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No.

Subject:

D255/19

Pacific Defence

SECRET

Reference to previous correspondence:

Tel. - 14/7/39
With the compliments of m Dixon

A copy has also been sent to

m Balbon
Col Jacob
maj Guala
Maj Foster
maj Means

Dominions Office, Downing Street,

17 JUL 1939

GYPHER TELEGRAM

To the Governments of New Zealand and the Commonwealth of Australia.

(Sent 8 p.m., 14th July, 1939.)

No. 83.
No. 63. Most Secret.

Your telegram of 20th June No. 68.

(1) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom agree in principle that the Fiji Defence Force should be expanded to one complete composite battalion at Suva and two European companies at Lautoka. Possibility of providing machine guns and small arms ammunition required is being investigated. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom also agree in principle that the scale of coast defences at Suva should be two 6-inch guns and searchlights. Provision of these defences is being considered in relation to the requirements of other ports and the stocks of material available, and some delay may be involved. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom appreciate willingness of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to provide key personnel to train locally recruited personnel who would man the defences.

(2) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom agree with recommendation of the Pacific Defence Conference that a defence force of one Infantry Company should be provided if possible at Tonga. High Commissioner for the Western Pacific is being instructed to approach the Government of Tonga with a view to the formation of a Company on the understanding that the cost of raising and maintaining the Company, apart from the initial provision of arms, ammunition and war equipment, should be borne by the Government

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Government of Tonga. It will be appreciated that feasibility of implementing the proposal depends largely on the attitude of that Government.

(3) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would welcome the proposal that a platoon from New Zealand should be stationed at Fanning Island in time of peace, whether permanently or for temporary purposes mentioned in your telegram, if His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, after consideration of defence requirements generally, should decide in favour of such a course. It is assumed that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be willing to bear the cost of the necessary arrangements for the reception of the force sent and its subsequent maintenance.

This telegram has been shown to Mr. Nash in draft.

Addressed to New Zealand No.83. Repeated to Commonwealth of Australia No.63.