and U.S.A.

CE 67
 DECRYPTER FROM **CABLEGRAM.**

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
 FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
 LONDON.

DATED 22nd May, 1941
 4-40 p.m.

RECEIVED 22nd May, 1941

CIRCULAR M. 93. MOST SECRET

Following for the Prime Minister.

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(a) Mr. Hull informed the Australian Minister in Washington on 28th April that, in the circumstances then prevailing in Japan and the United States, the United States Government believed that any more public declarations would do more harm than good, but that they had and were taking every opportunity through diplomatic channels to make it clear to the Japanese Government that the latter would be unwise to believe the United States had lost interest in events in the Pacific area.

(b) Mr. Hull informed His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington on 3rd May, of his conversation at (a) and said that what he thought would be most useful in the immediate future, would be to arrange for some further United States naval movements to take place. Pending some such action, he did not feel that a declaration would be of any real value, though he did not rule out the possibilities of a declaration at a later stage, and he thought that if and when such a proposal took shape, the declaration should be on parallel lines and need not necessarily be made privately.

(c) M. Van Kleffens, the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a farewell broadcast on leaving the Netherlands East Indies, on 6th May, while disclaiming all aggressive or challenging intentions, promised a resolute reaction to any threat and declared the willingness of the Dutch to fight if necessary and to fight in alliance. He mentioned that the British Commander-in-Chief of the Far East, whom he had recently met at Manila, had indicated in a conversation with the press, that a line running from Singapore to Australia via the Netherlands East Indies, must be treated as one unit and M. Van Kleffens said that an attack from outside on any point situated on this line must thus be considered and dealt with as an attack on the whole line, and an attack which concerned all affected parties alike. He concluded by saying that something similar would also be felt by the British Empire, and that all knew that America would give help to those who showed themselves willing to assist in the struggle against unprovoked aggression.

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CABLEGRAM.

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CABLEGRAM.

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COPY TO - FULL CABINET
DEFENCE CO.
E.A.
23.5.41.

TELEPRINT MELBOURNE

SECRET

CABLEGRAM.

1281

DECYPHER FROM:

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

DATE SENT: 6 p.m. 23/5/41.

RECD: 24th May, 1941

No. 376

SECRET. ACTING PRIME MINISTER'S TELEGRAM No. 49, last sentence.

After consultation with British Military Mission and with Colonel Craig (who is head of a British Security Mission now in Washington) Naval Attaché states arrangement described for transmission of secret correspondence to New Zealand is not acceptable for reasons of security.

Greater part of such information as would be given to New Zealand Government by Naval Attaché would only be sent by safe hand of a reliable British subject. Group Captain Isitt will be informed accordingly. Request this plainly be communicated to the New Zealand Government.

CASBY.

Copy to P.M.'s Dept. (~~for teleprinting to P.M. and info. for B.A.~~)
Dept. Defence Co-ord. (~~for teleprinting to Chief of Naval Staff~~)

26/5/41.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

SECRET

CABLEGRAM.

I. 8342.
GE 62/283.

DECYPHER FROM
ACTING PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND,
WELLINGTON.

Sent 23rd May, 1941, 1735.

Received 24th May, 1941.

SECRET.

The New Zealand Government are most grateful for arrangements made for copies of reports of interest to New Zealand to be sent direct by the Australian Naval Attaché at Washington. They would also be glad if you could agree to any enquiries to the Naval Attaché being addressed direct by the Prime Minister, Wellington, through the Australian Minister. Should you agree to this course, would you wish telegrams to be repeated to you?

Copy sent to Def. Co-ord. for advice (D.1399)
Navy TELEPRINTED.
E.A. 24/5/41.

THE SECRETARY,
DEPT. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

REFERRED.

Mahe
SECRETARY.

Anglo-USA Staff Conversations

xxx

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

I. 8,254

DECYPHER FROM **CABLEGRAM.**

CE 67

DATED 22nd May, 1941
4-40 p.m.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

RECEIVED 22nd May, 1941

CIRCULAR M. 93. MOST SECRET

Following for the Prime Minister.

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES.

Following further developments have now taken place since my message of 29th April, regarding the question of a declaration concerning the Netherlands East Indies.

(a) Mr. Hull informed the Australian Minister in Washington on 28th April that, in the circumstances then prevailing in Japan and the United States, the United States Government believed that any more public declarations would do more harm than good, but that they had and were taking every opportunity through diplomatic channels to make it clear to the Japanese Government that the latter would be unwise to believe the United States had lost interest in events in the Pacific area.

(b) Mr. Hull informed His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington on 3rd May, of his conversation at (a) and said that what he thought would be most useful in the immediate future, would be to arrange for some further United States naval movements to take place. Pending some such action, he did not feel that a declaration would be of any real value, though he did not rule out the possibilities of a declaration at a later stage, and he thought that if and when such a proposal took shape, the declaration should be on parallel lines and need not necessarily be made privately.

(c) M. Van Kleffens, the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a farewell broadcast on leaving the Netherlands East Indies, on 6th May, while disclaiming all aggressive or challenging intentions, promised a resolute reaction to any threat and declared the willingness of the Dutch to fight if necessary and to fight in alliance. He mentioned that the British Commander-in-Chief of the Far East, whom he had recently met at Manila, had indicated in a conversation with the press, that a line running from Singapore to Australia via the Netherlands East Indies, must be treated as one unit and M. Van Kleffens said that an attack from outside on any point situated on this line must thus be considered and dealt with as an attack on the whole line, and an attack which concerned all affected parties alike. He concluded by saying that something similar would also be felt by the British Empire, and that all knew that America would give help to those who showed themselves willing to assist in the struggle against unprovoked aggression.

II In the meantime, the staff conference at Singapore with the United States and the Netherlands participation has made considerable progress. The Netherlands Government, however, have drawn attention to the absence of any prior commitment or understanding on our part, and while they are ready to ratify the conclusions of the Singapore Conference, they would clearly welcome an assurance that the plans drawn up at Singapore will, in fact, be fulfilled on our side, should the Netherlands East Indies be attacked.

See Japan Staff Advance

CABLEGRAM.

III It may be argued that we should be running a risk by entering into any commitment, since, in the event of war resulting from Japanese aggression in the Netherlands East Indies, the whole of our lines of communication from British territory in the Pacific to the Middle East and the United Kingdom, would be open to attack by the Japanese navy, and, in the absence of United States assistance, adequate forces could not be spared in the present circumstances to counter this attack. On the other hand, the Defence Committee of Cabinet, who have considered this question, felt that it was most improbable that the United States would not assist in the situation contemplated.

IV The Defence Committee felt, moreover, that it was unthinkable for us to hold back in such circumstances. Our alliance with the Netherlands and the necessity of safeguarding our own communications, would leave us with no choice but to make common cause with the Netherlands East Indies. Arguments in favour of a declaration to that effect are:-

(a) A response to M. Van Kleffens' broadcast is likely to satisfy the Netherlands Government as to our intentions and so facilitate solution of the questions left outstanding for political decision by the Singapore Conference. Failure to respond is likely to raise doubts in the minds of the Netherlands Government as to our attitude and to weaken the will of the Dutch to resist.

(b) Help which the Netherlands East Indies can give to us in the air and on the sea is by no means negligible, and their air strength is increasing.

(c) We have hitherto been unwilling to enter into a commitment without some prior evidence of support from the United States. But the action of M. Van Kleffens in coming out into the open, introduces a new element into the situation, and evidence of firm determination on the part of ourselves and the Netherlands Government is more likely than anything else, to induce the United States Government to take corresponding action.

V. The Defence Committee considered the possibility of private assurance, but feels that a public statement, by making the position clear, may have the additional advantage of deterring Japan and encouraging not only the peoples of the Netherlands East Indies, but the peoples of other countries threatened by Japan. It will show, also, that our attitude is purely defensive, whereas a private assurance, if its existence leaked out, might be distorted and misrepresented by the Japanese Government.

VI We therefore propose, subject to the concurrence of the Dominion Governments that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make a statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, corresponding as closely as possible to that of M. Van Kleffens.

CABLEGRAM.

I. 8,254

- 3 -

VII Such a statement would welcome the determination of the Netherlands East Indies to resist attack, emphasising that we, like the Netherlands Government, have no aggressive intentions, but that we have an interest in any move likely to prejudice the security of the line which runs from Malaya to New Zealand through the Netherlands East Indies and that we agree that any attack on any part of that line equally concerns all affected parties, and must be dealt with as an attack on the whole line.

VIII It seems clear that the statement should be made very shortly, so that it may come as soon as possible after that of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs.

IX If the Dominion Governments agree, it would be valuable if, when the statement is made, they would be prepared to give it some kind of public endorsement.

COPY TO - ~~FULL CABINET~~
DEFENCE CO.
E.A.
23.5.41.

TELEPRINT MELBOURNE

Anglo-USA Staff Conversation

FILE COPY
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM.

MOST SECRET

1128

DECYPHER FROM:

HIGH COMMISSIONER,
LONDON.

DATE SENT: 8 p.m. 9/5/41.

RECD: 10th May, 1941.

No. 313.

ACTING PRIME MINISTER. MOST SECRET.

After careful consideration your and New Zealand views reply to Stimson Knox gesture re transference to Atlantic now been sent. Dominions Office cabling text.

BRUCE.

Copy to P. M's Dept. 10/5/41.

CABLEGRAM.

Via cable 169/ CE 13 W 43

DECYPHER FROM

DATED 6th May, 1941
4-30 a.m.THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND,
WELLINGTON. N.Z.

RECEIVED 6th May, 1941

MOST SECRET

(Addressed to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs 169,
repeated to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia 104)

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have considered most carefully the proposals made in your most secret telegram 171, dated 2nd May, and they have also had opportunity of exchanging views on this matter with His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia.

They would like, in the first place, to assure His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that they fully appreciate the force of the various considerations put forward by the United States and British authorities in support of the most significant movement now proposed by Messrs. Knox and Stimson, with which they are in general agreement, but, in view of their own vital interests in the Pacific, they feel obliged to offer the following observations;

(1) They are by no means assured that the action proposed would act as a deterrent upon Japan; indeed, they feel that the effect might well be the opposite. While appreciating the force of the argument that Japan would not wish to be on the losing side, and would thus be disinclined to take immediate action, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel that due regard must be paid to the terms of the Tripartite Pact and Japan's understanding with Germany. It appears to them that Japan will be more willing to go to war with the United States if the bulk of the American Fleet has been transferred from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and they do not therefore share the opinion of the United Kingdom Government, held in common with Mr. Stimson that "the presence of an unnecessarily large United States Fleet at Hawaii" is less of a deterrent than "marked advance by the United States Navy into the Atlantic", which might well be interpreted as a bluff rather than an active movement towards American participation in the war.

They feel, too, that Japan's actions will not necessarily be guided by a long, as opposed to a short, view. Indeed, it does not seem safe to postulate a logical consideration of such matter by Japanese leaders, who might, in the existing circumstances, take a risk in the hope of maintaining some advantages, even if in the long view the action appeared to be hazardous.

In short, it seems unlikely that an international aggressor, such as Japan, would be deterred from any action which she considers in her own interests, by the removal (which must be public and known in Japan) of a substantial portion of the only naval forces which could in the immediate future, restrict her activities in the Pacific.

Instead of acting as a deterrent, therefore, to Japanese hostility, the more probable result of the action proposed would be that the naval weakness that must be disclosed, would be accepted by the Japanese as an incentive.

*See Pt Washington
321 7/1-5-41*

MOST
SECRET

CABLEGRAM.

- 2 -

(2) While holding these views, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand nevertheless fully recognise the vital importance of the Battle of the Atlantic. Europe is obviously the decisive theatre of war, and the greatest importance must be attached to the probable effect of the proposal on wavering neutrals and on public opinion generally, both in Europe and the Middle East.

They agree that Britain is the first line of defence and that her needs come first, since a break in this front might well mean many years added to the length of the war.

Any movement which suggests more assistance to the United Kingdom is obviously to be encouraged, and the possibility of American entry into war, due in some measure to attacks made on her naval vessels in the Atlantic, seems on the balance to outweigh the risks of a declaration of war by Japan as a result of any weakening of American naval forces in the Pacific.

On the other hand, unless the proposed movement of a substantial proportion of the American Pacific Fleet into the Atlantic is to score the effect of intensifying American effort and ensuring or rendering more probable in the near future, actual participation of the United States in hostilities (which is ruled out in the American proposal and in the Secretary of State's telegram), then it might well amount to nothing more than a gesture helpful, but by no means decisive.

It might never lead to full United States co-operation, and, what is equally important, might never be interpreted by the Axis as necessarily or probably having that effect.

Moreover, if it did have that effect, the one immediate and important result might well be to create a situation intended to bring the Japanese-German Pact into operation, and thus in theory, ensure active Japanese hostilities in the Pacific.

(3) The effect of the reduction of the American Pacific Fleet to the order of three or four battleships with accompanying cruisers and destroyers is, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, to reduce it to a most inadequate force. They are of the opinion, and in this they are supported by their military advisers, that to ensure any reasonable protection of Australia, New Zealand and the East Indies, the number of American capital ships in the Pacific should not be reduced to less than half the present strength, and at the same time, the retention of at least two aircraft carriers should be regarded as indispensable.

(4) His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are much concerned at the position of Singapore. They assume that, under the terms of the recent Washington Conference, the release of British ships to Singapore, following a declaration of war by Japan, would, under the circumstances, take place sooner than would otherwise have been the case.

It is perhaps pertinent to observe also that the Japanese, not knowing of this replacement plan, would be encouraged accordingly. It is realised that, in any case, this transfer

- 2 -

CABLEGRAM.

- 3 -

could not be undertaken until American ships arrive in the Atlantic. There must inevitably be a considerable delay before any battleships could arrive in Singapore.

The concern of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand arises from the fact that, during this period, no effective resistance could be made to any Japanese naval movement in the Pacific and, moreover, there is no really effective guarantee that, if Japan were to move, American assistance, even to limited degree that would be left in the Pacific, would be available either at once, or up to a calculable period.

Although Singapore could no doubt be defended until such time as naval assistance could be provided, this possibility of a lengthy period of naval inferiority in the Pacific might well give Japan the opportunity of attacking and perhaps taking the Netherlands East Indies, Borneo, and island bases, and, of course, making widespread attacks on shipping.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel, therefore, that, in the event of transfer of United States ships to the Atlantic, renewed consideration should be given to the possibility of the strengthening of naval forces stationed at Singapore.

(5) His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully agree with the great desirability of encouraging all American efforts to assist our cause and they are certainly not unmindful of the unfortunate effect that might be created were the United States Government to feel that their most generous offer of assistance to us in this particular way, had in any way been rebuffed or insufficiently appreciated but it is their belief that a smaller American force in the Atlantic would be sufficient for the purpose which the United States authorities have in mind, and that at the same time the naval forces left in the Pacific should be sufficiently strong to resist potential Japanese aggression.

(6) (a) To sum up, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel that the offer being spontaneously made by the United States must be given very careful consideration. It is an offer from the United States and on the balance the weight may be to acceptance because it is their offer.

(b) Its weight would not be affected to an appreciable extent if the number of battleships transferred was four instead of eight.

(c) The Atlantic is the vital area of the Commonwealth fighting front and transfer of the ships may have a profound effect.

(d) The move instead of deterring may well result in action by Japan.

(e) If after consideration of the views expressed above His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom decide to approve of the United States proposals, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will concur; but they would suggest that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom request the United States to retain at least half of the present force of capital ships in the Pacific.

Info USA SC

FILE COPY

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

DECRYPTER FROM:

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

DATE SENT: 10.20 p.m. 2/5/41.
RECD: 3rd May, 1941.

No. 328.

My telegram 321.

You will have been consulted by the British Government on certain naval proposals made to them by the United States Government to move a large part of the United States Pacific fleet to the Atlantic. Possible consequences of such action if it were to come about will be clear to you. The Pacific would be left with what would be deemed by both American and Australian public as wholly inadequate naval forces with which to resist potential Japanese aggression.

(2) Subject no doubt to reactions of Australia and New Zealand, scheme may well be accepted or rejected in United States and in United Kingdom not on strategic grounds but on its anticipated political effect on Japan. Argument of those who favour large scale movement of United States naval forces to the Atlantic is that Japan will be so impressed with America's determination that Britain shall win and that these moves will be taken to mean that the United States is about to enter the war, that Japan will hesitate to take any action that will place her on the losing side. It is on this gamble on Japanese reactions that advocates of the proposal rely.

(3) I would draw your attention to a less drastic proposal (paragraph 2 of my telegram 321).

(4) I make no comment on the strategical aspect of all this but from a political point of view I have no hesitation in saying that the proposal for a transfer of a large proportion of United States Pacific fleet would leave British countries and interests in considerable peril. Smaller scheme is to my mind vastly preferable.

(5) Chief sponsors of more drastic proposal are Stimson, Secretary of War, and General Marshall, Chief of Staff of United States Army, who appears to take the attitude that risks have to be taken in the Pacific in order to make certain of things in North Atlantic and that when the war is won situation in the Pacific can be retrieved. As you will know, they seem already to have written off the Philippines in advance as indefensible.
GASEY.

Copies to War Cabinet,
Defence Co-ord. Dept. (teleprinted)
Dept. of Navy. 4/5/41.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SECRET

1040.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

CABLEGRAM.

Date sent 30th April, 1941.
12.50 p.m.
Received 1st May, 1941.

No. 318.

In a prepared address to the United States Chamber of Commerce today Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations said inter alia -

- (a) "It is a responsibility of the Navy under our Government and our law and as our interests dictate . . . that your freighters put out and return from Sydney and Singapore, from Batavia and Manila and Hong Kong with unbreached cargoes . . ."
- (b) Stark also said informally "I would like to tell you about our patrols and where they are 2,000 miles out from the high latitudes to the equator in the Atlantic . . ."

(2) As regards (a) particular reference to ports in the South West Pacific area should, as far as I am aware, be interpreted as a warning to Japan. No fresh plans for the protection of American trade in this area, have to my knowledge been formulated or put into operation other than those contained in the report of recent naval conversations.

(3) As regards (b) when orders were issued to the Commander in Chief of the United States Atlantic fleet for the establishment of patrols now operating in the Atlantic similar instructions were issued to Commander in Chief of the United States Pacific fleet for establishing patrols east of international three mile limit line but these instructions have not yet been put into force.

CASEY.

Copy to - War Cabinet
Defence Co-ordination
Navy.
P.M.'s. Dept.
1.5.41.

High. U.S. Staff Communication

23 APR 1941



TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 7185.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION.

No. SS. 1111.

MELBOURNE, S.C.I.

¹⁸
~~17~~th April, 1941.

MOST SECRET

MEMORANDUM for -

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SINGAPORE CONFERENCE - APRIL, 1941.

Herewith is forwarded, for information, Copy No. 12 of Agendum No. 135/1941 on the abovementioned subject, which has been submitted for consideration by War Cabinet.

M. Scuderi

Acting Secretary.

*W
W*

WAR CABINET AGENDA**MOST
SECRET**SINGAPORE CONFERENCE - APRIL 1941Purpose of Conference.

..... As a result of the staff conversations which have recently been held at Washington, the United Kingdom Government advised on 7th April (Cablegram No. 230, Annex "A") that a conference was to be convened at Singapore on the 18th April to prepare plans for conducting military operations in the Far East on the basis of Anglo-United States, Dutch co-operation in conformity with the report of the Washington conversations but without political commitment. The Commonwealth Government was invited to send representatives to the Conference.

2. It was also intimated that on the conclusion of the main conference that the opportunity would be taken to clear up any outstanding points arising out of the Anglo-Dutch Australian conversations held at Singapore in February, 1941, including the question of formulating a co-ordinated naval plan for the Far East which was the subject of recent representations by the Commonwealth Government to the United Kingdom Government (War Cabinet Minute No. 909).

..... 3. The terms of reference for the Conference are embodied in Dominions Office Cablegrams No. 248 of 11th April (Annex "B") and No. 262 of 15th April (Annex "C").
.....

Australian Representation.

4. The question of Australian representation was considered by the Chiefs of Staff, who have reported as follows :-

"At the Anglo-Dutch-Australian Conference in February, 1941, complete plans were drawn up for Australian Army and Air co-operation in Far Eastern defence measures. A co-ordinated Naval plan, however, was not formulated. It is noted from paragraph 8 of Cablegram No. 230 that arrangements are being made for discussions to be held on Naval plans at the forthcoming conference.

In view of the importance of Naval aspects, the Chiefs of Staff consider that the Australian delegation should be primarily a Naval one with Army and Air officers attached as advisers. It is recommended that the delegation should be constituted as follows :-

Leader:

Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin, K.B.E., C.B.

Naval Staff:

Paymaster Captain J.B. Foley, O.B.E., R.A.N.
Commander R.F. Nichols, R.N.

Army Adviser:

Colonel H.S. Rourke, M.C., G.S.O.l., 8th Division,
A.I.F. (at present in Malaya).

Air Adviser:

Group Captain F.M. Bladin, R.A.A.F.

The basis of the instructions for the delegation should be the decisions contained in War Cabinet Minute No. 909 and in Cablegrams 187 of 27th March and 206 of 2nd April from the Commonwealth Government to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. The delegation should not have authority to commit the Government, any further proposals for co-operation by Australia that may arise out of the Conference being reserved to the Commonwealth Government for decision."

5. Admiral Colvin, Captain Foley, and Commander Nichols are proceeding to Singapore in H.M.A.S. "SYDNEY" and are expected to arrive within one or two days of the opening of the Conference. Group Captain Bladin left Sydney by Empire Flying Boat on 15th April; Commander V.E. Kennedy, Australian Naval Liaison Officer, Netherlands East Indies, will also be attached to the Australian delegation.

Submission to War Cabinet.

6. The arrangements for Australian representation at the Conference to be held at Singapore, the basis of instructions for the Delegation, as outlined above, and the terms of reference for the Conference as set forth in Dominions Office Cablegrams 248 and 262, are submitted for consideration by War Cabinet.

A. W. FADDEN

ACTING MINISTER FOR DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION.

16th April, 1941.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT
C A B L E G R A MI.5303
Imp 226/30 W. 126IMMEDIATE.
MOST SECRET.DATED 7.4.41 2210
RECEIVED 8.4.41.DECYPHER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DOMINION AFFAIRS, LONDON.

MOST SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Addressed to Commonwealth Government 250, New Zealand 126,
repeated to Commander in Chief Far East.

Arising out of staff talks at Washington, it is proposed to convene a conference at Singapore to prepare plans for conducting military operations in the Far East on the basis of Anglo-United States, Dutch co-operation in conformity with the report of the Washington conversations but without political commitment. H.M. Governments in the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand are invited to send representatives to this conference.

2. Commander in Chief Far East will be Chairman of the Conference and the following are being invited to attend or to be represented in addition to Australian, New Zealand and the United States representatives: Commander in Chief China, Commander in Chief East Indies, Netherlands East Indies Defence Authorities.
3. The proposed date for assembling the conference is 18th April. The United States Government has already agreed to this date which we hope is also agreeable to the Commonwealth New Zealand Governments.
4. The Commander in Chief Far East has been instructed to proceed with arrangements for the conference forthwith and it has been suggested that he should arrange details direct with the Commonwealth and New Zealand authorities and with the Netherlands East Indies Defence authorities.
5. A copy of the final report of staff talks in Washington is due to leave Los Angeles by air 6th April addressed to your Chief of Naval Staff. It is therefore possible that your representatives at the Singapore conference will be in possession of the Washington report before departure.
6. In conclusion of the main conference it is proposed that opportunity be taken to complete plans on the basis of United States neutrality and clear up any outstanding points arising out of the Anglo-Dutch Australian conversations held at Singapore in February 1941.
7. Further information regarding the April conference will follow.
8. The above arrangements should meet the request in paragraph 5 of the Commonwealth Government's telegram 187 of 27th March repeated to Prime Minister of New Zealand 98. Suggestions of the Commonwealth Government with regard to points for discussion as given in Commonwealth Governments telegram 206 2nd April repeated to Prime Minister of New Zealand 111 will receive full consideration in drawing up the terms of reference for the talks proposed in paragraph 6 above.

Copy sent to - Service Ministers, Mr. Sinclair, Sir Frederick Stewart, E.A., Acting Prime Minister. 8/4/41.

Teleprint Sydney.

Decypher from Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs, London.

Dated 11/4/41 10.20 p.m.

IMMEDIATE. MOST SECRET. Addressed to C. of A.243, New Zealand 135.
Repeated to C. in C. Far East.

Reference my telegram C. of A. 230, New Zealand 126, of 7th April, following are the proposed terms of reference to the forthcoming Conference at Singapore.

2. The Conference will be in two parts -

Part 1. British - United States - Dutch Staff Conversations.

Part 2. British - Dutch Conversations with United States. Representatives as Observers if desired.

3. Following conditions apply equally to Parts 1 and 2 -

(a) No political commitment is implied.

(b) Any agreement is subject to ratification by the Governments concerned.

(c) Conversations to be conducted in spirit of complete frankness.

4. Following proposed instructions for Part 1 only -

(A) Hypothesis . War between Germany, Italy and Japan on the one hand and the British Empire with our present allies and U.S.A. on the other.

(B) Objects of Conference. To prepare plans for conducting military operations in the Far East on basis of report of Washington conversations.

(C) Representation as in telegram of 7th April under reference.

(D) Particular points on which agreement is required:-

(i) Plans for employment and disposition of forces in the whole area, Indian Ocean, Western Pacific, and Australian and New Zealand waters before and after arrival of Far Eastern fleet, as agreed in Washington conversations;

(ii) Details of arrangements for co-operation, e.g., communications, exchange of Liaison Officers, etc.

5. Instructions for joint action will follow.

6. We shall be glad to learn whether H.M. Governments in the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand concur in the above proposals.

Copy to Ministers for the Army and Navy and Air and Mr. Sinclair.

- - - - -

Decypher from Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs, London.

Dated 15th April, 3.45 p.m.
Recvd. 16th April, 1941.

Addressed to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia 262,
New Zealand 142. Repeated to Commander-in-Chief, Far East. My tele-
gram Commonwealth of Australia 248, New Zealand 135 of 11th April.

Following are the proposed terms of reference for part two of the
Conference:-

(a) Hypothesis, as for part one but United States neutral. Plans
to be based on assumption that question of what would constitute an
act of war by Japan could only be decided by mutual consultation between
His Majesty's Governments concerned, in the light of circumstances at
the time.

(b) The Object of the Conference. To clear up outstanding points
arising out of Anglo-Dutch-Australian conversations at Singapore in
February, 1941 and to draw up plans for disposition and employment of
British and Dutch Forces in the Far East.

(c) Representation, as for part one but United States Representatives
present only as observers.

2. Particular points for discussion are:-

(a) Naval plans on the basis of forces outlined in paragraph 12 of
the report of the Anglo-Dutch-Australian conversations distinguishing
between the situation before and after redistribution of the forces re-
ferred to in paragraph (-A) of Admiralty telegram 1135 of 24th February.

(b) Provision of escorts for troop convoys.

(c) Protection of troop movements from Australia, Ambon and Koepang
and subsequent maintenance.

(d) Protection of supply routes in the Indian Ocean and a route to
the United Kingdom via Panama.

(e) Any re-organisation of naval commands or spheres of operational
control considered necessary to dovetail in with the results of part one
of the Conference.

(f) Any further steps considered necessary in connection with defence
of ports in the New Guinea-Fiji area.

(g) Promulgation of monthly reports of progress.

(h) Command of troops at Ambon.

3. We should be glad to learn whether His Majesty's Governments in
Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand concur in the above proposals.

4. My immediately following telegram contains tentative views of
our Military Advisers based on telegraphic summary of the Anglo-Dutch-
Australian February Conference and after considering the views of the
Commonwealth Government as set out in their telegram 187 and those of
the New Zealand Government as set out in their telegrams 83 and 109.
It should be noted that full report of the February Conference has not
yet been received in the United Kingdom.

Copy to - Ministers for Navy, Army, and Air, Mr. Sinclair.

Anglo-USA Staff
Conversations

FILE COPY

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM

**MOST
SECRET**

DECODE FROM AUSTRALIAN LEGATION, WASHINGTON

No. 287.

Date Sent: 10.13 p.m. 18/4/41
Date Recd: 17th April, 1941.

I saw Sumner Welles today.

I discussed proposal that had reached British Embassy from Commander in Chief of the Far East through the Foreign Office that forthcoming Singapore conference should be given publicity subject to views of United States and other Governments concerned as useful offset to Japanese-Russian Pact. His first reaction was adverse due to the desire to avoid provocation to Japanese army and navy extremists. I think that his real reason is domestic politics here.

Sumner Welles has since telephoned to say that his colleagues agree that Japanese cannot fail to discover that the conference is taking place and that they believe that publicity would be provocative and might well have effect that we all take steps to avoid.

I left with him copy of most recent public opinion poll results which reached me privately today. They show: (a) 73 per cent think that the United States will go into the war in Europe some time before it is over; (b) 69 per cent think it more important for the United States to help England win even at the risk of war; (c) 74 per cent think that they would be personally affected by German victory over England; (d) 59 per cent think that the United States should take steps now to keep Japan from becoming more powerful even at the risk of war; (e) 80 per cent think that the United States should defend Central and South American countries if attacked by a European Power.

Sumner Welles said all that they really know is that Japanese are ready with army and navy force at Hainan et cetera and with transports available, and that in spite of official Government spokesman's denial of current rumours about attack on Singapore, next fortnight will be anxious time.

United States Government have no proposals for any further immediate statements or gestures arising out of Japanese-Russian Pact or Far East situation generally.

Copies to:

P.M.'s Dept: War Cabinet: Defence Co-ord: - 18/4/41.

Appl. to A. Staff conversations

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

O. 4556
O. 4557

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER TO -

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON. No. 225

SENT 11th April, 1941.

THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND,
WELLINGTON NO. 122

Your telegram 230 of 7th April. Commonwealth Government will be represented at Singapore Conference by Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin who will be accompanied by two Naval Staff Officers and an Air Adviser. Army Adviser will be made available from A.I.F. in Singapore.

Commonwealth Government appreciates arrangements made for discussions on co-ordinated naval plans for the Far East as outlined in our previous cablegrams.

O. 4556

DECYPHER TO-

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF,
FAR EAST.

SENT 11th April, 1941.

Following cablegram has been sent today to Dominions Office -- (ENDS)

Your telegram 230 of 7th April. Commonwealth Government will be represented at Singapore Conference by Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin who will be accompanied by two naval staff officers and an air adviser. Army adviser will be made available from A.I.F. in Singapore. (ENDS).

2. Admiral Colvin will be accompanied by Paymaster Captain J. B. Foley and Commander R. F. Nichols. Air adviser will be Group Captain F. M. Bladin and Army Adviser will be Colonel H. S. Rourke, who is at present in Malaya. Colvin, Foley and Nichols are proceeding to Singapore in H.M.A.S. SYDNEY and are expected to arrive within one or two days of the opening of the Conference. Bladin will travel by Empire flying boat leaving Sydney 15th April. Commander V. E. Kennedy, Australian Naval Liaison Officer, N.E.I., is also proceeding from Netherlands East Indies to Singapore and will arrive there in time for opening of the Conference on 18th April.

COPY TO SERVICE MINISTERS
MR. SINCLAIR (YOUR TELE. D.957)
SIR FREDERICK STEWART
DEPT. E.A.
ACTING PRIME MINISTER.
15/4/1941

THE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.
REFERRED.

J. H. G.
SECRETARY

Anglo-A Staff conversations

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

O. 4559

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER TO -

THE RT. HON. R. G. MENZIES,

SENT 11th April, 1941.

LONDON.

Following cablegram sent today to Dominions Office -
BEGINS.

Your telegram 230 of 7th April. Commonwealth Government will be represented at Singapore Conference by Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin who will be accompanied by two naval staff officers and an Air Adviser. Army Adviser will be made available from A.I.F. in Singapore. ENDS.

2. Admiral Colvin will be accompanied by Paymaster Captain J. B. Foley and Commander R. F. Nichols. Air Adviser will be Group Captain F. M. Bladin and Army Adviser will be Colonel H. S. Rourke, who is at present in Malaya. Colvin, Foley and Nichols are proceeding to Singapore in H.M.A.S. SYDNEY and are expected to arrive within one or two days of the opening of the Conference. Bladin will travel by Empire Flying Boat leaving Sydney 15th April. Commander V. E. Kennedy, Australian Naval Liaison Officer, N.E.I., is also proceeding to Singapore for the Conference.

3. In view of importance of naval aspects which are to be discussed we feel that Colvin should represent Australia. His medical advisers will not permit him to fly, but arrangements can conveniently be made for him to proceed to Singapore in the SYDNEY. As Army and Air aspects of Australian co-operation in Far Eastern Defence measures have already been decided, we do not think it necessary for those services to be strongly represented at Conference. We are therefore arranging for Army and Air advisers to be attached to Delegation as indicated in paragraph 2.

O. 4560
O. 4561

DECYPHER TO -

THE BRITISH CONSUL-GENERAL, BATAVIA,

SENT 11th April, 1941.

THE BRITISH CONSUL, SOERABAYA.

Wing Commander F. M. Bladin, R.A.A.F. proceeding to Singapore by Empire Flying Boat leaving Sydney 15th April and will pass through Netherlands East Indies.

ACTING PRIME MINISTER.
COPY TO SERVICE MINISTERS
MR. SINCLAIR (YOUR TELE. D.957)
SIR FREDERICK STEWART
DEPT. E.A.

15/4/1941

THE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

REFERRED.

J. Stirling
SECRETARY

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

SECRET
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON

CABLEGRAM.

I, 5305

Imp 226/30 W 126

ED 7th April, 1941

2210

RECEIVED 8th April, 1941

MOST SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Addressed to Commonwealth Government 230, New Zealand 126, repeated to Commander in Chief Far East.

Arising out of staff talks at Washington, it is proposed to convene a conference at Singapore to prepare plans for conducting military operations in the Far East on the basis of Anglo-United States, Dutch co-operation in conformity with the report of the Washington conversations but without political commitment. H.M. Governments in the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand are invited to send representatives to this conference.

2. Commander in Chief Far East will be Chairman of the conference and the following are being invited to attend or to be represented in addition to Australian, New Zealand and the United States representatives: Commander in Chief China, Commander in Chief East Indies, Netherlands East Indies Defence Authorities.

3. The proposed date for assembling the conference is 18th April. The United States Government has already agreed to this date which we hope is also agreeable to the Commonwealth New Zealand Governments.

4. The Commander in Chief Far East has been instructed to proceed with arrangements for the conference forthwith and it has been suggested that he should arrange details direct with the Commonwealth and New Zealand authorities and with the Netherlands East Indies Defence authorities.

5. A copy of the final report of staff talks in Washington is due to leave Los Angeles by air 6th April addressed to your Chief of Naval Staff. It is therefore possible that your representatives at the Singapore conference will be in possession of the Washington report before departure.

6. On conclusion of the main conference it is proposed that opportunity be taken to complete plans on the basis of United States neutrality and clear up any outstanding points arising out of the Anglo-Dutch Australian conversations held at Singapore in February 1941.

7. Further information regarding the April conference will follow.

8. The above arrangements should meet the request in paragraph 5 of the Commonwealth Government's telegram 187 of 27th March repeated to Prime Minister of New Zealand 98. Suggestions of the Commonwealth Government with regard to points for discussion as given in Commonwealth Governments telegram 206 2nd April repeated to Prime Minister of New Zealand 111 will receive full consideration in drawing up the terms of reference for the talks proposed in paragraph 6 above.

Copy sent to - Service Ministers
Mr. Sinclair
Sir Frederick Stewart
E.A.
Acting Prime Minister.

8.4.41

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs.

Referred.

TELEPRINT SYDNEY

Secretary
Secretary

*See Defence No. 1
Staff conversation
file*

Report of Anglo-Dutch-Austⁿ Conf Singapore Feb 1941
Observation by Cwth Govt.
See Cable to SS 187 on file

Defence of the Pacific 27.3.41

Mr. W.S. Staff Conversations

CEH

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

No.....

x

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

SECRET

17 MAR 1941

13th March, 1941.

MEMORANDUM:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Mission from Netherlands Indies.

I refer to your memorandum of the 12th March regarding the Netherlands Indies Military mission which is shortly visiting Australia. The Administrator, Darwin, has been advised of the visit of the mission and requested to extend all possible courtesies. The Administrator has been asked to request the Customs authorities at Darwin to facilitate the landing of the party.

(T.H. Garrett)
for Secretary.

File Copy.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

**MOST
SECRET**

543.

Decypher from

Australian Minister
Washington.

Date sent. 27th February, 1941.
10.5 am
Date received. 28th February, 1941.

No 167.

Prime Minister's Telegram No. 18.

Most Secret.

It is possible that the senior member of the British Naval Delegation here may visit Australia, New Zealand and Singapore by air to enlarge on the naval discussions, leaving here in about three weeks. Decision on this is expected from London within a week. I will advise you.

Casey.

Copy sent to Defence Co-ordination
Dept of the Navy
Prime Minister's Department.

Anglo-USA Staff Conversation

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

FILE COPY *Q*

CABLEGRAM.

SECRET

568.

DECYPHER FROM -

HIGH COMMISSIONER,
LONDON.

Date sent: 3rd March, 1941.
7.38 p.m.
Received: 4th March, 1941.

No. 170.

For Acting Prime Minister. SECRET.

Your telegram No. 924.

Harries is being released and will proceed
to Washington about 17th March. Am advising Casey. BRUCE.

Copy to P.M.'s Dept.
4.3.41.

Copy of INWARDS Teleprinter Message.

From: SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

To: SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Date 14/3/41. Time of Receipt 1557 Hours No. M.252.

C.10819/40.

SECRET.

With reference to your Teleprinter Messages Nos. CS.114 and CS.137 dated 22nd February, 1941, and 3rd March, 1941, respectively, it is requested that the following reply be forwarded to the Australian Minister, Washington :-

413

Your
"Reference your cablegrams Nos. 146 and 168.

Triangulation complete. Delineation of reefs, coastlining and sounding in progress. Channel one mile wide between Bramble Cay and grassy sand bank swept to a depth of 39 feet. Shoals discovered in vicinity of Bet Island raise doubts as to the use of existing channel in this area, but it is considered probable that another channel can be found and swept.

2. The whole channel is considered safe for passage of heavy ships, but owing to inaccuracies in present charts, production of local charts on a larger scale is considered essential before passage is attempted. This work is now in hand.

3. Appropriate R.A.A.F. publications, charts, maps, referred to are being despatched. Further particulars will be cabled."

Message ends.

The Secretary,
Dept. of External Affairs.

Referred.

Canberra.

J. R. Gallen
14/3/41.

Mr Ticker
trans
to
NAVY

Anglo-U.S. Staff Conference

SECRET
FILE COPY

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

552.

DECRYPTER FROM -

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Date sent: 28th February, 1941
8.58 p.m.
Received: 1st March, 1941.

No. 168.

My telegram No. 146.

Hydrographer now has amended request vide paragraph 3 (a) to Australian stations complete. United States Coast and Geodetic Survey on behalf of the Army has associated itself with the Hydrographer's request and would appreciate two copies of R.A.A.F. publications mentioned making total of eight.

I suggest that you now send above by prospective 3rd Secretary and include copies of item* one in the one million international series and of Army survey sheets. Secret maps should be so marked.

* Mutilated group.

(3rd Secretary leaving Australia 7th March).

Copy to Def. Co-ord Dept.
3.3.41.

Teleprinted to Dept. of Navy.
3.3.41.

For East Angl-USA staff communications

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

SECRET
O. 2480

DECYPHER TO -

DATE SENT 26th February, 1941.

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,

WASHINGTON.

SECRET.

18. Your cable 133 of 18th February - staff conversations between U.S.A. and United Kingdom. Naval authorities ask if return of Burrell to Australia for verbal report on conversations could be obviated by either telegraphed report or more lengthy safe hand despatch. Glad early advice. In any case, it is proposed to arrange for Harries to proceed to U.S.A. as Naval Attache as soon as he is free from requirements of naval liaison work connected with the Prime Minister's visit to London. We have telegraphed Bruce and have asked him to let you know position.

Copy sent to - War Cabinet

P.M.'s

E.A.

Navy

Defence Co-Ord. (in c/w. D. 562 of 26/2/41)

28/2/41

O. 2481

DECYPHER TO -

DATE SENT 26th February, 1941.

HIGH COMMISSIONER,

L O N D O N.

SECRET.

924. It is desired to relieve Burrell as Naval Attache at Washington as soon as his work in connection with the present conversations is completed. Would be glad if Harries could be released to proceed to Washington as soon as he is free from requirements of naval liaison work connected with Prime Minister's visit. Please advise arrangements, also inform Casey. Letter suggests that, to avoid embarrassing explanation at present, Harries should travel as Naval Adviser to the Australian division of the British Purchasing Commission.

Copy sent to - War Cabinet

P.M.'s

E.A.

Navy

Defence Co-Ord. (in c/w. D. 562 of 26/2/41)

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs. 28/2/41

Referred.


Secretary.

Copy of INWARDS Teleprinter Message.

From: SECRETARY, DEPT. OF DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION.

To: SECRETARY, DEPT. OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Date 20/2/41. *Time of Receipt* 1440 *Hours* *No.* M. 117.

C.15122/40.

S E C R E T.

Your teleprinter message No. CS.110 regarding telegram 93 from Australian Legation, Washington - Reply was forwarded to Prime Minister's Department on 19/2/41 (Teleprinter Message D.494). It embodies text of cablegram sent by that Department to Dominions Office, No. 97 of 15th February, 1941.

Prime Minister's Department were asked to send a copy to your Department.

Ends.

The Secretary,
Dept. of External Affairs.

Referred in confirmation of my telephone message this afternoon.

Canberra.

J. R. Gallman

20/2/41.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

460.

MESSAGE FROM: AUSTRALIAN LEGATION, WASHINGTON.

No. 140.

Date sent: 11.36 a.m. 19.2.41.
Date recd: 20th February, 1941.

Would be grateful for an early reply to my telegram 93.

COPY TO DEFENCE CO-ORD. (Teleprinted) advice.
20.2.41.

SECRET

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM: AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.

No. 133.

Date sent: 11.41 p.m. 18.2.41.
Date recd: 19th February, 1941.

My telegram No. 45.

Undoubtedly, in my view, co-operation will be necessary after the conclusion of the present conversations.

Admiral Bellairs considers that it will probably be desirable that the factors leading up to final report of present delegation should be explained verbally to New Zealand and Commonwealth Naval Board. Recommend as first action Harries proceed Washington at an early date to be available to relieve Burrell whom you may wish to return temporarily to make personal reports to New Zealand and Commonwealth Naval Boards.

To avoid embarrassing explanation at present suggest that Harries travel as Naval Adviser to the Australian Division of the British Purchasing Commission.

Copies to: War Cabinet.

P.M.'s Dept.

Navy Dept.

Defence Co-ord. (teleprinted).

20.2.41.

CASEY.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

**MOST
SECRET**
402.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON.

Date sent 13th February, 1941.
5.46 p.m.
Received 14th February, 1941.

No.120.

IMMEDIATE. MOST SECRET. PERSONAL FOR HODGSON FROM WATT.

Reference my telegram No.114.

(1) For what they are worth my purely personal comments are as follows :

- (a) No man (not excluding President Roosevelt) can foretell precisely how American opinion will react to Japanese attacks on Malaya, Australia or New Zealand.
- (b) Sympathetic interest in Australia and Australian prestige, particularly since the Libyan campaign has never been higher here.
- (c) Opinion in the State Department is divided on the question of American action in the Pacific. One school of opinion substantiates the strongest British viewpoint. It is very significant that Ambassador Grew has come down on the side of early action to keep Singapore in British hands.

(2) Reports from Australia, published in American press of warning issued yesterday by War Advisory Council have been given considerable prominence here and have suggested an immediate crisis not quite supported by other news items from the Far East. We have had numerous press requests for information prompted by the statement issued in Australia. You no doubt have considered fully the risk of Japan interpreting such warnings as indicating that Australia believes that war is inevitable and of Japan deciding therefore to move sooner than she may otherwise have planned.

(3) Minister is expected to arrive in Washington 10 p.m.tonight.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN LEGATION
WASHINGTON.

**MOST
SECRET**

392.

CABLEGRAM. 12th February, 1941,
9.23 p.m.

Received 13th February, 1941.

~~URGENT~~

No. 115.

With reference my telegram 113.

- (2) Summary of interview between Halifax and Secretary of State.
- (3) Halifax told Hull the substance of his interview with the President. He said the general situation seemed even more disturbing than when he saw the President and the urgency of determined action by the United States was therefore greater. "Whatever the United States Government might or might not decide to do if Japan went for us or for Netherlands East Indies, what was quite vital now was that Japanese should not think that United States would do nothing." Hull agreed with this and gave Halifax to understand "they were not indisposed to take the further steps" mentioned by the President to Halifax. Halifax expressed the opinion that sending of force of American cruisers to Manila would be preferable to sending submarines. Secretary of State noted this opinion and added that "he proposed to leave the Japanese Ambassador in no doubt that any idea which they might have that they were going to have a monopoly of interest in the Far East, was a mistake."
- (4) Halifax also stressed importance of not allowing Japan to build up stocks of oil and acquire storage of material for erection of oil tanks.

Copy to - Defence Co-ordination.

Teleprinted to Sydney - Mr. Fadden & Min. E.A. 13.2.41.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM

**MOST
SECRET**

DECYPHER OF
FROM AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON.

390
Date sent 12th February, 1941,
6.35 p.m.
Received 13th February, 1941.

No. 114.

With reference to my telegram 113.

(2) Summary of interview between Halifax and the President.

(3) Halifax gave the President summary of the latest British information concerning Japanese plans, and the President said much of it corresponded with his own information which suggested that the date for Japanese action was 10th February or 18th February.

(4) President said he had been anxiously considering what action the United States could take if Japan attacked Netherlands East Indies, Thailand or Singapore. While the United States Government would declare war on Japan if latter were to attack American possessions he did not think that country would approve this action if Japan only attacked the Netherlands East Indies or British possessions. Moreover, even if the United States were to be involved in war with Japan he felt that to fight a war in the Pacific would mean a dangerous diversion of forces and material from the main theatre of operations which in his view was the Atlantic and Great Britain. Therefore, should the United States become involved in war he thought they would have to fight a "holding war" in the Pacific.

(5) President said he had thought hard about possible deterrent to Japan - for instance the sending of naval forces to Aleutian Islands ^δ. The Navy Office did not consider this practicable and in any case they could not send strong enough force anywhere to have much effect. He said he was "through with bluffing" and had little doubt that the Japanese knew the limitations of American Action.

(6) President showed Halifax telegram from United States Ambassador, Tokyo, stating the problem with great force on much the same lines as British experts. He stressed the vital necessity of Singapore because of its importance to the general British war effort and disastrous effect of the fall of Singapore upon Chinese resistance. President commented that Ambassador had stated the problem but not supplied the answer.

(7) Halifax said it was difficult to exaggerate the importance of Singapore to the general British war effort and pointed out that if Great Britain should ever have to fall back from its Middle East position this would affect British blockade and permit the free passage of Russian and Rumanian oil to Germany by sea. Japan might already have decided to enter the war anyhow but, if not, action by the United States might have great effect, as had been illustrated by the withdrawal of the Americans from the Far East.

(8) President agreed and mentioned other possibilities which had occurred to him :

(a) further warning to American nationals to evacuate.

(b) Six or eight more submarines to Manila.

(c)/

δ as received.

- (c) Interview with new Japanese Ambassador during which the President could "speak very seriously to him, saying he hoped that rumours of further Japanese action were not true since it would be a pity if the Ambassador had to leave Washington almost at once."
- (d) United States might take up with Japan the question of Spratley Island and inquire "why the Japanese were apparently settling down there for good."
- (9) Halifax said cumulative effect of several small things might be great and in conclusion emphasized the urgency of very early American action.

Copy to - Defense Co-ordination 14.2.41.
Teleprinted to Mr. Fadden and Min. E.A. 13.2.41.
Sydney.

289

56

You 113 of 12. 2. 41
I have not ^{received} the ^{not} advised
by you.

Send in Code of
13-2-41

MOST SECRET
CABLEGRAM.
SECRET
383

SECYPHER FROM -
AUSTRALIAN LEGATION WASHINGTON.

Date sent: 12/2/41 4.45 p.m.

No. 113

Date recd. 13/2/41

IMMEDIATE MOST SECRET.

In the last few days Halifax has seen the Government, the President and the Secretary of State to discuss the Far Eastern situation and stress the urgency of some immediate American action to deter Japan.

My two immediately following telegrams contain reports of these two interviews. I am to discuss the whole question with Butler this afternoon and will report any further information or views to-night. I have not advised Tokyo on, or that there have been, staff conversations, or of the substance of the above-mentioned Halifax interviews, because I feel that I should take no conceivable risk of the information falling into Japanese hands. If you desire me to inform Tokyo on these matters, please advise.

WATT.

TELEPRINTER MESSAGE TO ACTING SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE
CO-ORDINATION, FROM SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Reference telegram No.93 from Australian Legation,
Washington regarding 8th Division - glad to learn when a reply
may be expected.

11.2.41.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET

334.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON.

Date sent 6th February, 1941.
8.25 p.m.
Received 7th February, 1941.

No. 23.

Reference your telegram 336. Information supplied much appreciated. Admiral Bellairs has now asked (a) has any decision been reached regarding the destination of the remainder of the 8th Division (b) is there any question of sending the remainder to Singapore. WATT.

Copy to Defence Co-ordination for fav.adv. 7.2.41.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION.

Copy of INWARDS Teleprinter Message.

From: DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION

To: DEFENCE SECRETARIAT, CANBERRA.

Date 4/2/41 Time of Receipt 1256 Hours No. M.74

C.10819/40.

MOST SECRET

Following is a repeat of message D.362.

D.362 0906. For Secretary, Prime Minister's Department
From Acting Secretary, Department of Defence
Co-ordination.

MOST SECRET

The following cablegram has been approved for transmission to the Australian Minister, Washington:-

"Most Secret. Immediate.

Your telegram 76 of 31st January. We appreciate arrangements to inform us of progress of conversations. We have not yet been advised of United Kingdom Delegation's instructions. Considerable importance is attached to early receipt of progress reports, especially in view of conversations between United Kingdom, Australian, New Zealand and Netherlands East Indies representatives which are to commence at Singapore on 22nd February. We shall be glad if you will arrange for transmission of reports as soon as received. Every precaution will be taken to ensure utmost secrecy.

2. Following information is furnished in regard to matters referred to in your telegram:-

(1) Brigade Group together with necessary ancillary troops totalling 5875 departing approximately 3rd February, due Singapore 17th February under command of Major-General Bennett, G.O.C., 8th Division.

(2) Ninety Beauforts planned for delivery to R.A.F. between March 1941 and end of 1941. Understand Air Ministry propose to allot these aircraft to Singapore.

3. In regard to the discussions we lay great importance on the bases to the north and east of Australia, i.e., Suva, Port Moresby, Darwin, and possibly New Caledonia and New Hebrides and their defence. We consider this line to be the most favourable one for U.S. naval reinforcements to the Singapore area. Initial Japanese action might be to attempt to occupy such bases, and if successful would, it is considered, make the passage of U.S. naval forces extremely hazardous. It is of the utmost importance that naval, military and air steps should be taken to deny such action to the Japanese, and we would be grateful for any expression of views by the U.K. or U.S.A. Delegations which might be sounded out. This matter is of particular importance in view of the forthcoming discussions at Singapore. It is desired that Burrell raise these points and submit the earliest possible advice.

External

WRM 336

196

Handwritten notes: 4-2-41

Note for Prime Minister's Department.

The statement in the above draft cablegram that "we have not yet been advised of United Kingdom Delegation's instructions" has been made after perusal of the cablegrams forwarded to this Department on the question of staff conversations with the United States of America. It is assumed that no other cablegrams on this subject have been received by your Department and not made available to this Department. Please confirm.

(Ends)

(Message Ends)

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs.

Referred. The Prime Minister's Department has been informed as follows:-

"As message D.362 has been repeated to Defence Secretariat for transmission to External Affairs please cancel D.362 to your Department."

Canberra.

M. G. G. G.
4/1/41.

Note on bottom of Cablegram.

The Sec.
Dept. of Defence.

Ref. in con/w. your tele. mes. M.74 of 4/2/41. With regard to statement contained in first paragraph to effect that no advice has yet been received of the U.K. Delegation's instructions I wish to confirm that so far as this Dept. is concerned no copy of the U.K. Delegation's instructions has yet been received.

Sec.
Dept. E.A.
5/2/41

Anglo-UK talks
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

MOST

SECRET

DECYPHER FROM:

CABLEGRAM.

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION, WASHINGTON.

DATE SENT: 12.15 p.m. 31/1/41

No. 76

RECD: 1st February, 1941.

IMMEDIATE. MOST SECRET.

My telegram No. 407. United Kingdom and United States conversations between delegations have now commenced. Burrell is in daily consultation with United Kingdom delegation and is kept fully informed of all aspects of the conversations.

Canadian representative Commander German R.C.N. retired arrived today.

British Embassy has communicated with the United Kingdom Government (a) to confirm that Dominions have been fully informed of the United Kingdom delegation's instructions and (b) stating that progress reports of the conversations will be made by this Legation to Canberra for the information of Australia and New Zealand and by Canadian Legation to Ottawa.

Need for utmost secrecy cannot be over emphasised particularly in view of the present tension caused by publicity of the discussions of the present Lend-Lease Bill and the possible effect on this vital issue of any leakage of information.

Rear-Admiral Bellairs Head of United Kingdom delegation requests urgent information regarding (1) proposed despatch of Australian brigade group to Singapore including the date of arrival (2) Approximate dates for arrival at Singapore of torpedo bomber squadron of Australian manufactured Beaufort (B) which it is understood will be formed within the next few months.

WATT.

Copies to: War Cabinet
Defence Co-ordn. (teleprinted)
P.M's Dept.

1/2/41

CABLEGRAM.

Was. 441

Tokyo 442

London 443

TO -
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER WASHINGTON

Dated: 19/12/40

No. 254

Addressed to Washington. Repeated to External Affairs Officer London No. 186, and Austn. Minister Tokyo No. 9.

SECRET.

Your telegrams 395, 399 and 407. Appointment has been approved of Commander E.M. Burrell, R.A.N., as Australian Naval Attaché at Washington. Please notify United States authorities accordingly.

Proposed Commander Burrell will leave Sydney by air on 2nd January arriving Washington 9th January. If you still think it of value that there should be formal announcement of exchange of Naval Attachés agree that you should try to arrange with the United States Administration for simultaneous statement. American Minister here notified on December 9th intention of United States Government to appoint Naval Attaché at Canberra.

EXTERNAL.

Copies to-
M.P.'s Dept.
Defence Co-ordination
War Cabinet. 20/12/40.

~~FILE COPY~~

MOST
900
SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

DECYPHER FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON

No. 407. **CABLEGRAM.** Date Sent: 7.49 p.m. - 2/12/40.

VERY SECRET

Date Recd: 3rd December, 1940.

President has agreed to complete the confidential strategic staff conversations between Great Britain and the United States. The President had some misgivings arising from the possibility of leakage of information that they were taking place.

Officers mentioned in my telegram No. 400 will represent Britain. Admiral and General leaving England very shortly. Arrival date uncertain.

The British Ambassador believes unwise in view of President's hesitant attitude to suggest expanding the numbers involved by adding Australian representation.

However, I understood from Burrell that Boucher likely to be travelling Australia to England at an early date. If at all possible I suggest his coming here en route as soon as possible. Once he is here I have little doubt that I will be able to work him in. In any case he will be able to see United States Naval Plans confidentially.

Above regarded as completely secret.

If you decide to agree to proposal for Naval Attache here you might appoint Boucher temporarily and replace him by another with or without the intervening interval of time.

CASEY.

Copies to:
WAR CABINET
DEFENCE CO-ORD.
3/12/40.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM

**MOST
SECRET**

DECYPHER FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER WASHINGTON

No. 395.

Date Sent: 7.19 p.m. - 26/11/40.

Date Recd: 27th November, 1940.

Repeated to London 120. MOST SECRET.

I took Burrell to call on Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations today.

Secretary of the Navy holds the same views as expressed in first two paragraphs of my telegram No. 389 (repeated to London No. 116). Five additional modern United States submarines are being sent to Manila making total of 17.

China is seeking and will probably get additional financial assistance here. China is also seeking aircraft here to enable air offensive to be conducted against Japanese.

Knox and Stark both agreeable to highly confidential strategic Staff Conversations at an early date. Secretary of the Navy will see the British Ambassador today on this.

Stark agreed to show Burrell American strategic proposals in Pacific area tomorrow.

Both Burrell and Goble have had useful discussions with all appropriate branches of both Services and have been given all relevant information regarding Australian situation. Burrell will leave Los Angeles 30th November. Navy Office suggests that he see Admiral Richardson Commander-in-Chief of Pacific fleet in Honolulu and see so arranging.

American Naval Attache (Commander Causon) is to be sent to American Legation in Australia.

I find on enquiry that the State Department and Navy Office and British Embassy would welcome appointment of Royal Australian Navy Attache this Legation. It would enable me to keep in touch with Naval Intelligence and plans prepared in an advantageous way that is not possible now. Grateful if early consideration could be given and if I have confidentially an opportunity of expressing an opinion regarding the individual before appointment. Personality of individual most important here. Burrell has knowledge of type necessary.

CASEY.

* Word inserted.

Copy to:
P.M.'s DEPT. for War Cabinet &
Defence Co-ord.

27/11/40.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

862
Date sent 25th Nov. 1940.
9.30 a.m.
Received 26th Nov. 1940.

No. 393.

Repeated to London 119.

British Ambassador saw Secretary of State today.
When questioned regarding strategical Staff Conversations
Secretary of State showed evidence of keenness and said he
would speak to President and Secretary of Navy.

CASEY.

Copy to P.M's for War Cabinet and Defence Co-ordination.

26/11/40

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

853

DECYPHER FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.

No. 390.

Date Sent: 6.55 p.m. -- 23/11/40

Date Recd: 24th November, 1940.

Repeated to London No. 118.

I took Burrell to see Welles and other senior State Department officials today. Very good reception. During talk with Welles I said although Burrell's talks with Navy Office were most useful they were one way traffic and asked when he thought strategic Staff Conversations could begin. He said he saw no reason why they should not be undertaken at very early date, the sooner the better.

British Ambassador returns today and Welles hopes to see him tomorrow.

CASEY.

Copy to:
P.M.'s for War Cabinet & Defence Co-ord.
25/11/40.

*Casey
1/20*

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

**MOST
SECRET**

789.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Date sent 15th Nov.1940.
11.49 p.m.
Received 17th Nov.1940.

No.379.

Repeated to London 114.

I called on Berle today. I started by advancing argument in the penultimate paragraph of my telegram No.358 repeated to London 109.

After referring appreciatively to the economic and other action taken by the Administration before the election and to the understandable pre-election reluctance to pursue Staff Conversations proposal, I said for our part we were now most anxious to revive the Staff Conversations proposal originally made by the Secretary of State and also to pursue any lines designed to deter Japanese from further attempt to expand.

In latter regard it would seem that preventive dispositions of available forces presented most useful line. I repeated without quoting the Secretary of the Navy substance of his "preventive" view reported in my telegram 358.

I reminded him also that it was the President who had first suggested the visit of United States fleet units to Australia, Singapore etc. and said that we looked forward to the moment when this proposal should be revived. Such a visit would be warmly prized in Australia by the Government and the people.

As regards ~~to~~ Staff Conversations I said Ghormley's talks in London, Singapore meeting and Burrell's visit here appeared to me to be nibbling at separate bites of the main problem which was that of all embracing discussions between sufficiently senior and informed Service officers on how to apply armed strength and resources so as to avoid war in the Far East and win the war in Europe.

Berle/

Berle received all this with understanding and said that he found little in what I had said with which he disagreed. In the absence of the President and the Secretary of State he would discuss the battle cruiser squadron with Welles at once. He agreed that these matters might turn out to have some urgency following on the recent Russian-German meeting.

CASEY.

Copy to - P.M's. for War Cabinet and Defence Co-ordination.

17.11.40.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.CABLEGRAM.**MOST
SECRET** 655. 0

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Date sent 31st Oct. 1940
1.12 a.m.
Received 31st Oct. 1949
8.43 p.m.

No. 345.

MOST SECRET.

With reference to my telegram No. 343.

Telegraphic report of Commander Thomas Cross
Singapore summarising report on Naval Staff Conversations has
come through British Embassy for American Chief of Naval
Operations.

I presume that Australian representative has
reported to you.

CASEY.

**MOST
SECRET**

644.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM
AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Dated 29th Oct. 1940.
6.58 p.m.
Received 30th Oct. 1940.

No. 343.

MOST SECRET. FOR PRIME MINISTER. MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Private. Informal arrangement has been made between United States Navy Office and Admiralty under which United States Naval Attaché Bangkok is visiting Singapore arriving today October 29th ostensibly for medical attention but actually as an observer at Staff conversations.

It is possible also that the United States Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet will send officer or officers as observers.

Please treat above with strictest secrecy.

Information available State Department and British Embassy indicates Japanese keeping quiet at the moment although State Department expects that they are consolidating their position in Indo-China.

CASEY.

Not for records

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

DECYPHER OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

Dated 14th October, 1940.

Lodged 10.31 a.m.

No.321.

Received 8.30 a.m.
16.10.40.

Repeated to London 100.

MOST SECRET.

British Ambassador flies to England October 15th for
fortnight's consultation.

Prior to leaving he saw the President, Secretary of
State, Welles, Hornbeck today.

Regarding the Pacific, President says that it is unwise
from the point of view of American public opinion (clear that
this means election) that there should be anything that could be
interpreted as commitment beyond international date line for the
present. What United States has done lately (economic embargoes
and recommending American citizens leave Far East) has a
momentum that will last a little time.

President went on to say that he was keen to send a
small force of fast light cruisers to Samoa, Australia, the
Netherlands East Indies and Singapore, and that he was having
conferences to ascertain practicability of this. Although the
President did not say so British Ambassador got the impression
that if this came about it would not be before November 5th

The President emphasized importance of domestic
x of avoiding commitment and said "We must let the
situation grow."

President said that at some later date he thought
it would be useful to have conference on economic matters
between representatives of the Pan-American countries and of all
self-governing British countries but he emphasized that this was
not an immediate matter.

British

x mutilation.

British Ambassador got the impression from the Secretary of State that fear of their being interpreted as commitments had killed staff conversations proposal for the present, at any rate in its original form. Meanwhile American Admiral Ghormley is exploiting discussions with the Admiralty in London.

Hornbeck, whose views are frequently ahead of those of administration, is keen that United States should take all steps now that will deter Japanese from going for Singapore, imperceptibly he is spreading this gospel in administration.

As soon as I can see the Secretary of State I propose to pursue with him proposal asking that at least Senior Naval Officer should fly from Australia if necessary as a temporary member of my staff to enable complete confidential private talks to take place here particularly on naval matters, However this could only take place if administration agreeable.

Nothing that I have seen or heard lately gives promise of any move useful to us coming from Russia.

President's "no appeasement" speech on October 12th has been well received in press.

CASEY.

Copies to P.M's. for War Cabinet and Def. Co-ordination.

16.10.40.

14
CABLEGRAM.MOST
SECRET

DECYPHER TO

- (1) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS, LONDON. 0.7551
 (2) THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, WELLINGTON. N.Z. 0.7552
 (3) THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTER AT WASHINGTON, U.S.A. 0.7561

MOST SECRET

(Addressed to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs No. 526, re-
 peated to Prime Minister of New Zealand No. 35, and Aust.Min. Washington 3).

Cablegrams Nos. 333 and Z. 290 have been read with much interest. With reference to Z. 291 and No. 334, His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia is in full agreement with the proposed private staff talks between the United States of America, United Kingdom, and Dominion Governments concerned, and the Dutch authorities, on common action for defence, and is prepared to send Service representatives to Washington.

We also heartily concur in proposed invitation to United States of America representative to attend Singapore Conference and replied on 8th October to your cablegram No. 384, relative to our participation therein.

In regard to Z. 292, relative possibility that the United States might find itself at war with Japan, as result of discussions with United Kingdom Government to secure some form of concerted re-action to Japanese-Axis Pact and the conclusion of the United Kingdom Government that should the question arise, it would declare war on Japan, the Commonwealth Government would, in such circumstances, take similar action. It is assumed, of course, in regard to your earlier cablegrams Nos. 262, 263, 267 and Z. 214 on strategical position in Far East and assurances therein relative to naval dispositions designed to secure Commonwealth against major aggression that dispositions of combined Anglo-American naval strength would be such as to achieve the same end.

MENZIES.

THE SECRETARY,
 DEPT. OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

COPY - P.M.
 DEF. CO-ORD. (in c/w Tele.No.D.454)
 E.A.
 11.10.40.

REFERRED.

Smiley
 SECRETARY.

CABLEGRAM.

T. 9048

DECYPHER FROM

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,

Sent 11th October, 1940.

L O N D O N.

Received 12th October, 1940.

Received through United Kingdom High Commissioner.

IMPORTANT.

Circular Z. 301.

M O S T S E C R E T.

My telegram of 10th October, Circular Z. 298,
and previous correspondence. I should be grateful if
you would impress on the Prime Minister the need for the
most complete secrecy in regard to suggested conversation,
and particularly possible collaboration of United States
and Netherlands Governments.

TELEPRINTED.

Prime Minister.
Minr. and Dept. E.A.
Minrs. for Army, Navy, Air.
Mr. Shedden.

12/10/40

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

**MOST
SECRET**
I. 9010.

DECYPHER FROM

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,

L O N D O N.

Sent 10th October, 1940, 11.20 p.m.

Received 11th October, 1940.

Received through the United Kingdom High Commissioner.

IMPORTANT.

Circular Z. 298.

M O S T S E C R E T.

My telegram of 10th October, No. 338,
2nd paragraph. Prime Minister may like to know that as at
present arranged our Service representatives will be Rear
Admiral R.W. Bellairs, Special Employment Admiralty,
Major General R.W. Dewing, Director of Military Operations
and Plans, War Office, and Air Commodore J.C. Slessor,
Director of Plans, Air Ministry.

TELEPRINTED.

Minr. and Dept. E.A.
Mins. for Navy, Army, Air.
Mr. Shedden.

11/10/40

COLONEL HODGSON.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

I. 9008. ✓

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,

Sent 10th October, 1940, 9.25 p.m.

L O N D O N.

Received 11th October, 1940.

Received through United Kingdom High Commissioner.

IMMEDIATE.

No. 338.

MOST SECRET. My telegram of 8th October, No. 334.

Plan which we propose for conversations in London and Washington is as follows:-

We are appointing a senior representative of each of the three Services to meet in London forthwith with United States and Netherlands Service representatives available here. After short preliminary discussion, our representatives would proceed to Washington, probably accompanied by a non-Service Chairman and discussions would then be resumed in Washington with United States and Netherlands representatives.

As regards meetings in London, we are suggesting to Dominion High Commissioners concerned that if they so desire we should welcome the presence of suitable Dominion Service representatives at talks.

As regards discussions in Washington, we understand from His Majesty's Ambassador, who has been in touch with the Australian Minister on the point, that a staff delegation from Australia is ready to proceed to Washington at once. If the Canadian and New Zealand Governments should so wish, we should of course be glad if they could send similar delegations to Washington to participate in conversations.

On the assumption that the above scheme is adopted, we should hope that discussions in Washington would start in from two to three weeks' time.

I should be glad if you would inform the Prime Minister in the above sense and let me know his views.

*Approved
M. J. P. 11/10/40*

Copy sent to Minr. and Dept. E.A.
Minrs. for Navy, Army, Air.
Mr. Shedden.

11/10/40

178.
**MOST
SECRET**

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

DECYPHER OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.

Dated: 9th October 1940

Lodged 11.22 a.m.

No. 312

Recd. 9.45 p.m.
10/10/40.

SECRET.

Repeated to London 97.

I accompanied British Ambassador to-day to see Secretary of State and Welles.

Conflicting attitude various senior members administration in last twenty-four hours is evident. Some think United States has gone too far in respect Japan. I believe action regarding evacuation of American nationals from Far East has frightened a good many people and has probably caused many enquiries from Congress leaders as to what it is all about. Willkie in public speech yesterday asked President, "Are there international understandings to put America into war that public do not know about?" New York Times to-day also urged caution in Far Eastern matters.

The Secretary of State who until two days ago had enthusiastically urged Staff Conversations proposal was to-day much more cautious. He now says he believes anything approaching conference here would be impossible to conceal and would encourage opponents of administration to suggest that some commitment was being hatched. He laid some stress on point that Congress leaders had to be nursed along, that perhaps we had been going a little too fast, and that after all we had to remember that before many months we had to face Congress with question of credits for British Empire for which Congress approval was necessary.

He then reverted to proposal that quite private talks should take place in London, particularly between Admiralty and American naval officers now in London. He said no doubt Australia, New Zealand and Dutch forces dispositions and plans were known in London.

I said I believed that no worthwhile discussion of

problems that co-operation would entail could come about so far as Australia was concerned except by face to face meetings between the service officers concerned and that even if staff conversations between all countries originally proposed did not eventuate, I suggested that appropriate Australian service representatives should fly here for confidential discussion with American services. I explained that by leaving in a few days they could get here by October 21st. I suggested that they could, if necessary, be called naval, military and Air Attachés to this Legation. Secretary of State said that as it was principally a naval problem he would discuss this with chief of operations and let me know in a day or so.

Knox, Secretary of Navy, who is very well disposed, to us, told the British Ambassador yesterday that he was keen to send heavy cruiser squadron on trip to Singapore but that President is being very cautious on this.

T.V. Soong who arranged twenty-five million dollar loan to China told me yesterday that he was hopeful of getting more.

CASEY.

Copy to P.M's Department for War Cabinet
and Mr. Shedden.
11/10/40.

- 2 -

I do nevertheless feel that this significant transformation in American opinion is not yet complete. The process, though hurried by recent events, might be checked by precipitate action on our part either in an official taking of the initiative or in seeming to do so by too vigorous comment in Australian newspapers. I cannot too strongly emphasise my view of the desirability of allowing Americans to continue to act on the assumption "that American defence policy should be based on American interests".

CASEY.

Copies to -

P.M.'s Dept. for War Cabinet,
Mr. Shedden
Sir Keith Murdoch.

Sir John Latham.
26.9.40.

SECRETDEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRSDECYPHER OF TELEGRAM FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.

Date 24th September, 1940.

Lodged 8.11 p.m.

Recd. 4.50 p.m.

25/9/40.

No. 279.

My telegram No. 262. Paragraph 3.

During the past five days possibilities of Australian-American defence arrangements have been discussed widely.

Press correspondents and radio commentators have played up rumours of secret defence agreement embracing south-west Pacific and Singapore and "involving the possibility of an informal but closer co-operation of English-speaking parts of the world particularly with regard to joint use of naval and air bases for mutual defence".

Three American journalists recently in Australia also contributed useful week-end descriptive articles on the strategical significance to this part of the south-west Pacific.

Radio comment has, with few exceptions, been favourable. Some newspapers have withheld editorial comment possibly with Indo-Chinese developments in view. I consider the absence of hostile editorial comment except in a few Middle Western papers significant of a general trend to favourable opinion revealed by individual writers and commentators, as well as by the strong support of some papers notably the "Christian Science Monitor" and the "Washington Star" and by sympathetic if guarded attitude of "New York Times" and "Baltimore Sun".

Cumulative evidence of recent matériel including Wilkie's public reference to Pacific air bases confirms me in the opinion that American thought is now moving outwards. American people are coming to accept the idea of outer lines defence and to appreciate the relationship of distant bases to home defence. Present interest and speculation regarding possible defence collaboration in the south-west Pacific is a logical development out of the West Indies and Carribean Agreement which happily was sufficiently close to be readily intelligible to American people.

Via Imperial 325/44.

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM

DATED 9th October, 1940.

THE PRIME MINISTER OF
NEW ZEALAND,
WELLINGTON.7 p.m.
RECEIVED 10th October, 1940.M O S T S E C R E T.

The following telegrams have to-day been despatched to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs :-

"Most Secret.

411.

My Prime Minister has had the opportunity of perusing and considering your telegrams Z.290, 291, 322, 323 and 324 to the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom in New Zealand and in reply, has the following comments to make -

- (1) His Majesty's Government in New Zealand warmly welcome the possibility of still closer relations between the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A. and considers that every opportunity should be taken of accelerating this process.
- (2) They fully agree with the desirability of arranging some form of concerted reaction to the German-Italian-Japanese pact and in particular they warmly support the suggestion of private staff talks between the United States, United Kingdom, and Dominion Governments concerned, and the Dutch authorities on the Far Eastern question, and entirely agree with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that these talks should be held at the earliest possible date. If and when arranged they would be glad to take part and would be prepared to make the necessary arrangements at short notice.
- (3) They agree that concerted pressure on the Japanese would be desirable and in this connection they would be prepared to adopt the procedure set out in your telegrams No. Z.323 and 324.
- (4) While they agree with the general principle, they are not entirely clear as to the particular application of your comment

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

lest "any steps taken should be such as would not increase Japanese pressure on the Dutch." In particular they feel that any increase in the supply of oil to Japan from the U.S.A. or British sources would be unwise notwithstanding the fact that it might conceivably relieve pressure on the Dutch.

- (5) They are quite prepared to join in parallel declaration by United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the Dutch authorities guaranteeing insular territories in the Pacific south of the Equator, though they are not sure that this geographical limitation is entirely apt and it may be necessary to extend the guarantee to include all insular possessions in the Pacific of the abovementioned powers.
- (6) They feel that the presence of a United States Squadron at Singapore would be a useful gesture though it would be most unwise to have this in face of United States reluctance.

411. This message is being repeated to Ottawa, Canberra, and Pretoria."

2. "Most Secret."

412.

With reference circular E.292 of 8th October addressed to the High Commissioner ^{for} the United Kingdom in New Zealand, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand wish to make it quite clear that in the event of United States finding themselves at war with Japan as the result of a concerted action with the British Commonwealth in the Pacific they entirely and unanimously agree with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that the British Commonwealth should immediately declare war on Japan in alliance with the U.K. and they undertake for their part to take necessary action in such circumstances immediately."

Teleprinted.

Copy for -
Prime Minister
Mr. Shedden.
10.10.40.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

I. 8907.
C. 1716.
CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,

L O N D O N.

Sent 9th October, 1940
5.35 p.m.

Received 9th October, 1940.

Received through United Kingdom High Commissioner.

IMPORTANT.

No. 334. High Commissioner Canberra No. 334.
High Commissioner Wellington No. 328.

M O S T S E C R E T.

My telegram Circular Z. 291 of 7th October, 1940, paragraph 2. Please inform the Prime Minister for his most secret and personal information that His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington has reported that in conversation between him and United States authorities the suggestion was made that there should be immediate preliminary talks in London to be followed as soon as possible by talks in Washington. We have replied to him gladly supporting this suggestion, and a further telegram will follow as soon as we have been able to consider detailed arrangements.

2. It seems to us that it may be desirable that conversations should take place on two planes, i.e.

- (a) First in the United Kingdom and then in the United States, where broader considerations should be reviewed;
- (b) In the Far East, where particular problems should be discussed.

We feel sure that the Commonwealth and New Zealand Governments would welcome a proposal for the inclusion of United States authorities in discussions on problems in the Far East, and we have therefore authorised His Majesty's Ambassador to invite the United States to send representatives to attend the Conference which, as indicated in my telegram to the Commonwealth Government, No. 384, we hope the Commonwealth Government will agree should be held at Singapore in the very near future. It was explained to His Majesty's Ambassador that this conference is intended to cover the whole defence problem in the Far East, including that of the

CABLEGRAM.

Netherlands East Indies if the Dutch participate, and, if the United States are agreeable, the Philippines also.

3. In telegrams to His Majesty's Ambassador we stated that it was possible that the United States Government might think this too public, but that we felt, if it could be arranged for United States representatives to be present in Singapore during the Conference, they could be kept fully au courant with proceedings and discussions with them could be arranged without their attending formal meetings if this were thought undesirable. We added that we noted the objections of the United States authorities to the suggested visit of a United States Squadron to Singapore, but that should the visit of any naval unit coincide with the presence of the United States representatives at the Conference, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would naturally welcome it.

4. We are now considering approach to the Dutch.

5. In connection with the Singapore Conference, please explain to the Commonwealth Government that we have now heard that the Commander in Chief, China, will be able to attend the Conference and it is now proposed that he should preside since he will be the senior Commander present.

We are very glad to note from New Zealand Government's telegram 409 of 8th October that the New Zealand Government approve of the proposal that the Conference should be at Singapore; we share their view that the conference should be held at the earliest possible date and we hope the Commonwealth Government will also be able to concur in the proposal without delay.

Prime Minister, Minister and Department of External Affairs,
Service Ministers and Mr. Shedden.

C. 1695.

I. 8864.

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER FROM
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,

Sent 7th October, 1940,
11.30 p.m.
Received 8th October, 1940.

L O N D O N.

Received through United Kingdom High Commissioner.

IMPORTANT.

Circular Z. 291. MOST SECRET.

Please give the following message to the Prime Minister --
BEGINS. Recent reports from His Majesty's Ambassador at
Washington show a stiffening of United States attitude and
suggest possibility of arranging for some form of concerted reaction
to German, -Italian-Japanese Pact.

In recent conversation with His Majesty's Ambassador, Mr.
Cordell Hull threw out the idea of private staff talks between
the United States, United Kingdom, Dominion Governments concerned
and Dutch authorities on the Far East question. We have welcomed
this suggestion and have indicated that we should like these to be
held at the earliest possible date.

His Majesty's Ambassador has been informed that any other
suggestions for co-ordinated reaction to Japanese - Axis Pact
which the United States Government may feel able to put forward
will be most sympathetically considered here. We share the view,
which is evidently gaining ground among members of the United States
Administration, that any steps taken should be such as would not
increase Japanese pressure on the Dutch (Please see in this
connexion paragraphs 2 and 3 of my Circular telegram D. 503).

Question of parallel declarations by the United States of
America, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Dutch authorities
giving some form of guarantee for insular territories in the
Pacific south of the Equator was mentioned recently in discussion
between His Majesty's Ambassador and the Australian Minister at
Washington with Mr. Hull and we have authorised His Majesty's
Ambassador to elucidate this proposal in further discussion with
Mr. Hull.

Question of possible visit by United States Squadron
to Singapore has also been considered by the United States authori-
ties but, as indicated in my Circular telegram M.64 of 5th October
they are not in favour of this at present.

Prime Minister, Minister and Department
External Affairs, Service Ministers,
Mr. Shedden.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

I. 8897.

DECYPHER FROM

CABLEGRAM.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

1940.
6.55 a.m.
RECEIVED 9th October, 1940.

Circular Z. 290. (Through U.K. High
Commissioner)

MOST SECRET AND PERSONAL.

MOST
SECRET

My telegram of to-day No. 333. Following information which is of the highest degree of secrecy is for the personal information of the Prime Minister. BEGINS.

On their arrival in the United Kingdom the United States representatives visited various naval, military and air establishments in order that they might form their own opinion of the methods and vigour with which operations against the Axis Powers are being prosecuted.

2. United States representatives were received by the Chiefs of Staff before and after these visits. During these meetings the Chiefs of Staff gave them a general description of strategical situation on similar lines to that conveyed in message to you in my telegram to High Commissioners Circular Z. 219 of 21st August, and described broadly terms of our military policy for the conduct of the war.

3. Most brief summary of our presentation of this policy is as follows :

- (a) to ensure the security of the United Kingdom and British overseas territories and interests.
- (b) to maintain command of sea communications in the oceans, in home waters and eastern Mediterranean, and to secure command throughout the Mediterranean.
- (c) to intensify economic pressure.
- (d) to intensify our air offensive against both Germany and Italians.
- (e) to build up our resources to an extent which will enable us to undertake major offensive operations on land as opportunity offers.

4. Views of military authorities here on the situation and future policy in the Middle East and Far East as described to you in recent messages on these subjects were also explained to the

CABLEGRAM.

representatives.

5. The immense value of active United States co-operation in the event of war with Japan, and transformation which would be effected in the whole strategical situation in the Far East if we had the support of the United States battle fleet was emphasised.

6. With regard to production programmes it was explained that our aim is to achieve balanced programmes in which strategic requirements are related to quota of power and production capacity likely to be available. Following are some of the points made. Limits imposed by our supply of steel and skilled labour make it essential to get everything possible from the United States, leaving the United Kingdom to concentrate on production of naval ships and certain aircraft and armaments which cannot be obtained from the United States. Our (?) arms production programmes for the three fighting services are therefore based on the production potential of the British Empire, supplemented to considerable extent by production capacity of the United States. Although our aircraft production is fast increasing and we are making large quantities of army equipment, we are still heavily outnumbered in the air, and are also in urgent need of military equipment and additional light naval forces. Our shortage of flying boats is proving a great disadvantage, and provision of these craft from the United States would be particularly helpful.

7. The United States representatives explained that they were "observers" sent to this country by the President. They wanted to learn all they could about our strategic position, but had no authority to act as representatives of their services, or to make any commitment on behalf of their Government. They emphasised the importance they attached to the organisation of British and United States armament programmes, on a co-ordinated plan, and asked how they could best obtain a definite statement of British requirements from the United States. Arrangements were accordingly made for the representatives

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

-3-

I.8897.

to meet suitable representatives of our Service and Supply Departments, who conveyed to them necessary information on these subjects. At these departmental meetings a useful exchange of technical information has taken place. In addition, various suggestions have been made to the United States naval representatives of the form in which we should most welcome United States naval co-operation should occasion arise and also with regard to liaison. Any discussion on this co-operation has of course been limited by the position of the United States representatives as outlined in the preceding paragraph.

8. The United States representatives addressed a series of questions to the Chiefs of Staff. With regard to the Far East they enquired regarding the strength of Hong Kong and were told that the fortress should be able to resist a siege for a considerable time. They were emphatically assured, in response to another question, that it is very much in our interests that the United States main fleet should remain in the Pacific.

9. With regard to the Mediterranean, questions were asked regarding security of our naval bases at Gibraltar and Alexandria and degree of interference which we can exert with Italian communications to North Africa.

10. Information was asked for concerning efficiency of our blockade, the effect of German air action against our naval ship-building yards in the United Kingdom and of their submarine action against our trade. In reply to a further question as to whether our plans were based on continued economic and industrial support of the United States and their eventual active co-operation, the representatives were told that continued economic and industrial co-operation of the United States in ever increasing volume was fundamental to our whole strategy, but that account was not taken in our strategical planning of the possibility of active United States Co-operation, since this was clearly a matter for the United States Government.

11. Arrangements for implementing of recent agreement regarding periodical exchange of information with the United

⁻⁴⁻
CABLEGRAM.

I. 8897.

States were discussed.

12. Main conclusions drawn by us from the visit were :
- (a) United States representatives were specially interested in ascertaining our ability and determination to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion at whatever cost. We think they were left in no doubt on these questions.
 - (b) They were also greatly interested in methods by which the United States could extend to us fuller economic and industrial assistance. ENDS.

9/10/40.
Teleprinted.

SECRET
MOST SECRET
SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

L. 8854.

CABLEGRAM.

DECRYPTER FROM -

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS,
LONDON.

DATED 7th October, 1940,
5.47 p.m.
RECEIVED 8th October, 1940.

No. 333.

MOST SECRET AND PERSONAL. The following information, which is of the highest degree of secrecy, is for the personal information of the Prime Minister. BEGINS.

As the Prime Minister will be aware, a visit by senior officers of the United States defence services to this country has recently been completed. Officers in question were attached to the United States Ambassador's staff in London as "observers" during their visit. President of the United States agreed with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that it was most important for military discussions to take place between British and United States representatives on various defence questions, and authorised such conversations to be initiated with the above officers during their visit here. Brief account of results achieved during the visit is contained in my telegram of today Circular Z.290. ENDS.

COPY FOR PRIME MINISTER ONLY.

TELEPRINTED.

8.10.1940.

(Through United Kingdom High Commissioner)

COLONEL HODGSON.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

SECRET

O. 7377-8.

CABLEGRAM.

DECYPHER TO

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER,
WASHINGTON.

HIGH COMMISSIONER,
LONDON.

5th October, 1940.

SECRET.

Addressed to Australian Minister, Washington, No. 5,
reference his cable of 1st October, London 89;
Repeated to High Commissioner, London, No. 516.

With reference to your cablegram of 1st October, we think there are considerable military and political advantages to be gained from private staff conversations between United States, United Kingdom, Australian and Dutch representatives on the technical problems that would be involved in common action for defence. We agree with your opinion that the best results are to be obtained from a meeting at Washington, and, on the assumption that the meeting will be there, we are prepared to send Major General Northcott and Commodore Boucher from Australia. Air Vice Marshal Goble will travel from Ottawa to be the Air representative.

Please advise as soon as any definite conclusion is reached and the date fixed for the conference, in order that the necessary transport arrangements may be made.

MENZIES.

Copy sent to Prime Minister, Minrs. for Navy, Army, Air, E.A.
Mr. Shedden.

7/10/40

SECRETDEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.DECYPHER OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON.

Dated 5th October, 1940.

Lodged 8.54 p.m.

No.303.

Received 6.10.40. 4.30 p.m.

Repeated London 95.

SECRET. I called on the Secretary of State today with the British Ambassador. The latter informed the Secretary of State on instructions that the British Government welcomed the proposal for technical staff conversations.

The British Ambassador also said that it would be announced in the House of Commons on 8th October that the Burma Road would be opened on the due date.

In the course of the discussions on the Far Eastern situation the Secretary of State said that he proposed to ignore yesterday's threat to the United States by the Japanese Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He said that the Administration would in silent reply give instructions for the sailings of ammunition and supply ships from the mainland to Hawaii to be speeded up and for the stoppage of visits of units of the fleet from Hawaii to San Diego to provide home leave for the fleet. They were also considering stopping shore leave and even considering advising all American nationals to leave Japan and the China coast dominated by Japan. The latter would include withdrawal of American garrison at what remains of International Settlement at Shanghai. He asked me how I thought the withdrawal of nationals would be interpreted and I said that I thought that it would be a very pointed gesture full of meaning which the Japanese could not misinterpret.

Admiral Richardson will be in Washington on 7th October and 8th October.

CASEY.

Copy to P.M's. for War Cabinet and Mr. Shedden.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

CABLEGRAM.

C.1618.

from AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON.
Dated 1.10.40.
Recd. 2.10.40.

S E C R E T.

(repeated to London 89).

No.292. TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

In conversation with the British Ambassador yesterday, Secretary of State asked whether it would not be possible for United States, Britain, Australia and Dutch to have private staff conversations immediately on technical problems that would be involved in commonaction for defence, though he stipulated that these conversations were to be technical and not to concern themselves with political policy.

In my talk with Welles this morning he said the same thing to me. Glad to have your early reply.

British Ambassador is asking for earliest possible reply from British Government and is asking for views as to how best to carry on such talks. He inclines to think that London best meeting place but I think that although initial talks may take place in London between Britain, American, Dutch and Australian individuals who are there, I believe that Washington more central and more politic place for detailed talks. Learn that Senior Service officers from Australia and Netherlands East Indies would have to fly here.

I believe that if it can leak out in due course from Washington that these talks are taking place or about to take place, and if this can happen BEFORE 17th October it would have substantial relation to Burma Road affair.

In above connection I am urging the British Ambassador seek authority to offer free joint use to United States for any defence purpose of any of Pacific Islands regarding which United States have claimed sovereignty from Britain.

CASEY.

to:
Minister External Affairs.
Service Ministers.
Chiefs of Staff - for advice.
Mr. Shedden.

Anglo-USA Staff Conversations

**MOST
SECRET**

393.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

DECYPHER OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON

Dated: 1/10/40

Lodged 8 p.m.

No. 292

Recd. 5 p.m. 2/10/40

Repeated to London 89.

SECRET.

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United/

393

United States for any defence purpose of any of Pacific Islands
regarding which United States have claimed sovereignty from
Britain.

CASEY.

COPIES TO: P.M'S Dept. for War Cabinet
and Mr. Shedden 2/10/40

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OSR 16471

OSR 17149

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OSR 20589

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