

SECRET

H.E.

American-Dutch-British Staff Conversations at Singapore.

We have received here a lengthy and detailed telegraphic summary of the Report of the outcome of the Singapore Staff Conversations which has been rendered home, to the U.S. Authorities and to the Dutch. Its contents can ~~be~~ be summarised very briefly as follows:

1. The "Object" and "Summary of the Situation" are elaborations of our views as expressed in the Washington Conference Report. It is pointed out that the following are open to attack by Japan: Philippines and Hong Kong, Malaya direct or via Thailand, Burma via Thailand and Indo-China, Borneo or Northern Line N.E.I., and sea communications in all areas. An attack on Australia or New Zealand is ruled out as an initial operation.
2. These alternatives or combinations are then discussed, and emphasis is laid on Japanese dependence upon seaborne facilities for her offensives, and the conclusion is drawn that simultaneous attacks on more than one of the objectives mentioned above can only be undertaken by accepting great risks, though these would be lessened if and when Japan was already established in Southern Indo-China and the Bangkok Areas.
3. Emphasis is laid on the necessity for collective U.S.-British-Dutch action, and that their collective Military strength can only be developed fully if the Governments agree to act together in certain circumstances. These should be either:
 - (a) A direct act of war by Japan against the territory of any one of the Powers; or
 - (b) The movement of Japanese forces into any part of Thailand West of 100° E. or South of 10° N; or
 - (c) The movement of large warship strength or convoys which indicated an effort against the Philippines, or against the coast of Malaya; or
 - (d) The movement of Japanese forces into Portuguese Timor; or
 - (e) The movement of Japanese forces into New Caledonia or the Loyalty Islands.

The Conference recommends steps should be taken to evolve a satisfactory procedure to ensure immediate decision to take counter measures, particularly with regard to (c) above.

4. The Report then discusses the action open to the Associated Powers - economic blockade, naval pressure and air bombardment, particularly the last which would probably cause Japanese collapse. Much emphasis is laid on the importance of organizing air operations against Japanese-occupied territory and Japan itself, and hence the importance of holding Luzon as a base for as long as possible.

5. The Command arrangements evolved are satisfactory. It is recommended that the British Naval C.-in-C. should exercise unified strategic direction of all Naval forces except as regards those for local defence and under the C.-in-C. U.S. Asiatic Fleet, until such time as the U.S. C.-in-C. places them under the British C.-in-C;

viz., probably once the action of the enemy has made the Philippines no longer useful to us.

6. As there is little possibility of strategic offensive action by the land forces, these forces will continue to be controlled by their respective National Authorities.

7. As regards Air Forces, the establishment in advance of a central controlling authority with power to direct concentrations is recommended in order to extract full strategic advantage; and that this strategic direction should be in the hands of the British C-in-C. Far East.

8. The Report says it is essential to maintain in the Pacific a U.S. Pacific Fleet equal in strength to the Japanese fleet; viz, nine or ten capital ships, etc.

9. The importance of co-ordinating the direction of submarine operations is emphasised (there are no British submarines in the Far East.) The U.S. submarines will operate in the defence of the Philippines under C-in-C. Asiatic Fleet until he releases them, when they will pass under the control of the British C-in-C. who will co-ordinate their operations with those of the Dutch submarines.

10. The Report then discusses convoy requirements, and determines the detailed initial dispositions and functions of the Associated naval forces for the security of sea communications in the Far East.

11. Reference is made to the situation after the arrival of a British Far Eastern fleet, when the immediate object of this fleet would be to operate in such a manner as to enable them to seize the initiative, launch powerful counter-attacks against Japanese forces in our territories and intensify attacks on Japanese interests. If by that time the fleet was not able to operate from Singapore it would work from bases in the Indian Ocean, though of course this would severely limit its offensive role.

12. The Report states the Northern Frontier of Malaya is strategically weak, and that the defence of Malaya primarily rests on our sea and air bases; hence, the policy should aim at the security of these, which will be the primary task of the land forces.

13. Finally, the Report concludes with the following recommendations:

- (i) That the definite object of the Associated Powers should be the building up of capacity to operate offensively against Japan.
- (ii) To prepare plans for air attacks on Japanese sea communications in the South China Seas and Pelew Area, and objectives in China, Formosa and Pelew Island.
- (iii) To support Chinese regular forces by all means, including finance and equipment, and to prepare for the establishment of a U.S. Mission in China, possibly in combination with a British Mission.
- (iv) The U.S. Government to organize Chinese guerilla forces similar to those being organized by the British Government.
- (v) The U.S. Government to organize subversive activities in Japan and Japanese occupied territories similar to British activities in this direction, and that these activities be co-ordinated.

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