

I will show Mr Casey.

G: For East

Mr H-Millar
Admiral Bellairs.

G 46/15/41

No. 43.

(F 230/230/G)

SECRET

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

MB 13th January, 1941.

14/2.

Handwritten notes:
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J. van...
Mr. W. see
on return
24.2.

Sir,

I resumed on the 13th January the fortnightly meetings which my predecessor used to hold with the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Minister in London, and His Majesty's Minister to the Netherlands. The conversation turned largely on the Far East, but in the course of it I gave them, in strict confidence, an outline of the present position as appears to us in Libya, Abyssinia and the Balkans, as well as of our intentions and hopes in these parts for the immediate future.

2. As regards the Far East, it was the Netherlands Representatives who supplied the information. M. van Kleffens seemed no more apprehensive of any early attack from Japan than he has been previously, but he admitted that the Netherlands Commander-in-Chief on the spot was not altogether so sanguine. It was also noteworthy that the Japanese economic delegation contained six military officers, though, M. van Kleffens added, these gentlemen could not effect very much as their movements were under continuous observation. We agreed that it was not the Japanese habit to embark suddenly on an extensive operation, but rather to proceed step by step until they had gained a commanding position from which to take a decisive offensive.

3. M. van Kleffens repeated that, as already reported by His Majesty's Minister, the Netherlands Government while grateful for the invitation, preferred to remain, for the present, outside the conversations about to take place in Washington: amongst other things they feared that confusion might arise, if they were represented at the Washington conversations while talks were going on between the parties concerned at Singapore. No detailed news had reached the Dutch, any more than ourselves, of the progress of these talks, but M. van Kleffens knew that one important result had already been reached, namely the establishment of a common system of signalling.

4. We also touched on the question of a guarantee for the Netherlands East Indies, but without pursuing it very far, though agreeing that a search for "formulae" should be sternly avoided. Meanwhile, it was satisfactory that the United States Government had increased their naval strength in the Pacific. M. van Kleffens told me that the Dutch had three cruisers (2 very old) and a number of destroyers (large) and submarines in the Far East. I said we had increased our military strength at Singapore and that this process would be continued so far and so fast as calls elsewhere would permit.

5. His Majesty's Minister enquired after the progress of Messrs. Jongejan and Boerstra, whose journey has been causing so much concern to His Majesty's Ambassador at Tokyo and His Majesty's Consul-General at Batavia, and M. van Kleffens replied/

N.M. Butler, Esq., C.V.O.,
etc., etc., etc.,
Washington.



replied that he had so far had no report on any conversations which might have taken place between them and the Netherlands East Indies delegate who had been selected to hear what they had to say. Apparently M. Jongejan is no longer regarded as utterly above suspicion, but M. van Kleffens said that he complete confidence in M. Boerstra, who was the son-in-law of Jonkheer de Graaff whom I should no doubt remember (and whom I do, in fact, remember) as Netherlands Foreign Minister and a most loyal colleague. The real object of the mission was still a mystery.

I am, with great truth,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(For the Secretary of State)

J.C. Sturndale Bennett