

F.720/172.

SECRET.

6 December, 1938.

Dear Jacob,

With reference to O.D.C. paper No. 1635, on the subject of the strategic importance of the Pacific Islands, our general view is that it would be desirable that the proposed meeting of representatives of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand should consider, not only any defence questions arising in connection with the Pacific Islands, but also possible action in relation to United States activities in the Pacific and the suggested conference between His Majesty's Governments concerned and the United States Government to discuss the question of reciprocal air facilities.

We assume that the other Departments concerned, and particularly the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the Air Ministry, will make suggestions as to detailed matters which might be raised on behalf of the United Kingdom Government at the proposed meeting, and at this stage we do not wish ourselves to put forward any suggestions.

The last head mentioned in the first paragraph of this letter relates to civil aviation rather than defence.

MAJOR E.I.C. JACOB.

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The main point of importance in this connection would seem to be that a British Commonwealth Company should be available, whenever required, to lodge an application with the United States Government for landing facilities in islands under their sovereignty. Consideration of this question would appear to be primarily for the Imperial Air Communications Committee (presided over by Sir Warren Fisher) or a Sub-Committee of that Committee. We are writing to the Air Ministry putting this suggestion, and, pending receipt of the views of Sir Warren Fisher's Committee, we assume that this aspect of the preparations will not come up at the Oversea Defence Committee.

Signed G. W. BUSH