

Pacific Islands 348/26/40

This is all right exc. that the U.S.G. carefully avoid confirming our assumption that they have tabled all their claims.

Copies to F.O. ~~in pt.~~ ref -/23/- by airmail bag.

copy to Mr. Casey with compts.

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The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the British Ambassador and has the honor to refer to an aide-mémoire dated June 8, 1940 which the Counselor of the British Embassy handed to Mr. Hickerson on June 11 last concerning certain islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The Secretary of State is pleased to note that the British Government is willing in principle to enter into discussions regarding the status of the islands specified in the Department's note of August 16, 1939 which are claimed by the United States and to which, it is understood, Great Britain also asserts claims. Mr. Hull desires also to express his concurrence in the view expressed by the British Government that the problem at issue can best be solved by way of direct oral discussions.

With

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With respect to the suggestion that the United States Government inform the British Government in advance of the reasons why it believes certain of the islands in question should be included in these discussions, the Secretary of State perceives no reasons why the United States Government should set forth the details of its claims at this point. He believes, on the contrary, that the oral discussions suggested by the British Government will provide ample opportunity for the United States Government to put forward its claims as well as to hear any counter claims on the part of the British Government. In a similar manner, it is believed, the respective claims of the two Governments to the remaining islands enumerated and to islands in the Phoenix Group, as well as to any other islands in the central Pacific to which either Government asserts claim, may be considered in detail.

Although the United States Government is firmly convinced that it would be to the mutual interest of both the United States and the United Kingdom to reach



an early settlement of their conflicting claims to sovereignty over these islands, it readily understands the reasons which have prompted the British Government to suggest that the proposed oral discussions be temporarily postponed. In view of these circumstances the United States Government acquiesces in the postponement of these discussions until the British Government has had some time in which to prepare the necessary documentation for its claims.

Department of State,

Washington, August 10, 1940



811.0141 Phoenix Group/

*R. Brown*