

Bases: Pacific: C239/24/4

SECRET

[W 12345/10815/G]

(No. 805.)

Foreign Office.

My Lord,

October 16, 1941.

THE United States Ambassador came to see me this evening, when he showed me a confidential message from his Government, of which the gist is the following:—

2. The War Department has been studying the question of Pacific air bases and has concluded that the immediate establishment of an air route between Honolulu and the Philippine Islands, suitable for the movement of heavy bombardment land type aircraft, is imperative to national defence. Some of these bases lie in British, Australian, New Zealand, Dutch and Free French territory, and the help of these authorities is therefore necessary. It is hoped that their full co-operation will be forthcoming.

3. Proposed route will provide bases at Honolulu, Palmyra Island, Canton Island, Tutukaka Island, American Samoa, Fiji, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Rockhampton (Australia), Darwin, Kendari, Celebes or Ambon Island, Davao, Manila, with supplementary or alternate bases at Christmas Island, Solomon Islands, New Britain, Port Moresby and Tarrakan.

4. The longest over-water flights will be from Honolulu to Palmyra—1,104 miles—and from New Caledonia to Rockhampton—1,224 miles.

5. Preliminary surveys have been completed. The War Department has had certain informal discussions with the British Military Mission. Substance of these discussions has been forwarded to London, Canberra and Wellington. It is also understood that the matter of Pacific air bases was discussed at recent meeting between the President and the Prime Minister. Discussions have now reached a point where it is desirable to obtain from the British and other Governments a statement of their approval and desire to co-operate.

6. Once agreement is reached in principle, United States War Department desires permission to communicate with Local officials for the purpose of making surveys separately or jointly with British or other authorities concerned, or for the entry of the necessary construction parties on selected sites for the establishment of such suitable aerodromes as may be jointly decided upon.

7. United States War Department would like the Governments concerned to construct bases in their respective territories in accordance with the requirements of the American aircraft, but is willing to provide technical and financial assistance and, when necessary, to carry out the immediate construction.

8. The United States Government is repeating this information to Australian, New Zealand and to the Netherlands Governments.

10916—195 [22970—13]

I am, with great truth and respect,
My Lord,

Your Excellency's obedient Servant,
(For the Secretary of State)

N. B. Ronalds

His Excellency
The Right Honourable
Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I.,
etc., etc., etc.,
Washington.

Sir R. Campbell

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