

Handwritten notes: "4-5", "Mr. Moffat", "75-11-11-39", "A.A. Gil 3-1/x1"

BRITISH EMBASSY  
WASHINGTON D.C.  
November 15th 1939.

No. 1274.

My Lord,

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In accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram No. 726 of November 4th, the Counsellor of His Majesty's Embassy visited the State Department to-day and left with the Chief of the European Division an aide-memoire, of which a copy is enclosed herein, regarding the status of certain islands in the Pacific Ocean.

2. Mr. Moffat seemed to understand that there were good reasons for delay in carrying the discussion regarding these islands any further just yet, but he seemed anxious to get the question finally cleared up. Mr. Mallet referred once more to the importance attached by His Majesty's Governments to the subject of trans-Pacific aviation, and especially facilities for landing in Hawaii.

3. Mr. Mallet went on to refer to the reports which had been received from His Majesty's High Commissioner for the Western Pacific regarding the activities of the United States survey expedition during August and September at Hull and Sydney Islands. He told Mr. Moffat that he naturally did not wish to suggest that any sinister interpretation should be placed on these activities in view of the assurance given by the State Department that they were "entirely scientific and without reference to the title to the islands"; Mr. Moffat said that he had heard nothing about all this and that he felt sure that there could

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The Right Honourable the Viscount Halifax K.G.,  
etc., etc., etc.

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be no desire to do anything which might embarrass us. He would make enquiries on the subject.

4. He has since telephoned to Mr. Mallet that the Survey Ship, which is now on its way to Ecuador, reported that it enjoyed the best possible relations with the officials on the islands, and that the blasting and erection of poles were part of the normal and necessary operations for carrying out a hydrographic survey of this type.

5. The rapidity with which the State Department undertook this enquiry shows, I think, that they were most anxious to remove any impression in Your Lordship's mind that they were engaged in any sinister activities behind our backs.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

(Sgd) LOTHIAN