



For night Anglo-American Naval Staff Conversations G 70/12/39

Foreign Office.
S.W.1.

17th April, 1939.

W 5721/G.

SECRET.



Dear Ronnie,

The enclosed copy of a memorandum which Winston Churchill recently sent to the Secretary of State will be of interest to you in connexion with our telegram No. 172 of the 13th April. His views as to the strategic necessity of dealing with Italy before attempting to send any large force to the Far East accord very closely with our own.

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You will see that in the second paragraph of the fifth section of his memorandum Winston suggests that the Americans should be sounded now about the "very remote contingency" of Japan's sending a fleet south of the Equator. On the whole we think that, for the time being at any rate, it would be best not to make any approach on this subject to the United States Government; but I should be glad to know what you think would, in point of fact ...

His Excellency

The Right Honourable

Sir Ronald Lindsay, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

Under file



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fact, be the American reaction to a Japanese attack either on Singapore or on Australia.

Our original intention to despatch a fleet to the Far East irrespective of the situation in the Mediterranean is now under review. The only conclusion that has so far been reached is that there are so many variable functions which cannot at present be assessed, that it is not possible to state definitely how soon after Japanese intervention a fleet could be despatched to the Far East. Neither is it possible to enumerate precisely the size of the fleet that we could afford to send.

Although the recommendation has not yet been officially approved by the C.I.D., I think you should know that at their first meeting on the 1st March, the Strategic Appreciation Sub-Committee agreed that the United States "should be made aware, in the strictest confidence, of the situation with which we should be faced, with our fleet at its present strength, if we became involved in war with Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously." You will of course be notified as soon as this recommendation

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Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

is either approved or rejected by the Committee of
Imperial Defence.

Yrs. em.
Alfredson.

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