

PARAPHRASE TELEGRAM

NEW ZEALAND

From the Government of New Zealand.

Dated 24th December, 1938. Received 7.20 a.m., 24th Dec.

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No.144. Secret.

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Your telegram No.179 of 13th December secret. Questions regarding proposed conference on Pacific Islands between representatives of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand. Meetings of such a conference in New Zealand will be welcomed by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand but they would now in view of developments since the suggestion was first made, urgently propose extension of conference to cover defence in the Pacific in its widest aspects, sea, land and air. For this purpose the appointment would be welcomed of representatives from the United Kingdom who would be fully competent to discuss and advise on these matters and would be supplied with the latest information particularly as to conditions upon which and times within which on the outbreak of a major war both in the East and West, naval reinforcements can be expected to arrive at Singapore, and correspondingly the scale of attack against which it would be prudent to provide.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are convinced that it would be desirable that the proposed conference should be arranged at the earliest possible date but this must largely depend upon the time necessary for the representatives of the United Kingdom to arrive in New Zealand.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would accordingly be grateful if they could be advised whether it would be acceptable to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to extend the scope of the conference as proposed and if so when the arrival of the British representatives may be expected. Would suggest that the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific might with advantage be represented at the conference.

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My succeeding telegram contains the gist of a report by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff on a recent strategical survey of the Pacific Islands.

The proposals now made for extension of the scope of the conference are being notified to His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia by telegram and that Government have been invited to agree to conference being held in New Zealand.