

SECRET

A.B. Acheson, Esq.

D.O.3a.

No. D 420/1841

Subject: Survey of Pacific
Islands

145

ee and I

Reference to previous correspondence:

With the compliments of Mr. Dixon

A copy has also been sent to Major Jacob (C.I.D.)

Dominions Office, Downing Street,

5 JAN 1939

193

(R5952) Wt 32346/3586 5,000 2/36 H & Sp Op 640
(R6639) Wt 15568/3657 20,000(4) 7/36

Sir E. Harding, Sir H. Batterbee and I discussed this with General Ismay and Major Jacob this morning.

*Letter to 47
H. A. S.*

It was agreed that the best procedure would be to circulate New Zealand telegrams Nos. 144 and 145 to the Chiefs of Staff, who would be asked to advise on the questions raised in those telegrams, though as regards the detailed proposals in telegram No. 145, General Ismay thought that the view of the Chiefs of Staff would probably be that, having regard to the general strategical situation and to urgent commitments elsewhere, it would not be possible for the United Kingdom to undertake any of the measures referred to.

No trace

It was also agreed that in the circumstances the letter to the Governor-General of New Zealand drafted on D.6/37 would not be required and that it would be necessary for the memorandum of the Chiefs of Staff to be revised so as to deal with the questions raised in the New Zealand telegrams, a reference to which would appropriately form the opening of the memorandum.

It was thought that before the matter went before the Chiefs of Staff themselves, it would probably be convenient for it to be considered by the Joint Planning Committee with whom would be associated not only Sir H. Batterbee, but also Captain Parry and Group Captain Saunders, who are going out to New Zealand, and Mr. Dwyer, who is coming from New Zealand to attend the Imperial Defence College, apparently with a prospect of being appointed Secretary to the Defence Department thereafter.

2

As regards the question of United Kingdom representation at the Conference, it was pointed out that an aircraft Mission will be going out to Australia and should arrive there about the end of February. If the New Zealand Government desire that the Mission should also visit New Zealand, it was anticipated that they would proceed to New Zealand about the end of March. It was felt that the presence of this Mission was a new factor that should be taken into account in considering the question of United Kingdom representation.

As regards the date of the Conference, the feeling was that there was no special reason why the defence discussions should take place before the end of April, but it was pointed out that, on the political side, the Foreign Office were anxious that there should be no avoidable delay in order that His Majesty's Governments concerned might be prepared for any action which might be taken by the United States Government. It was suggested that a possible course might be for the Conference to open, shortly after Sir H. Batterbee's arrival in New Zealand, with a discussion of the political questions, the discussion of defence questions being deferred until after the arrival of the air Mission. Sir H. Batterbee undertook to raise this question at the Inter-Departmental meeting which it is proposed to hold to consider

preparations

preparations for the Conference on the political side.

In order to consider the timetable further, General Ismay asked that we would send a telegram to New Zealand asking when the Report of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff was likely to be received.