

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

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Jamie Norrish

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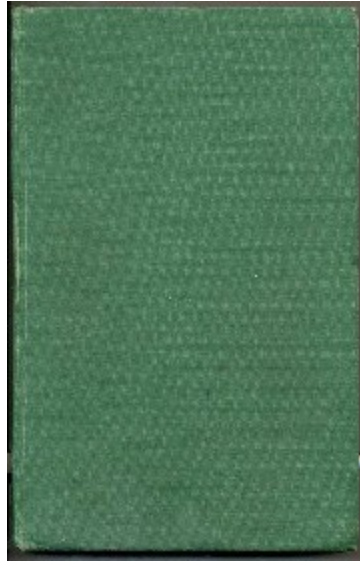
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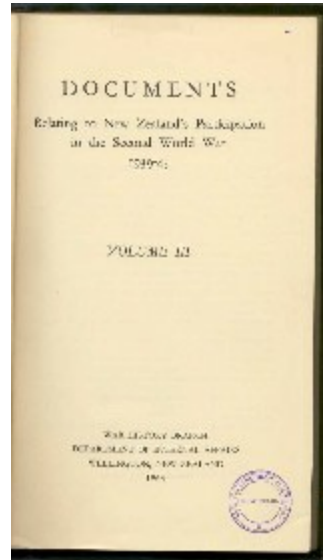
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**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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DOCUMENTS

**Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939-
45**

VOLUME III

WAR HISTORY BRANCH

**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS WELLINGTON, NEW
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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PREFACE

Preface

THIS VOLUME, the third and final of the 'Documents' series is, like its predecessors, complementary to the campaign and political volumes of the war history programme. It is based on documents held in the Prime Minister's Department and the Service departments, to which access, for the purpose of producing this collection, has always been entirely unrestricted. Their bulk is formidable, and publication in full quite impracticable; indeed, many of them are only of minor importance.

In order, therefore, to present a reasonable picture of the problems which confronted the Government of New Zealand in particular, and also those of her Allies, in the prosecution of the war in the **Pacific with which this volume is primarily concerned, a selection of documents had to be made. Every care has been taken to include all executive and enough informative documents to provide an adequate coverage of each subject; but the number published comprises only a small proportion of the whole, especially in the sections dealing with relations with **Japan** and **Thailand** before the outbreak of war in the **Pacific**.**

As with previous volumes, the documents are presented chronologically within various subject headings. The telegrams reproduced contain the errors and mutilations in transmission which exist in the originals. No effort was made at the time, except with gross errors, at any elucidation, and none has been attempted since. Most of the documents therefore appear in the form on which the Government acted: the chief exceptions are **General Freyberg's telegrams, which have been corrected with the file copies of the originals, and the telegrams published by Mr Churchill in his volumes on the Second World War.**

The requirements as to the paraphrasing of messages, which applied to Volumes I and II, have now, because of effluxion of time, been waived. Where, however, multiple addresses were used, as is common practice between Commonwealth countries, only the New Zealand address is reproduced. Annotation, again for reasons of space, has been restricted.

The research for the three volumes in this series has been the work of Mr L. S. Hart and Mr C. R. McColl, formerly of the staff of the **War History Branch, and of Mr W. A. Glue, who also prepared the documents for publication. Mrs M. M. Fogarty compiled the index.**

**Editor-in-Chief,
New Zealand War Histories**

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1 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND²

1

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs¹ to the Governor-General of New Zealand²

26 June 1940

Circular telegram. Following for your Prime Minister:³

1. His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo**⁴ has suggested that some readjustment of our Far Eastern policy which takes account of the impact on **Japan** of recent developments in **Europe** is now urgently necessary.

2. His Majesty's Ambassador has expressed his doubts whether the aim of preventing **Japan** from being drawn into the war on the side of her former Axis partners can be achieved without the adoption of some more positive methods than those followed hitherto. He feels that the **United States** policy, designed so to wear down Japanese resistance that the Army in **Japan** would be deposed from its paramount position, is now in view of the French collapse certainly ineffective.

3. Sir Robert Craigie considers that the issue by the United States Government of a declaration to the effect that they will not tolerate any change in the territorial *status quo* in the **Pacific** area would be valuable if it means more than a repetition of non-recognition of the aggressor, but that if an eventual head-on collision between the United

¹ Secretaries of State for Dominion Affairs in the United Kingdom Government during the war were:

28 Jan 1939–3 Rt. Hon. Viscount Caldecote, PC, CBE, KC
 Sep 1939 (then Sir Thomas Inskip).
 3 Sep 1939–12 Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, PC, MC.
 May 1940
 12 May 1940–3 Viscount Caldecote.
 Oct 1940
 3 Oct 1940–19 Rt. Hon. Viscount Cranborne, PC.
 Feb 1942
 19 Feb 1942–28 Rt. Hon. Clement Attlee, PC, CH.
 Sep 1943
 28 Sep 1943–3 Viscount Cranborne.
 Aug 1945
 3 Aug 1945–7 Rt. Hon. Viscount Addison, KG, PC.
 Oct 1947

On 2 Jul 1947 the title of this office was changed to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.

² **Governors-General of New Zealand during the war were:**

1935–**Rt. Hon. Viscount Galway**, PC, GCMG, DSO, OBE; died 27
 41 Mar 1943.
 1941–**Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Cyril Newall**, GCB, OM,
 46 GCMG, CBE, AM. (Created Baron, 18 Jul 1946.)

³ **Prime Ministers of New Zealand during the war were:**

28 Nov 1935–death, 26 Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage, PC.
 Mar 1940
 1 Apr 1940–13 Dec 1949 Rt. Hon. P. Fraser, PC, CH. (Died 12
 Dec 1950.)

⁴ **Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Craigie**, PC, GCMG, CB; Ambassador to **Japan**, 1937–41.

States and Japan is to be avoided there should also be a more positive side to Anglo-American policy in the **Far East**. Hence it is important to know without delay:

- (1) Whether in the growing emergency in the **Far East** the **United States** are prepared to co-ordinate policy and to act with us more closely than in the past.
 - (2) If so, whether it is possible to discover some common policy capable of dealing with the German drive to secure **Japan's** involvement in the European war. As to (2), he considers our object should on no account be to involve the **United States** in the war in the **Far East** on our behalf. Such involvement would be disastrous to our most vital interests since it would divert **United States** attention from **Europe** and seriously diminish the extent of **United States** material assistance at a crucial point. On the contrary he feels that we should seek a plan which would lessen the chance of **United States** involvement in the **Far East** by offering some alternative to that policy of stark aggression for which extremists and younger officers in **Japan** are now pressing so strongly.
4. He believes that if Great Britain and the **United States** were to agree upon it promptly an understanding might yet be reached with **Japan** along the following lines:
- (a) Joint assistance to **Japan** in bringing about peace with the Chinese Government on the basis of the restoration of **China's** independence and integrity.
 - (b) **Japan** formally to undertake to remain neutral in the European war and to respect to the full the territorial integrity not only of the **Netherlands East Indies**, but also of British and of French and of American possessions in the **Pacific** so long as the *status quo* of these territories is preserved.
 - (c) The **United States** and the members of the **British Commonwealth** to give **Japan** all financial and economic assistance and facilities in their power, both now and during the post-war reconstruction period.
 - (d) The Allied Governments to receive full guarantees against reexport to enemy countries.
 - (e) The question of the future status of settlements and concessions in **China** to be left in abeyance until the restoration of peace in **Europe** and **China**.
5. On the present procedure he thinks that such proposals should emanate from the Japanese themselves, and he has reason to believe that this might be quickest if Japanese intermediaries were to be definitely assured in advance that a settlement on these lines would be acceptable in principle both to the **United Kingdom** and **United States**

Governments.

6. If, however, the United States answer to both questions in paragraph 3 were to be negative, and if the United States Government were unable to give us more active support, even as regards the International Settlement at Shanghai, he feels that at best we could seek to gain time by concessions on the points not considered of capital importance.

7. A telegram has been sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington¹ suggesting that there seem to be two courses of action open to the United States:

(a) To increase their pressure either to the extent of a full embargo or of the despatch of ships to Singapore, in full realisation that this may result in war with Japan.

(b) To seek to wean Japan from aggression by a concrete offer on the lines suggested by Sir Robert Craigie.

8. The United Kingdom Government appreciate that if the United States of America were involved in war with Japan she would be unable to furnish the material assistance which we require in Europe at a crucial moment (though it is not known to what extent this would apply to fleet action only). If the United States Government share this view then we are anxious to know whether they are prepared to give early and serious consideration to the second alternative mentioned in paragraph 7.

9. While there is no doubt an element of bluff in the Japanese attitude, and wiser elements in Japan cannot but be conscious of the adverse effects upon their economy of an extension of the policy of aggression, we cannot ignore the possibility that interventionists may before long gain complete control. If anything can be done to prevent this it must be done soon.

10. In the meantime we are faced with the necessity of returning a reply to the Japanese demands which we understand have just been presented through the Ambassador:

(1) To withdraw our garrison from Shanghai;

(2) To close the **Hong Kong** frontier;

(3) To close the Burmese frontier to supplies to **Chiang Kai-shek**.²

11. As to (1), we feel that as the **United States** are not in a position to promise armed support, and as our own territories in the **Far East** are now in some danger of attack, we may well desire to withdraw troops to reinforce the garrisons of our colonies. We should, however, prefer not to appear to be giving way to a Japanese demand and to

¹ Lord Lothian, PC, KT, CH; British Ambassador at **Washington**, Aug 1939 – death, 12 Dec 1940.

² Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek**, Chairman of Chinese Supreme National Defence Council, 1939–47; President of **China**, 1943–49; resumed presidency, Taiwan, 1950.

take this step in return for definite undertakings by the Japanese, possibly as a part of a general settlement on the lines of paragraph 7 (*b*). It is questionable, however, whether we could delay our reply for very long.

12. As to the second demand, we may be able to satisfy **Japan** without in fact making any concession in principle. But the third demand presents serious difficulties and is one which we feel we should endeavour to resist. At the same time we have to recognise that the Japanese, if they persist in their intention, have the means to enforce it. The situation is further complicated by the fact that by far the greater part of the traffic to which objection is taken is **United States**. Put bluntly, our problem is whether we are to incur both **United States** and Chinese odium by stopping traffic or face the consequences of refusal without **United States** support.

13. His Majesty's Ambassador has been asked to put these considerations before the United States Government at the earliest possible moment and to invite their observations.

His Majesty's Ambassador has been authorised to add that if there is war in the **Far East** we shall resist it to the best of our ability. The slenderness of our resources must however already be apparent to the United States Government, and the effect upon our operations in **Europe** of the severance of our communications, the loss of supplies and possibly also of shipping, would be obvious. If, on the other hand, the United States Government feel able either to come to our assistance or to undertake a policy directed towards the termination of hostilities between **China** and **Japan**, then we should be prepared to offer our full contribution. If conciliation is the alternative to be adopted then it is obvious that reinstatement of our position [group mutilated-with?] **Japan** renders it undesirable that we should take the initiative in the matter.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

2 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

2

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

2 July 1940

Reference my Circular telegram of 26 June.

The following telegram has been received from His Majesty's
Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia**:

‘The Commonwealth Government has given prolonged consideration
to the questions in issue, and is in full agreement with the conclusion of
the British Ambassador at **Tokyo** that a readjustment of Far Eastern
policy is urgently necessary.

‘From reports and information from various quarters it seems to us
that **Japan** will take advantage of the present European situation to
further her extreme interests, even to the extent of war with the
Empire, if immediate steps are not taken to meet the new position.

‘To our mind it is imperative at the outset to have a clear indication
of **United States** policy, how far she is prepared to act beyond her recent
negative policy and, at the same time, her intentions regarding the
future disposition of the fleet. From the point of view of holding our
position in the **Pacific** and the **Far East**, the continued maintenance of
the fleet on **Hawaii** is essential, and so long as the British Fleet, the
main defence of **America** on the **Atlantic**, remains undefeated, there
would seem no reason outside American sentiment for it to be
transferred to the **Atlantic**.

‘We consider that the present three Japanese demands do not in themselves vitally affect the future or present security of the Empire. French acceptance of similar demands has further strengthened the Japanese position, and we can only arrive at the conclusion that if the **United States is not prepared to give most complete support, these demands should be conceded. The alternative is a grave risk of war against **Japan**, which cannot be contemplated in our present position.**

‘As to the suggestions of Craigie for a general settlement, the basis of negotiation so far as they visualise the complete independence and integrity of **China appears to us as quite impossible of acceptance by **Japan**. They would put her in a worse position than at the commencement of hostilities in 1937.**

‘We cannot believe that **Japan would herself make an approach to the **United States of America** and the **United Kingdom** on such a basis. In this respect it is strongly urged that if there is to be mediation, the [group mutilated–original?] proposal should go to the limit of concessions at the outset of the [group omitted–negotiations?] rather than raise the stakes when it is too late.**

‘At the same time, we see virtue in this proposal of mediation for the termination of the Sino-Japanese war, only if the specific object and result is a tripartite declaration regarding the *status quo* in the Western Pacific and guarantees as to respective territorial integrity in the designated spheres, to which the **United States must be definitely committed.**

‘This latter may in fact prove difficult to obtain but, failing it, the **United Kingdom herself should not offer to mediate.**

‘Generally we agree with the view that it would be contrary to the successful prosecution of the war for the **United States to become involved in war in the **Pacific**, and policy therefore must be based on the realities of the situation and the common sense that we should not at the moment take such action, or by omission of reasonable action, as**

will cause **Japan** to become involved in this war.'

The following reply has been sent:

'**War Cabinet** this morning considered the Far Eastern situation and had before it your telegram of 27 June, for which we are much obliged.

'After full consideration the **War Cabinet** came to the conclusion that it would be desirable to reply as follows to the Japanese demands:

(To agree to the withdrawal of the **Shanghai** garrison provided the
a) Italians also withdraw, and on the assumption that British lives and property will be protected and that the **Japanese Government** will not seek to alter the status of the Concession except in consultation with the parties concerned.

(To make inquiry as to the precise grounds for complaint at **Hong**
b) **Kong**, and,

(With regard to the **Burma Road**, to point out that the passage of
c) arms and ammunition to Chungking does not offer any very material contribution to the armed strength of **China**, that war material from the **United Kingdom** has been insignificant in recent months, and that owing to their own war effort His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** are in fact unable to supply **China** with munitions of war. As to the stoppage of fuel, fuel oil and petrol, trucks and railway materials, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** would state that in making this request the **Japanese Government** was asking them to take action inconsistent with their obligations to **India** and **Burma**, for whom the **Burma Road** constitutes a legitimate trade route. Relations with the **United States** would also be affected, inasmuch as the route is largely used for **United States** products. It is proposed to [group mutilated–say that?] in strict neutrality [group mutilated–compliance with a?] request to cut off these materials from **China** should involve a similar stoppage of supplies to **Japan**, though of course this is in no way the intention. ¹

'Finally, it is proposed to say that, far from being instrumental in prolonging hostilities, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** have always deplored them and have on various occasions expressed their readiness, should both parties so desire, to use their endeavours to bring the conflict to a close.

‘In arriving at the above conclusion His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have been influenced by the fact that, while it is obviously desirable to avoid trouble with Japan at this moment, it is doubtful if concessions from Burma on points of principle, apart from other considerations, would bring any lasting improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations. Furthermore, in any attempt to find a way of accommodation with Japan, care must be taken not to destroy confidence in the United States and China in British policy.

‘As the Commonwealth Government are aware, the United States have indicated that they are prepared neither to increase pressure which might involve them in war nor to take the initiative in a policy of conciliation. On our part we are quite prepared to adopt the latter policy if it is capable of producing any results. But the United States Government appear to hold the view, which we are inclined to share, that the Japanese nation is in no mood to be weaned from a policy of aggression, and in these circumstances it seems more than likely that any concessions which we may [group mutilated–be?] ourselves ready to make will fail to deter Japan from her objective.

‘We are inclined to agree with Sir Robert Craigie that a refusal to close the Burma Road will not directly lead to war, and that the Japanese will in the first place have recourse to less violent measures. Unless Great Britain were to be defeated in Europe, moreover, it seems to us doubtful whether Japan would have recourse to total war. Japan's resources are not inexhaustible and, should she ultimately resort to hostilities, it seems much more probable that they would be limited and local and that, provided we ourselves did not declare a state of war, she would terminate them whenever it became apparent that a further advance would tax her resources beyond their machinery. If Japan is bent on a policy of this kind it is unlikely that anything can be done at this stage to deflect her. Nevertheless, Sir Robert Craigie is being authorised to explore the possibilities, and if these exist His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will naturally do what they can in consultation with Dominion Governments to exploit them.

‘In the light of the above, and in view of the very bad effect which the closing of the **Burma Road would have upon **India**, **Burma** and **Malaya**, which would be directly affected, we feel that we should not close the **Burma Road**.**

‘We fully appreciate the considerations advanced by the Commonwealth Government from the point of view of **Australia. It will be understood that it is necessary for us to take into account all relevant factors, and we hope that in the light of the wider considerations mentioned above the Commonwealth Government will feel able to concur in the terms of the reply which it is proposed to send to **Japan**. We should be grateful for a very early reply.**

‘We are repeating your telegram and this reply to His Majesty's Governments in **Canada, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa with a request for any observations so far as they are concerned.’**

We should be grateful if we could be informed as soon as possible whether His Majesty's Government in New Zealand concur in the terms of the reply which it is proposed to send to **Japan.**

¹ **On the recommendation of Sir Robert Craigie, who considered that ‘there would be a serious risk that a reply on these lines would lead to a state of war with **Japan**’, its terms were subsequently modified.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

3 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

3

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

3 July 1940

With reference to your Circular telegram of 26 June [**No. 1**], my Ministers ask me to convey to you the text of a telegram which has today been despatched to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia** ¹ as follows:

‘I thank you for your telegram of 28 June ² with reference to the Far Eastern situation. We entirely agree with you on the following points:

- (**The delicacy and danger of the situation.**
a)
- (**The desirability of obtaining a clear indication of **United States**
b) policy in the **Far East**.**
- (**The desirability, if circumstances allow, of retaining the United
c) States Fleet in the **Pacific**.**
- (**The extreme undesirability of any act or omission on our part
d) which might have the effect of unnecessarily precipitating trouble
with **Japan** in our present situation.**
- (**The undesirability of any attempt to haggle with **Japan**.**
e)
- (**The undesirability in the best interests of the British
f) Commonwealth of the involvement of the **United States** in a war in
the **Far East**.**
- (**The probable futility of the suggestion that in the present
g) circumstances **Japan** might be induced on the lines proposed to offer
to restore the territorial integrity and independence of **China**.**

‘On the other hand we are most sceptical as to whether **Japan** could in

the existing situation be persuaded to make a satisfactory tripartite declaration as to the *status quo* in the **Pacific**, or whether such a declaration if made would have any value at all unless accompanied by a full **United States** guarantee, which would seem unlikely at the moment.

‘Again we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the offer of mediation that you propose, in the absence of **United States** collaboration, offers any substantial promise of successful results. Nor are we convinced that a simple acceptance of the present Japanese demands would be morally right or even politically expedient. Indeed, we are inclined to feel that an acceptance of the Japanese demands or an offer of mediation between **Japan** and **China** might well be interpreted by the Japanese as a plain indication of our realisation of the weakness of our position and of our readiness on that account to sacrifice the Chinese and the principle of resisting aggression for the purpose of endeavouring to protect our own interests. We are at present inclined to feel that an appearance of continued confidence is more likely to be effective with the Japanese than any step which might be interpreted as a display of weakness. On the whole, however, we are inclined to defer the formation of any definite judgment on this most difficult problem until it has been possible to ascertain the result of the approach which has already been made by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to the United States Government.

‘A copy of this telegram has today been despatched to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.’

¹ Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth of **Australia** during the war were:

26 Apr 1939–29 Aug 1941 Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, PC, CH, QC.

29 Aug 1941–7 Oct 1941 Rt. Hon. A. W. Fadden, PC.

7 Oct 1941–death, 5 Jul 1945 Rt. Hon. J. Curtin, PC.

6 Jul 1945–13 Jul 1945 Rt. Hon. F. M. Forde, PC.

**13 Jul 1945–19 Dec
1949**

**Rt. Hon. J. B. Chifley, PC. (Died 13
Jun 1951.)**

² Repeated in No. 2.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

4 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

4

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

3 July 1940

My Ministers desire me to inform you that their general views on the Far Eastern situation and on your Circular telegram of 26 June are set out in a telegram sent this morning to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia, a copy of which was communicated to you.**

My Ministers are in general agreement with the point of view expressed in your telegram of 2 July (Part 2 of which was received in a mutilated condition and was not deciphered or considered before the despatch of the above-mentioned telegrams). At the same time my Ministers feel that it would be preferable to await the result of the approach made to the United States Government before any reply is made to **Japan, and they themselves propose to reserve any final decision on the points at issue until the **United States** attitude is known to them. ¹**

A copy of this telegram is being sent to **Canberra.**

¹ **The New Zealand Government on 5 July telegraphed its concurrence with the terms of the reply to be sent to **Japan**.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

5 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

5

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

11 July 1940

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 10 July, D. 327. ¹

Following for Prime Minister:

In view of the attitude of the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs ² His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** has suggested that the best course as regards the **Burma Road** would be an agreement on our part to suspend the transit of war material through **Burma** for a period of three months, on the understanding that during this period special efforts will be made to bring a just and equitable peace in the **Far East**. Should these efforts fail, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** would remain free to permit the transit of trade to be resumed at the end of three months.

2. Sir Robert Craigie has pointed out that the possibility of the resumption of traffic in October would be a lever for ensuring adequate Japanese attention to any suggestions which we and the **United States** might make meanwhile for the settlement of the **China** dispute, and would give time for the elaboration of concrete proposals for British and **United States** economic and financial assistance to **Japan** which would prevent her [group mutilated–falling?] wholly under the influence of **Germany**. The loss to **China** through the closing of the route during the rainy season would be inconsiderable. Last year during the corresponding period traffic fell to one tenth of the normal figure.

3. After further consideration of the situation it has been decided to

inform Sir Robert Craigie as follows:

4. The solution which we should prefer if it could be obtained would be that for a period of three months, and on the understanding referred to in the latter part of paragraph (1), the transit of the materials in question should be not banned, but limited to the quantities during the corresponding period last year.
 5. If Sir Robert Craigie cannot obtain this solution or thinks it unwise to attempt it, he is being authorised at once to put forward the proposal in the form which he suggests. He has been informed that the more restricted the list of war materials is the better. He will be at liberty to add at his discretion that we assume the **Japanese Government** will utilise the interval to discuss the suspension of the export of munitions to **China** with the third Powers from which they emanate.
 6. Sir Robert Craigie is being instructed to add that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** are making this very considerable concession to Japanese opinion in face of great opposition, but that they do so in the confident hope that it will lead to a genuine improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations. Their position will become very difficult if, nevertheless, there is to be a continuance of hostility on the part of the Japanese public and press. He will point out that His Majesty's Government have never accepted the view that they are in any way responsible for the prolongation of hostility between **Japan** and **China**, that the gesture they are now making is evidence of their good intentions, and that they look to the **Japanese Government** to take prompt action to put an end to the anti-British campaign which so far they have done little to suppress. He has given us to understand that once this difficult corner in Anglo-Japanese relations is turned there will be an end to threats and [group omitted–demands?]. It is for the **Japanese Government** to ensure that this forecast is correct.
 7. The United States Government are being informed of our decision and of the reasons for reaching it.
-

¹ Not published. In this telegram the Dominions Secretary reported that the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hachiro Arita) had expressed disappointment at the British reply to the Japanese demands and requested an assurance that exports of war material from the **United Kingdom** to **China** via the **Burma Road** 'would remain insignificant'. Mr Arita had emphasised that the Japanese people were 'in no mood to put up with "procrastination"'.

² Mr Arita was Minister for Foreign Affairs from 16 January to 21 July 1940.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

6 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)¹

6

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*¹

14 July 1940

Your telegram of 12 July, No. 285.²

We entirely sympathise with the general attitude of the Prime Minister of New Zealand; in particular, the importance of not taking any action which would antagonise **United States** opinion has been fully present in our minds. The situation with which we were faced was one in which we were advised by His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** that there was a serious risk that a reply to the Japanese demands which would be interpreted by the **Japanese Government** as tantamount to a refusal would gradually lead to war with **Japan**. Even if the present **Japanese Government** were to shrink from this course, there is the possibility that, if it were considered to have failed in upholding the Japanese position, it might at any moment be succeeded by a more extreme and pushful Government which would feel no similar hesitation. In that event it is clear from discussions which have taken place with the **United States Government** that we should not have their active assistance, and in the present phase of the war the possibility of having, single-handed, to carry on hostilities, including the serious threat to vital Imperial communications, against **Japan**, in addition to our other enemies, is one which our military advisers consider must be avoided if at all possible.

His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** has moreover expressed the view that **United States** opinion would probably regard action as to the

Burma Road of the kind now proposed as imposed upon us by the necessities of the European situation. He has been asked, when informing the United States Government of the action contemplated, to point out to them that in arriving at our decision, which although only temporary is distasteful to us, we have been influenced by their attitude as described above, and that, in the circumstances, we assume that they would not wish us to expose ourselves to war between Great Britain and **Japan** with all its complications. He has also been asked to make it clear that we should welcome any assistance which they may feel able to offer in making clear our difficulties, and it has been suggested that it might be possible to let it be known that the United States Government are concerned about supplies from the **United States** being cut off from **China** and are seriously considering whether, from the point of view of strict neutrality, they should themselves take steps to stop supplies from the **United States** going to **Japan**.

Please speak to the Prime Minister in the above sense.

¹ Sir Harry Batterbee, GCMG, KCVO; High Commissioner for the **United Kingdom** in New Zealand, 1939–45.

² Not published. Sir Harry Batterbee reported a conversation with Mr Fraser in which the latter had expressed his concern that concessions to **Japan** would not prevent aggression and might have an effect on public opinion in the **United States**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

7 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

7

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

18 July 1940

Circular telegram. The Prime Minister ¹ made the following statement in the House of Commons this afternoon:

On 24 June the **Japanese Government** requested His Majesty's Government to take measures to stop the transit to **China** via **Burma** of war material and certain other goods. A similar request was made in respect of **Hong Kong**. The continuance of the transit of these

¹ Prime Ministers of the **United Kingdom** during the war were:

28 May 1937–11 May 1940	Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, PC.
11 May 1940–26 Jul 1945	Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, PC, OM, CH.
26 Jul 1945–25 Oct 1951	Rt. Hon. Clement Attlee, PC, OM, CH.

materials was represented as having a serious effect on Anglo-Japanese relations. An agreement has now been reached with the **Japanese Government** as follows:

Hong Kong. The export of arms and ammunition from **Hong Kong** has been prohibited since January 1939 and none of the war materials to which the **Japanese Government** attach importance are in fact being

exported.

Burma. The Government of **Burma** have agreed to suspend for a period of three months ¹ the transit to **China** of arms and ammunition as well as the following articles: petrol, lorries and railway material. The categories of goods prohibited in **Burma** will be prohibited in **Hong Kong**. In considering the requests made by the **Japanese Government** and in reaching the agreement to which I have referred, His Majesty's Government were not unmindful of the various obligations accepted by this country, including their obligations to the National Government of **China** and to the British territories affected. His Majesty's Government were, however, also bound to have regard to the present world situation, nor could they ignore the dominant fact that we are ourselves engaged in a life-and-death struggle. The general policy of this country towards the Far Eastern troubles has been repeatedly defined. We have persistently asserted our desire to see assured to **China** a free and independent future, and we have as frequently expressed our desire to improve our relations with **Japan**. To achieve these objectives two things were essential—time and a relief of tension. On the one hand it was clear that the tension was rapidly growing owing to the Japanese complaints about the passage of war material by the **Burma** route. On the other, to agree to the permanent closure of the route would be to default from our obligations as a neutral friendly power to **China**. What we have therefore made is a temporary arrangement in the hope that the time so gained may lead to a solution just and equitable to both parties to the dispute and freely accepted by them both. We wish for no quarrel with any nation of the **Far East**. We desire to see **China's** status and integrity preserved and, as was indicated in our note of 14 January 1939, ² we are ready to negotiate with the Chinese Government after the conclusion of peace the abolition of extra-territorial rights and rendition of concessions and the revision of treaties on the basis of reciprocity and equality. We wish to see **Japan** attain that state of prosperity which will ensure to her population the welfare and economic security which every Japanese naturally desires. Towards the

¹ **From 17 July to 17 October 1940.**

² **Not published.**

attainment of the aims of both these countries we are prepared to offer our collaboration and our contribution, but it must be clear that if they are to be attained it must be by a process of peace and conciliation and not by war or threat of war.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

8 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

8

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

30 July 1940

My Prime Minister asks me to convey to you the text of the following communication which has today been despatched to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia**:

‘I am very much obliged to you for your telegram of 27 July ¹ and for the opportunity of perusing the instructions you have forwarded to your High Commissioner in **London** ² with reference to the Far Eastern situation. Our own views remain very much as expressed in my telegram of 3 July, ³ and while we entirely agree that it is in the highest degree advisable to avoid hostilities with **Japan** in our present circumstances, we have never felt that concession to aggression and threats is the best or indeed at all a promising way of achieving that end. We have never believed, and we do not now believe, that it was either wise or proper to attempt to placate **Japan** on the question of the **Burma Road**, especially as any concession in this respect was necessarily at the expense of **China**, was a violation of international undertakings to which we are a party, and involved a grave risk of misunderstanding and resentment in the **United States of America**.

‘We have never understood why the policy set out in the Secretary of State's telegram to us of 2 July ⁴ (containing the British reply to your telegram of 27 June), which seemed to us to be as reasonable and sensible as circumstances would allow, and with which we, and I believe you also, expressed agreement, was changed without further

consultation with us to one of retreat and concession. The policy of “appeasement” is in our view no more likely to be successful in the **Far East** than it was in **Europe**, if indeed, as evidenced for example by the recent change of government in **Japan**,⁵ it has not already failed; and we would be most reluctant to associate ourselves with any further attempts of this nature which would we feel be wrong in principle, and in practice more likely to precipitate aggression even against us than to provide a solution of the difficulties between **Japan** and **China**, or still less form a foundation for a better international order in the **Far East**. It may well be, however, and we say it with regret, that having now adopted a policy of concession, any alteration, and particularly any reversal of that policy, may now have become very dangerous.

‘In short, while we neither understand nor sympathise with the policy that has been adopted *vis-à-vis* **Japan**, we are nevertheless unwilling, by stressing this view, to add unnecessarily and perhaps uselessly to the difficulties of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, whose decision on this difficult and delicate matter we have accepted in the past and will no doubt accept in the future.

‘We have no specific comments and no objections to make to the considerations set out in your telegram, except that we gravely question the possibility of enlisting **United States** support for any concession to Japanese aggression, and while we would support your suggested attempt to obtain **United States** and Russian collaboration in this matter, we would not feel that this offers any substantial promise of success.

‘We warmly endorse your suggestion that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** should be requested to afford to us in future the opportunity of considering and commenting upon any further proposed action in the **Far East** and, particularly in respect of any further negotiations with **Japan**, in ample time to allow the expression and consideration of our views before the position is compromised.

‘Finally, we attach the greatest importance to the fullest possible exchange of views in this matter between New Zealand and **Australia**, of

which we for our part fully assure you and which we confidently assume is the policy of **Australia** also.

‘In our opinion the position in the **Far East**, whatever its day to day fluctuation, is very serious.’

¹ Not published. In this telegram the Commonwealth Government expressed its views on the Far Eastern situation and requested the observations of the **New Zealand Government** and, if it concurred, its support.

² Viscount Bruce of **Melbourne**, PC, CH, MC (then Rt. Hon. Stanley Bruce); High Commissioner for **Australia** in **London**, 1933–45; Australian representative in United Kingdom War Cabinet and on **Pacific War Council**, 1942–45; created Viscount, 1947.

³ Repeated in **No. 3**.

⁴ **No. 2**.

⁵ On 16 July the Japanese Cabinet resigned. Prince Konoye became Prime Minister and Mr Matsuoka Foreign Minister.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

9 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND¹

9

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand*¹

3 August 1940

Your telegram of 30 July repeating the message sent to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia** concerning relations with **Japan**.

We are sorry to learn from your telegram that the **New Zealand Government** do not view with sympathy the policy which we adopted in relation to Japanese demands regarding the **Burma Road**.

We realised throughout that the **New Zealand Government** were in principle opposed to a policy of concession to the aggressors, but we had gathered, after the full explanation as to the particular case which was communicated to you through our High Commissioner in our telegram of 14 July [**No. 6**], that the **New Zealand Government** acquiesced in the line which we were taking.

We do not regard our yielding to the Japanese demands in relation to the **Burma Road** as in the nature of 'appeasement' but rather as a retreat under *force majeure* in accordance with general advice which, it will be remembered, was given to us by the United States Government.

It is our constant endeavour to consult and inform Dominion Governments as fully as possible on questions of major policy affecting the **Far East**, and we welcome an expression of the **New Zealand Government's** views at all times. But it will be appreciated that occasions arise, especially under the present conditions, when the need

for immediate action precludes our consulting the Dominion Governments as fully as we should wish.

¹ **Repeated to the Commonwealth of [Australia](#).**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

10 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

10

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

7 August 1940

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand much appreciate your most secret telegram of 3 August. They fully realise that in the existing circumstances there must arise occasions upon which action must be taken by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** without consulting the Dominions, and in such cases the **New Zealand Government** may be relied upon to understand the situation and in general to accept the decision that is made. But they entirely agree with His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** that in matters affecting the **Far East**, which so directly concern the Dominion of New Zealand and the Commonwealth of **Australia**, every possible opportunity should be taken of obtaining the views of the Governments of those Dominions before action is taken, and this is especially the case where the policy adopted is subject to marked fluctuation. They find it difficult to understand your statement that you 'had gathered after the full explanation as to the particular case which was communicated through our High Commissioner in our telegram of 14 July, that the **New Zealand Government** acquiesced in the line which we were taking', and, solely with the object of clearing the record, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand wish to point out that they have never at any time expressed acquiescence in the line that was taken in respect of the **Burma Road** and that, in any case, the message to which you refer was dated 14 July, three days after you had informed them of the altered policy in connection with the **Burma Road**. ¹

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have now had an opportunity of perusing the telegram of 6 August from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia** to the Australian High Commissioner in **London** ² with reference to your Circular telegram M. 45, ³ in connection with which they have the following comments to make:

- (1) They fully agree as to the desirability of consultation.
- (2) They warmly support the policy of making every possible effort to avoid hostilities with **Japan**. Their feeling, however, is that continued concession at the expense of our friends, our rights, and our principles is not the best way of achieving this object, which is more likely to be attained by a reasonable and discreet display of confidence and determination. In short, they feel that the policy now being adopted, though it would have been much more likely to be effective and much less likely to be dangerous if applied earlier, is nevertheless still the right one.

This telegram has been repeated to **Canberra**.

¹ No. 5.

² Not published. This telegram contained the Commonwealth Government's views on British proposals concerning retaliatory action for the recent arrest of British subjects in **Japan**. The Commonwealth Government recommended further consideration – and consultation with the **United States** – before such action was taken.

³ Not published. Reported a British decision to arrest certain Japanese nationals in British territory against whom there was a *prima facie* case on the grounds of espionage.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

11 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

11

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*

11 August 1940

**Please communicate to the Prime Minister the following personal
and most secret message from the Prime Minister:**

**The Combined Staffs are preparing a paper on the Pacific situation,
but I venture to send you in advance a brief foreword. We are trying our
best to avoid war with Japan, both by conceding on points where the
Japanese military clique can perhaps force a rupture and by standing up
where the ground is less dangerous, as in the arrests of individuals. I do
not think myself that Japan will declare war unless Germany can make
a successful invasion of Britain. Once Japan sees that Germany has
either failed or dare not try, I look for easier times in the Pacific. In
adopting against the grain a yielding policy towards Japanese threats,
we have always in mind your interests and safety.**

**2. Should Japan nevertheless declare war on us, her first objective
outside the Yellow Sea would probably be the Dutch East Indies.
Evidently the United States would not like this. What they would do we
cannot tell. They give no undertaking of support, but their main fleet in
the Pacific must be a grave preoccupation to the Japanese Admiralty. In
this first phase of an Anglo-Japanese war we should of course defend
Singapore, which if attacked—which is unlikely—ought to stand a long
siege. We should also be able to base on Ceylon a battle-cruiser and a
fast aircraft carrier which, with the Australian and New Zealand ships
which would return to you, would exercise a very powerful deterrent**

upon hostile raiding cruisers.

3. We are about to reinforce with more first-class units the **Eastern Mediterranean Fleet**. This fleet could of course at any time be sent through the Canal into the **Indian Ocean**, or to relieve **Singapore**. We do not want to do this, even if **Japan** declares war, until it is found to be vital to your safety. Such a transference would entail the complete loss of the **Middle East**, and all prospect of beating **Italy** in the **Mediterranean** would be gone. We must expect heavy attacks on Egypt in the near future, and the **Eastern Mediterranean Fleet** is needed to help in repelling them. If these attacks succeed, the Eastern Fleet would have to leave the **Mediterranean** either through the Canal or by Gibraltar. In either case a large part of it would be available for your protection. We hope, however, to maintain ourselves in Egypt and to keep the Eastern Fleet at **Alexandria** during the first phase of an Anglo-Japanese war, should that occur. No one can lay down beforehand what is going to happen. We must just weigh events from day to day and use our available resources to the utmost.

4. A final question arises: whether **Japan**, having declared war, would attempt to invade **Australia** or New Zealand with a considerable army.¹ We think this very unlikely, first because **Japan** is absorbed in **China**, secondly, would be gathering rich prizes in the Dutch East Indies, and thirdly, would fear very much to send an important part of her fleet far to the southward, leaving the American fleet between it and home. If, however, contrary to prudence and self-interest, **Japan** set about invading **Australia** or New Zealand on a large scale,

¹ See

I have the explicit authority of Cabinet to assure you that we should then cut our losses in the **Mediterranean** and proceed to your aid, sacrificing every interest except only the defence of the safety of this Island on which all depends.

5. We hope, however, that events will take a different turn. By gaining time with **Japan**, the present dangerous situation may be got over. We are vastly stronger here at home than when I cabled to you on 16 June.

¹ We have a large army, now beginning to be well equipped. We have fortified our beaches. We have a strong reserve of mobile troops, including our Regular Army and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian contingents, with several armoured divisions or brigades ready to strike in counter-attack at the head of any successful incursions. We have ferried over from the **United States** their grand aid of nearly 1000 guns and 600,000 rifles, with ammunition complete. Relieved of the burden of defending **France**, our army is becoming daily more powerful and munitions are gathering. Besides this, we have the **Home Guard** of 1,500,000 men, many of them war veterans, and most with rifles or other arms.

6. The **Royal Air Force** continues to show the same individual superiority over the enemy on which I counted so much in my aforesaid cable to you. Thursday's important air action in the Channel showed that we could attack against odds of three to one and inflict losses of three and a half to one. Astounding progress has been made by **Lord Beaverbrook** ² in the output of **RAF** machines. Our fighter and bomber strength is nearly double what it was when I cabled you, and we have a very large reserve of machines in hand. I do not think the **German Air Force** has the numbers or quality to overpower our air defences.

7. The Navy increases in strength each month and we are now beginning to receive the immense programme started at the declaration of war. Between June and December 1940 over 500 vessels, large and small, but

many most important, will join the Fleet. The German Navy is weaker than it has ever been. The *Scharnhorst*³ and the *Gneisenau*⁴ are both in dock damaged, the *Bismarck*⁵ has not yet done her trials, the *Tirpitz*⁶ is three months behind the *Bismarck*. There are

¹ Not published. In this message to all the Dominion Prime Ministers, Mr Churchill reviewed the position of the **United Kingdom** in view of the impending French surrender and expressed his Government's determination to carry on the war.

² **Lord Beaverbrook**, PC; Minister for Aircraft Production, 1940–41; Minister of Supply, 1941–42.

³ *Scharnhorst*, battle-cruiser, 32,000 tons, nine 11-inch guns, speed 30 knots. Sunk in action 26 Dec 1943.

⁴ *Gneisenau*, sister ship to *Scharnhorst*. Scuttled in harbour at Gdynia, 28 Mar 1945.

⁵ *Bismarck*, battleship, about 45,000 tons, eight 15-inch guns, speed 30 knots. Sunk in action 27 May 1941.

⁶ *Tirpitz*, sister ship to *Bismarck*. Attacked by midget submarines in September 1943 in Aalten Fiord and put out of action for six months. Eventually sunk by **RAF** on 12 Nov 1944.

available now in this critical fortnight, after which the time for invasion is getting very late, only one pocket-battleship, a couple of 8-inch *Hippers*,¹ two light cruisers, and perhaps a score of destroyers. To try to transport a large army, as would now be needed for success, across the seas virtually without naval escort in the face of our Navy and **Air Force**, only to meet our powerful military force on shore, still more to maintain such an army and nourish its lodgments with munitions and supplies, would be a very unreasonable act. On the other hand, if **Hitler** fails to invade and conquer **Britain** before the weather breaks, he has received

his first and probably fatal check.

8. We therefore feel a sober and growing conviction of our power to persevere through the year or two that may be necessary to gain victory.

2

¹ Heavy cruisers, about 15,000 tons, eight 8-inch guns, speed 30 knots. The first of the five ships of this class was named *Admiral Hipper*.

² In a message sent through the High Commissioner for the **United Kingdom** on 15 August Mr Fraser said: 'Your sober yet confident and courageous summing-up of the position is not only most heartening and inspiring to us, but will ... be of material assistance to the Dominion's war effort and will enable us to apply all our strength with a full knowledge of the situation and what it requires.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

12 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

12

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*

12 August 1940

My following message, Circular Z. 214, ³ contains a full summary of an appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff of the situation in the **Far East**.

2. The appreciation is based on the following important assumptions:

- (1) That the military situation in other theatres, i.e., in **Europe** and the **Middle East**, will not change in our favour to any marked degree in the *immediate* future. For the present, therefore, we shall have to retain a fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- (2) That the attitude of the **United States** remains as at present, i.e., that we can rely upon a measure of economic and material support but cannot anticipate active **United States** co-operation.
- (3) That we should go to war with **Japan** if she attacked the **Netherlands East Indies** and provided that the Dutch resisted.

3. The third assumption above is arbitrary and, in fact, the question whether we should or should not go to war with **Japan** in the event of Japanese aggression against the **Netherlands East Indies** is now receiving further consideration by the Chiefs of Staff. As assumption (3) has a far-reaching effect on the whole appreciation, the passages to which it particularly applies are prefaced by the words '(*Assumption 3 begins*)' and end with the words '(*Assumption 3 ends*)'.

4. We fully appreciate the strategic disadvantage of a failure to take up the Japanese challenge in such circumstances, and the main point for further examination is whether our limited resources in the **Far East**, in combination with the Dutch resources in the **Netherlands East Indies**,

would justify our taking action, in the event of a Japanese attack on the **Netherlands East Indies**, which would lead us into war with **Japan**. If our joint resources would justify such action, it would clearly be to our advantage to accept the consequences of war with **Japan** in the attempt to dispute a Japanese occupation of the **Netherlands East Indies**. If not, it remains to be considered what would be the consequences of an endeavour to avoid war with **Japan** on this issue. The assumption adopted on this question in the appreciation, namely, that we should go to war on this issue, should not of course be regarded as in any way prejudging the political decision. Please inform the Prime Minister that we should be glad to receive any views which he may wish to express on this question.

5. In the light of the third assumption above it would be logical that the appreciation should recommend immediate staff conversations with the Dutch in the **Far East** in order to concert a combined defence plan. As the Prime Minister will see from the appreciation, the Chiefs of Staff have had this in mind but consider that it would be inadvisable to initiate such conversations until we have strengthened our position in **Malaya** and are able to offer effective military assistance to the Dutch. Here again we should welcome any views which the Prime Minister may wish to put forward. If it is decided that such staff conversations should be held with the Dutch, it would be of the greatest assistance if the **New Zealand Government** would agree to send Service representatives to take part in them when the time arrives. I should be glad if you would invite the Prime Minister to consider this suggestion, which is also being made to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

6. It will be seen from paragraph 34 of the appreciation that an attempt has been made to assess, on the basis of such information as is at the Chiefs of Staff's disposal, the scale of a possible Japanese attack on **Australia** and New Zealand. No suggestion, on the other hand, has been included in the appreciation as to the defence arrangements which would be required locally to meet such an attack. His Majesty's Governments in the Commonwealth of **Australia** and in New Zealand

will, however, wish to consider the matter in detail in the light of the Chiefs of Staff's estimated scale of attack, if they find themselves in agreement with the appreciation generally.

7. As regards paragraph 34 of the appreciation, the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, like the **New Zealand Government**, have reached the conclusion that the existing garrison at **Fiji** must be regarded as quite inadequate in the circumstances of hostilities with **Japan**. Please refer in this connection to my telegram of 9 August ¹ stating that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** consider that the action which His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to take with regard to the early reinforcement of **Fiji** is a most valuable contribution to the common cause.

8. In paragraph 50 of the appreciation certain conclusions are drawn as to the garrison required in **Malaya** in addition to the troops already there. The Prime Minister will wish to know that, as in the present circumstances it is impossible for us or for **India** to provide even one further division, we are renewing our invitation to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth to consider as a matter of urgency the possibility of the early despatch of such a force to **Singapore** from **Australia**.

³ See **Appendix IV**.

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 240.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

13 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

13

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

3 September 1940

Circular telegram. Following for Prime Minister:

1. . **Anglo-Thai non-aggression pact was ratified on 31 August.**
2. . **There appears to be a danger of the broad issues involved in the **Burma Road** question becoming obscured by a Japanese manoeuvre to make it appear that we have not fully carried out our undertakings. In order to clear the way for us to drop the agreement if after the three-months' period we should wish to do so, His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** has been instructed, as opportunity offers, to develop the following general line with the **Japanese Government**:**
 - (1) **The spirit of the agreement is to forbid the transit of certain articles but to place no obstacle in the way of traffic in non-prohibited goods.**
 - (2) **The agreement is temporary and does not therefore justify measures designed to forbid the accumulation of goods in **Burma**.**
 - (3) **The Japanese are trying to expand the agreement in various ways incompatible with its general spirit and in particular with (1) and (2) above.**
 - (4) **What are the Japanese doing for their part to fulfil their side of the bargain, i.e., special effort to reach a general settlement in the **Far East**?**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

14 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

14

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

4 September 1940

Circular telegram. Following for your Prime Minister:

. **Less than two months remain before the **Burma Road** agreement is due to expire, and we have been considering what steps should be taken to meet the situation which will arise at the end of that period.**

2. Nothing has happened to suggest that the **Japanese Government are seriously prepared to fulfil their part of the bargain. Public opinion here would make it difficult to justify extension of the agreement. The American public is out of sympathy with us on this subject, while the Chinese can be relied upon to stimulate interest should it show signs of flagging.**

3. The United States Government have indicated willingness to discuss with us what measures of support the **United States could give. Nevertheless, we do not feel it possible to depend on any promises of support from the **United States** in advance of the decision which we shall have to take regarding the opening of the road, though we shall naturally do everything to pave the way for any support from the **United States**. We regard the prospect of support from the **USSR** as negligible in the existing circumstances.**

4. Our decision will obviously have to depend on our war position at the end of the intervening period. Any setback would still further prejudice our position in the **Far East, and it may well be that in any case the**

situation will not have cleared sufficiently to permit us to disregard the considerations that led us to accept the present compromise.

5. On the other hand, the failure of **Germany** either to make a full-scale attack on Great Britain or to succeed in one if made would presumably have a powerful influence on the Far Eastern situation and might render it easier for us to reopen the **Burma Road**.

6. To do so without due preparation, however, would doubtless be the signal for a fresh anti-British agitation in **Japan** which might compel the **Japanese Government** to take some kind of face-saving action against us.

7. Preparatory action must (i) avoid allowing the Japanese to make it appear that, if we do not keep the **Burma Road** closed to military supplies, we shall ourselves be breaking our undertakings towards **Japan**; (ii) keep the responsibility of proposing the lines of general settlement in the hands of the Japanese: continued lack of any indication that the **Japanese Government** are prepared even to consider with us the question of a general settlement would provide further justification for our reopening the **Burma Road**; (iii) enable us to maintain a position where we can demonstrate, if necessary, that certain Japanese authorities have met our concession by instigating intensified anti-British agitation in **Japan**.

8. With these considerations in mind His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** has been instructed, unless he sees any objection, to develop the lines foreshadowed in Circular telegram of 3 September. If the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs ¹ attempts to place upon us the responsibility of making concrete suggestions for a general settlement, Sir Robert Craigie has been instructed to take the line that, before we could [group mutilated-make?] any approach to the Chinese or decide on the contribution to a general settlement which would be appropriate on our side, we should of course have to know on what precise basis **Japan** was prepared to deal with **China**. Meanwhile we are considering whether we can devise any plan for a general settlement which could be kept in

reserve for production should an appropriate moment arise.

9. We should be grateful for your views. ²

¹ Mr Y. Matsuoka, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, 22 Jul 1940–16 Jul 1941.

² A telegram on 5 September from the Dominions Secretary advised that paragraph 9 'should be read as referring to the general question of the **Burma Road** and not to the last sentence of paragraph 8.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

15 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

15

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

7 September 1940

My Ministers have now had an opportunity of considering your most secret and personal telegrams to your High Commissioner [Nos. 11 and 12] and Circular Z. 214 of 12 August ³ with reference to the Far Eastern situation.

In the first place my Ministers would like His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom to know how warmly they welcome and appreciate the assurance as to naval protection in Eastern waters, should the necessity arise, which is contained in the Prime Minister's message conveyed in your telegram [**No. 11**].**

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand offer the following immediate comments on those aspects of the matter upon which specific requests for their views have been made:

- 1. The main problem as it appears to them is not so much (as set out in your telegram [**No. 12**]) 'whether our limited resources in the **Far East**, in combination with the Dutch resources in the **Netherlands East Indies**, would justify our taking action in the event of an attack on the **Netherlands East Indies**', as whether we can afford not to take action.**
- 2. They do not believe that this can be considered solely or even primarily as a military problem.**
- 3. The political aspects seem to them to be of even greater importance**

than the military, and the problem involves also the question of honour and of that indefinable which for want of a better word might be referred to as prestige. Our honour, and our reputation for fair and generous dealing, they feel, are among the most valuable attributes of the British Commonwealth—so valuable that without them our cause might not prevail. We must bear in mind that, in the event of a Japanese attack on the **Netherlands East Indies** in respect to which we took no action, there is a danger that the neutral world, and particularly the **United States of America**, would be gravely disturbed by what they would regard as another instance in which we have considered ourselves unable to assist our friends against piecemeal attack and destruction. This would, they feel, be highly disadvantageous to us, especially if it militated, as it well might, against the possibility of our receiving assistance from the **United States**.

4. Turning now to the military aspects of the matter, they agree that for the time being there is little that the British Commonwealth, and particularly New Zealand, could do, other than by example and encouragement, to support the Dutch, and they agree also that the Dutch refusal up to the present to concert plans with us is an embarrassing factor that cannot be ignored. But, as they see it, Japanese control of the **Netherlands East Indies** would surely and rapidly render untenable our position in **Singapore** and **Malaya**, and would thus certainly and perhaps irretrievably jeopardise the security of New Zealand, **Australia**, and all British possessions in the **Pacific**.

5. It is their opinion, therefore, that the British Commonwealth cannot afford, on the material side, to allow a Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies, nor on the moral side remain neutral and inactive if our allies, the Dutch, are attacked in that area. Nor do they believe that an attempt to follow such a policy would at best achieve more than a postponement of hostilities with **Japan** for a short period. Such a postponement they feel would be dearly purchased if it enabled **Japan**, as they believe it would, to attack us later at her chosen time and—in occupation of the **Netherlands East Indies**, and perhaps of other areas of

strategic value—on still more advantageous terms.

6. It seems to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand therefore:

- (That we are bound, both by honour and interest, to act with what
a) vigour we can in the case of Japanese aggression in the Dutch East Indies, which we should let it be known we would regard as a hostile act;
- (that we should accept, and as far as possible prepare against, the
b) disadvantageous position (temporary they hope) in which we would be placed *vis-à-vis* Japan;
- (that the Dutch should at once be advised of our attitude to Japan
c) if Japan should attack the Netherlands East Indies and urged to resist discreetly any Japanese commercial advances in the Netherlands East Indies, and to oppose by every means any Japanese aggression on that territory;
- (that at the same time the Dutch should be informed of our
d) difficulties in providing immediate powerful military, naval and air force assistance but that steps are already under way to overcome these limitations, and they should be informed also of our firm resolve to do all in our power to come to their assistance if attacked;
- (that the Dutch should be suitably warned of the obvious results,
e) as so patently exemplified in Europe, of a failure to consult and concert plans in advance, and urged to enter at once, with the utmost secrecy, into the necessary staff consultations. Should such consultations take place, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would of course be glad to detail suitable officers for this purpose as suggested;
- (that the policy outlined above should be explained fully to the
f) United States Government, whose sympathy would be valuable and whose collaboration in such a policy it might not be impossible to obtain.

This telegram has been repeated to Ottawa, Canberra and Pretoria.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

16 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

16

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

25 September 1940

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have now given careful consideration to your Circular telegram dated 4 September [**No. 14**] from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs concerning the closing of the **Burma Road**. As they have already stated in various telegrams to the Secretary of State, and notably in their telegrams of 30 July [**No. 8**] and 7 August [**No. 10**], they are averse to the policy of making concessions to **Japan** on this issue, and they still feel obliged to maintain the view previously expressed that such a course is unwise.

They hold this belief on the grounds that such a concession at the expense of **China**, whom we are pledged to assist, must constitute a most damaging breach of solemn obligations; that it must incur widespread resentment and loss of sympathy in our own cause among the people of the **United States** at a time most critical to ourselves; and that it must, by weakening **China**, contribute in some degree to the further aggrandisement of **Japan** and thus increase the immediate as well as the ultimate threat to **Britain's** territories in the **Far East** and the **South Pacific**.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand realise full well the difficulties now confronting the **United Kingdom** and the other countries of the **British Commonwealth of Nations** and the manifold weaknesses and deficiencies in their defensive position at this particular time. But they feel that a continuation of this concession would neither conciliate

Japan nor turn her from such further aggressive intentions as she might be contemplating against British interests. On the other hand a display of firmness, for which the ground has been adequately prepared by the British Ambassador in **Tokyo**, on the lines set out in Circular telegram of 3 September [**No. 13**] and paragraph 8 of Circular telegram of 4 September [**No. 14**], may prove to be a course of much greater practical worth.

In any case, the war position of the British Commonwealth is no worse than it was in July last and, indeed, prospects seem likely to be better in a few weeks' time than they are today. Should the **United States** adopt the stronger line which their Secretary of State ² professes, according to your telegram D. 477 of 20 September, ³ to be their immediate intention, then this support, together with our renewal of transit facilities over the **Burma Road**, should stimulate the Chinese to continue the struggle, and this resistance His Majesty's Government in New Zealand regard as a major safeguard to the remaining British interests in the **Far East** and in the South Seas.

Since Japan has made no attempt whatever to comply with the understanding that the period of the agreement should be used to explore the terms of a general settlement, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand consider that the Governments of the British Commonwealth are justified in claiming that their concessions have met with no corresponding response. In actual fact, of course, the Japanese have taken, and are continuing to take, full advantage of British and French weakness to make further gains and thereby to prosecute the war against **China** with greater vigour. It seems, therefore, that any further steps that the Japanese may be permitted to take will merely strengthen them in their determination to press for yet more concessions, and enable them to complete their fixed policy of crushing entirely all Chinese resistance under **Chiang Kai-shek**.

The danger of adding to the numbers of our enemies at this critical time must obviously be taken into consideration, and it is of course more dangerous to open the road now than formerly it would have been

to decline to close it, but His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel that the risk of converting the enmity of **Japan** into a form more active than it has now assumed is outweighed by the disadvantages that must result from the continuance of the policy of making concessions.

¹ Repeated to the Governments of **Australia**, **Canada** and **South Africa**.

² Mr Cordell Hull, Secretary of State of the **United States of America**, 1933–44.

³ Not published. On 16 September His Majesty's Ambassador in **Washington** and the Australian Minister had asked the United States Secretary of State what assurance there would be of **United States** support, both for the Commonwealth and the **Netherlands East Indies**, in the event of **Britain** reopening the **Burma Road** and encouraging the Dutch to resist unreasonable Japanese demands. Mr Hull's reply had indicated that the **United States** administration was considering taking a much stronger line against **Japan** once it became clear that **Britain** had met the threat of attack from **Europe**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

17 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

17

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

3 October 1940

Circular telegram. . Following for Prime Minister:

We greatly value the views which you have furnished in reply to my Circular telegram of 4 September [**No. 14**], and these have been most carefully considered. Since my telegram was despatched there have been two major developments, (*a*) the Japanese entry into Indo- **China**, ¹ and (*b*) the German-Italian-Japanese pact; ² and the matter is also being discussed in the light of these developments between His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** and the United States Secretary of State. The latter stated, (*a*) the United States Government hope that the road will not remain closed after 17 October; (*b*) cancellation of the agreement before 17 October would be needless provocation; and (*c*) in order to avoid a second crisis three weeks hence the best course would be to notify the **Japanese Government** at once of our intention not to renew the agreement.

His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** is in favour of this course and does not consider that it would lead to war with **Japan**. His view is that if the Japanese decide to challenge the British Commonwealth to war it will be on a wider calculation of issues than this.

The War Cabinet considered the matter today and came to the conclusion that in the present circumstances there was no alternative to the adoption of this course. We are confident that your Government

will concur in this view. It is accordingly proposed that the decision would be announced by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons next Tuesday in the sense that the agreement was concluded for a [group mutilated–definite?] period and there has been no provision for renewal, and in any case, in view of recent developments, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** would have felt unable to agree to a renewal if this had been in question.

¹ Japanese forces entered **French Indo-China** on 22 Sep 1940.

² A 10-year pact between **Germany, Italy and Japan** was signed in **Berlin** on 27 Sep 1940.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

18 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

18

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

5 October 1940

**Your Circular telegram of 3 October. My Prime Minister asks me to
advise you that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully agree
with the course that is being adopted regarding the **Burma Road**.**

¹ Viscount Cranborne had succeeded Viscount Caldecote as
Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs on 3 October.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

19 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

19

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*

8 October 1940

Circular telegram.

Please give the following message to the Prime Minister:

Recent reports from His Majesty's Ambassador at [Washington](#) show a stiffening of the [United States](#) attitude, and suggest the possibility of arranging for some form of concerted reaction to the German-Italian-Japanese pact.

In a recent conversation with His Majesty's Ambassador, Mr Cordell Hull threw out the idea of private staff talks between the [United States](#), the [United Kingdom](#), the Dominion Governments concerned and the Dutch authorities on the Far Eastern question. We have welcomed this suggestion and have indicated that we should like these to be held at the earliest possible date.

His Majesty's Ambassador has been informed that any other suggestions for co-ordinated reaction to the Japanese-Axis pact which the [United States](#) may feel able to put forward will be most sympathetically considered here. We share the view, which is evidently gaining ground among members of the United States Administration, that any steps taken should be such as would not increase Japanese pressure on the Dutch. (Please see in this connection paragraphs 2 and 3 of my Circular telegram D. 503. ¹)

The question of parallel declarations by the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**, **Australia**, New Zealand and the Dutch authorities, giving some form of guarantee for the insular territories in the **Pacific** south of the Equator, was mentioned recently in the discussion between His Majesty's Ambassador and the Australian Minister at **Washington** ² with Mr Hull, and we have authorised His Majesty's Ambassador to elucidate this proposal in further discussions with Mr Hull.

The question of a possible visit by a **United States** squadron to **Singapore** has also been considered by the **United States** authorities, but, as indicated in my Circular telegram M. 64 of 5 October, ³ they are not in favour of this at present. ⁴

¹ Not published. Paragraphs 2 and 3 read:

‘2. *Netherlands East Indies*. The Netherlands Government inform us that the Japanese are now asking for 3,150,000 tons of oil per annum over and above normal exports to **Japan** of 600,000 tons. These demands are unacceptable to the Netherlands Government and they say they will resist them. They recommend that the attention of the United States Government be drawn to the connection which they and the Governor-General of the **Netherlands East Indies** see between the increasing Japanese demands and the **United States** embargo policy. His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** has been instructed to inquire of the Netherlands Minister the result of any communication which the latter may have had with the **United States** on this subject.

‘3. We have pointed out to Lord Lothian that we feel that the Japanese attack on the **Netherlands East Indies** is more likely to come from Japanese determination to maintain oil imports than as a counter measure to the opening of the **Burma Road**. Moreover, since he is satisfied that the United States Government could not stand aside and watch the Japanese absorb the **Netherlands East Indies**, it would be natural that he should impress upon them that this danger is perhaps more imminent than they seem to suppose in consequence of the evident Dutch determination to resist increasing Japanese demands. In fact the moment has come for the United States

Government to decide whether they wish to encourage the **Netherlands East Indies to resist Japanese pressure, in which case the Dutch will naturally ask for **United States** military support: the alternative being for the **Netherlands East Indies** to reach [group mutilated-agreement?] with **Japan**, which may well lead to Japanese penetration and economic domination of the **Netherlands East Indies**.’**

² **Lord Casey, PC, CH, DSO, MC (then Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey); Australian Minister to the **United States**, 1940–42; Minister of State Resident in the **Middle East**, 1942–43; Governor of Bengal, 1944–46; created Baron, 1960.**

³ **Not published.**

⁴ **Mr Fraser replied on 9 October welcoming ‘the possibility of still closer relations between the British Commonwealth and the **United States**’ and expressing the **New Zealand Government's** agreement ‘that concerted pressure on the Japanese would be desirable’. He said that the Government ‘warmly supported’ the proposed staff talks and was prepared to take part in them.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

20 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

20

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*

8 October 1940

Circular telegram. For the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

As will be seen from the message in my Circular telegram of today [No. 19] the question of further action in relation to Japan by the United States in conjunction with us is being discussed with the United States authorities. We gather, in this connection, that there is an impression in certain quarters that if, as a result of any such action, the United States were to find themselves at war with Japan, we might stand aside. The War Cabinet has considered this aspect and there is no doubt in their mind that, should the question arise, we should certainly declare war on Japan. May we assume that in the circumstances the attitude of your Government would be similar? We are letting our Ambassadors at Washington and Tokyo know what our attitude would be in case the question should arise, and we should be grateful therefore for your views at the earliest possible moment.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

21 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

21

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

9 October 1940

With reference to Circular telegram of 8 October addressed to the High Commissioner for the **United Kingdom** in New Zealand, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand wish to make it quite clear that, in the event of the **United States** finding themselves at war with **Japan** as the result of a concerted action with the British Commonwealth in the **Pacific**, they entirely and unanimously agree with His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** that the British Commonwealth should immediately declare war on **Japan** in alliance with the **United States**, and they undertake for their part to take the necessary action in such circumstances immediately. ¹

This telegram has been repeated to **Ottawa**, **Canberra** and Pretoria.

¹ For several months after the reopening of the **Burma Road** in October 1940, intergovernmental messages about **Japan** were mainly descriptive of overseas trends and in themselves required little executive action. They are therefore not reproduced in this volume. A generally deteriorating situation was nevertheless indicated, resulting in decisions for preparedness by the **New Zealand Government** which are recorded, *inter alia*, in the sections *Defence of New Zealand*, *Defence of the South Pacific* and *Fanning Island*.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

22 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

22

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

5 April 1941

Circular telegram.

1. We have been considering possible steps which we could take *inter alia* in the economic sphere as counter action in the event of further Japanese moves to the south. Two suggestions have been made which seem worth considering as possible reprisals. They are:

- (i) The placing of Mitsui, Mitsubishi, or Okura on the Black List, and
- (ii) Denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty. ¹

2. Our preliminary views on these two suggestions are as follows:

3. Black-listing of one or other of the above firms might bring home to Japanese industrialists the perils of bad leadership.... ² A summary listing of all three might have even more adverse effects on the trade of Empire countries than on **Japan** itself. The same violent reaction might also be anticipated to this step as is to be feared from a complete oil embargo or other extreme economic sanction.

4. The argument in favour of denouncing the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty is that, although a year must elapse before its expiry, a denunciation would have a considerable political effect in **Japan**, particularly if accompanied by some statement to the effect that, in view of Japanese restrictions on British trade, it has become obvious that the treaty in its present form no longer served any useful purpose. If Japan were to take Indo- **China** after coming to an agreement with

Russia and the treaty were then to be denounced, Japanese industrialists would perhaps feel the sacrifice had been unnecessarily great and the unpopularity of the Government's pro-Russian policy would increase.

5. We have asked His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** for his views on the above suggestions. We realise, of course, that it is not possible to give a precise appreciation of their effect, failing an exact indication of the occasion for their application.

6. We should be grateful for any observations Dominion Governments may wish to offer on these two proposals.

¹ Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, signed 3 Apr 1911.

² A brief comment on the priority for black-listing has been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

23 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

23

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

26 April 1941

Your Circular telegram of 5 April. The views of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are in general as follows:

1. They are and always have been firmly opposed to any policy of appeasement with **Japan**. In their opinion **Japan's** attitude towards the Axis and towards us respectively will be governed by her appreciation of her own interests, and will be affected, if at all, only to a negligible extent by any attempt on our part to conciliate. Indeed, it is their view that a resolute show of determination is on the whole more likely to avoid hostilities than any attempt to conciliate.
2. At the same time His Majesty's Government in New Zealand realise that the circumstances are now exceedingly delicate and that any unnecessary irritation at the present juncture would be unwise. They feel, therefore, firstly, that action such as is now contemplated should be taken only in the event of the 'Japanese move to the south', which these measures are intended to follow, being sufficiently unequivocal and important, and, secondly, that the action is made in co-operation with or with the knowledge and sympathy of the **United States of America**.
3. Of the two proposals set out in the Secretary of State's telegram, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand prefer the denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty, leaving the question of placing

Mitsui, Mitsubishi, or Okura on the Black List for subsequent consideration.

4. Should notice of termination of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty be given, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will undertake to take a similar step with reference to their trade arrangements with [Japan](#), but it will be understood that in the present circumstances New Zealand–Japanese trade has now become negligible.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

24 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹ TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

24

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand¹ to the Secretary of
State for Dominion Affairs²*

21 May 1941

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are in general agreement with the recommendations of the British– **United States** conversations contained in the report ABC-1.³ They appreciate the reasons which necessitated deferring to **United States** views regarding the strategical situation in the **Far East**, and particularly the reinforcement of **Singapore** by capital ships. At the same time they hope that every possible step would be taken to expedite the arrival of the main fleet at **Singapore**, and that possibly the move of certain **United States** capital ships from the **Pacific** to the **Atlantic**, which was visualised in telegram No. 190 dated 10 May from the Secretary of State,⁴ may help to achieve this.

2. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are also in general agreement with the recommendations of the ADB and BD⁵ reports, particularly those for the general strategical direction of the naval and air forces in the Eastern theatre. They would, however, point out that paragraph 41 of ADB states that it is essential to maintain the **United States Pacific Fleet** in strength at least equal to the **Japanese Fleet**. This is not in accordance with the views of the Admiralty as expressed in your telegram No. 190 of 10 May, which states that the **United States Pacific Fleet** could achieve its object with a capital ship strength of not less than six vessels. They would be glad of a further expression of the opinion of the **United Kingdom Government** on this question.

¹ Hon. W. Nash. Mr Fraser had left New Zealand on 3 May on a visit to the **Middle East**, the **United Kingdom** and the **United States**. He returned to New Zealand on 13 September.

² This message was repeated to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia**, the Commander-in-Chief Far East, and the British Ambassador, **Cairo**, for Mr Fraser.

³ British and American staff talks began in **Washington** towards the end of January 1941 and concluded on 27 March. As a result a plan was produced known as ABC-1. Its main point was that in the event of Anglo-American involvement in war with **Germany** and **Japan**, the concentration of force should be on **Germany** first. In the **Far East** the strategy of both powers was to be defensive, but the United States Pacific Fleet was to be used offensively to weaken **Japan's** economic power and to divert her strength away from the south-west **Pacific**.

⁴ Not published. The United States and British view was that the transfer of part of the **United States** fleet from the **Pacific** to the **Atlantic** would be more likely to deter the Japanese from going to war than the maintenance of a 'very large' **United States** fleet at **Hawaii**. The New Zealand Government on 6 May expressed its doubts as to the wisdom of the proposed transfer of capital ships from the **Pacific**. In the event, three battleships, four cruisers, one aircraft carrier and nineteen destroyers were transferred to the **Atlantic** in May and June 1941.

⁵ Meetings between American, Dutch and British service representatives, and between the British and Dutch, took place at **Singapore** during April 1941.

3. With reference to paragraph 42 ¹ of ADB, action is being taken by the Chief of the Naval Staff ² through the United States Naval Observer in New Zealand to ascertain the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief United States Pacific Fleet in so far as they affect New Zealand and **Australia**, with a view to initiating plans for direct co-operation of naval

and air forces.

¹ Paragraph 42 defined the responsibility of the United States Pacific Fleet.

² Admiral Sir Edward Parry, KCB, RN (then Commodore Parry); Chief of New Zealand Naval Staff, May 1940–Jun 1942.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

25 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

25

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

5 July 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram of 25 June, Circular D. 373. ³

Information from most secret ... sources shows that the **Japanese Government** have now reached a decision upon future policy. Their first move will be to secure bases in Indo- **China** and this move may take place in the very near future. I shall hope to telegraph shortly our views as to the action which we should take.

2. His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** ⁴ states that when discussing reports also received by the United States Government that the **Japanese Government** intend to move in the near future, Mr Welles ⁵ informed His Majesty's Ambassador that in the event of **Japan** embarking on hostilities either north or south, the United States Government would immediately apply all the urgent pressure that they could command. When asked what action the United States Government would take if, without resorting to hostilities, **Japan** denounced the neutrality pact with **Russia**, Mr Welles said that it would depend on circumstances whether the United States Government would let the Japanese know confidentially that they would apply economic pressure in the event of the Japanese resorting to hostilities or whether the United States Government would immediately apply such pressure. They would certainly do one or the other.

³ Not published. In a brief comment on the likely attitude of the

Japanese Government towards the German invasion of **Russia** a few days earlier, Sir Robert Craigie predicted that the Japanese would remain neutral in the meantime.

⁴ Rt. Hon. the Earl of **Halifax**, KG, PC, OM, GCSI, GCIE (at this date Viscount Halifax); British Ambassador at **Washington**, 1941–46; succeeded Lord Lothian, who died at **Washington** on 12 Dec 1940.

⁵ Mr Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State of **United States of America**, 1937–43.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

26 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

26

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

[Extract]

9 July 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 5 July.

We have now considered what action should be taken in the event of a further move south by **Japan. We have decided to recommend two measures accordingly:**

(1) Restrictions on Japanese shipping facilities in **Malaya.**

(2) The possible denunciation of the Commercial Treaty.

2. We will telegraph separately in the near future in regard to (2). As regards (1), the Commanders-in-Chief in the **Far East ¹ and **China** ² have represented that we run the risk of 'Trojan horse' activities by allowing the Japanese to load iron ore, etc., off the Malayan coast by night. The Commanders-in-Chief have accordingly advised that from sunset to sunrise all tugs and lighters should be required to lie inside harbour mouths on the east coast of **Malaya** and also on the west coast of **Java**, and in addition that no vessel over 1000 tons should be allowed to arrive at anchorage off these coasts between sunset and sunrise.**

3. We have hesitated hitherto to enforce measures of this kind since, though outwardly non-discriminatory, they will entail heavy loss and delay to Japanese mining companies. The Governor of the Straits Settlements ³ has, however, now been authorised to bring the measure into force immediately in consultation with the Commanders-in-Chief

¹ **Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, GCVO, KCB, CMG, DSO, AFC; C-in-C Far East, 1940–41.**

² **Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, GBE, KCB, KCMG, DSO; C-in-C China, 1940–41; Eastern Fleet, Dec 1941–Mar 1942; Ceylon, 1942–45.**

³ **Sir Shenton Thomas, GCMG, OBE; Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Malay States, 1934–46; interned by Japanese, Feb 1942 – Aug 1945.**

⁴ **In the text omitted the Dominions Secretary discussed the likely effects of this measure on the Japanese iron and steel industry.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

27 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

27

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

12 July 1941

My Circular telegram of 9 July. .

The possible denunciation of the Commercial Treaty in the event of a further southward move by **Japan** was one of the suggestions upon which the views of Dominion Governments were invited in my telegram of 5 April [**No. 22**]. The main points made in the replies received to those suggestions were (i) the importance of suiting action to the circumstances as they arise and avoiding provocative measures which might do more harm than good; (ii) the importance of securing **United States** co-operation in any retaliatory measures which might be contemplated. As regards the Commercial Treaty, the general view expressed was that in the circumstances envisaged a denunciation might have little to commend it except from the point of view of bringing us into line with the **United States**. The Canadian Government for their part expressed doubts as to the wisdom of such action if taken as a reprisal and suggested that it might be preferable if notice of termination could be given in a moment of comparative calm. The Commonwealth Government felt that there was some risk of the denunciation being regarded as an irritant and suggested that counter action in an economic role could more effectively be provided by the adoption of a joint policy of import restrictions in co-operation with the United States Government. The alternative suggestion put forward in my telegram that the situation might best be met by placing Mitsui, Mitsubishi, or Okura on the Black or Statutory List was felt to [group

mutilated – give?] rise to strong objections, at least as far as the two former companies are concerned, and was generally viewed with disfavour.

2. We have given most careful consideration to these views and suggestions re-examining the possible courses of action open to us. In deciding to recommend the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty, notwithstanding the doubts previously expressed, we have been influenced by the manner in which the situation has developed in recent months, and by the need for meeting any further Japanese move by a measure which could both be put into effect without delay and would at the same time afford unmistakable evidence of our reactions. We fully recognise that the practical importance of this step would be small, but do not consider that it could be regarded as provocative. On the other hand, we have reason to believe that the psychological effects in **Japan** would be salutary and would bring home, especially to the trading community, the perils of bad leadership. This has also been the opinion of His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo**. We further consider it most important to bring ourselves fully into line with the **United States** in this matter.

3. We very much hope, therefore, that on reconsideration His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions will feel able to concur in our taking this step as soon as the moment is judged opportune. Although we should wish to proceed with the denunciation of the treaty at a very short interval after the Japanese move into Southern Indo- **China**, we agree with the view previously expressed by the Canadian Government that it should not be represented as a reprisal, and would propose that notice should be based on the grounds that Japanese restrictions on British trade and changing conditions have made continuation of the treaty pointless.

4. A very early reply would be appreciated since the latest indications are that a Japanese move may be imminent. As to the general **United States** attitude, please see my telegram M.149 today. ¹ In the meantime we are

further exploring possibilities in the direction of import restrictions as suggested by the Commonwealth Government, but the matter is complicated by varying conditions in that there may be needs of different parts of the Empire, and it is clear that preparation of a suitable scheme would not be free from difficulty. His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** is, however, being asked to elicit the views of the **United States** authorities as to the prospects of their being able to co-operate in this field.

¹ Not published. In the event of an 'overt act' by **Japan**, such as the acquisition of bases in Indo- **China** or action against **Russia**, the United States Government proposed to impose an immediate embargo on certain exports to **Japan**, principally metals, cottons and lubricants.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

28 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

28

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

15 July 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 12 July.

Following for Prime Minister:

Reliable information has now reached us indicating that the Japanese have demanded, or are about to demand, bases in South Indo-China, giving a time limit to the French to comply. In these circumstances we feel that it is of the highest importance that we should be in a position to take the step recommended in paragraph 2, my telegram under reference, at any time. I should be very grateful, therefore, for a most immediate reply.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

29 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

29

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*

16 July 1941

With reference to your telegram of 15 July, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand agree with the proposal to denounce the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in the event of steps being taken by Japan to obtain bases in Indo- China, and they note from telegram M.149 ¹ that an overt act of this nature on the part of Japan will evoke retaliatory action of the kind referred to on the part of the United States Government. If and when notice is given, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will, as indicated in paragraph 4 of their telegram of 26 April last [No. 23], take a similar step with reference to their trade agreement with Japan, and they would therefore appreciate the earliest advice possible of the date when it is proposed to serve notice on the Japanese Government.

¹ See p. 38, note 1.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

30 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO THE RT. HON. P. FRASER (LONDON)

30

The acting Prime Minister to the Rt. Hon. P. Fraser (London)

16 July 1941

You will have seen from our telegram dated 16 July to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs that the **New Zealand Government** concurred in the United Kingdom Government's proposal to denounce the **Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty** in the event of steps being taken by **Japan** to obtain bases in Indo- **China**. In the circumstances it was not possible to consult you before sending this reply. **War Cabinet** have, however, now given further consideration to the possibility of a Japanese southward move, and in this connection request you to draw attention to the proposal contained in telegram M.93 from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs of 22 May, ² namely, that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make a statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** emphasising the identity of interests between the **Netherlands East Indies** and the British Commonwealth in any move likely to prejudice the security line which runs from **Malaya** to New Zealand through the **Netherlands East Indies**, and declaring that any attack on any part of that line equally concerned all affected parties and must be dealt with as an attack on the whole line. You will recall that I telegraphed you in **Cairo** informing you of this proposal and requested that you should publicly endorse on an appropriate occasion any such statement made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. We were disappointed to learn from a further telegram from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, M.114 dated 19 June, ³ that the proposed public declaration was being reconsidered in the light of the views expressed by the Commonwealth and Union

Governments and on account of the situation which had subsequently arisen between [Japan](#) and the Netherlands East Indies. We are not aware of the grounds upon which the apparent objections of [Australia](#) and South Africa were based, nor does it appear to us that the ‘delicate situation which has since arisen between [Japan](#) and the [Netherlands East Indies](#)’ still constitutes a sound reason for withholding the proposed declaration. On the contrary, it would seem that the customary policy of saying or doing nothing which might be construed as provocative by the Japanese has resulted inevitably in the very situation we were at such pains to avoid. It seems therefore that, even at this late hour, the proposed declaration should be made, if possible in conjunction with the [United States of America](#), and we would ask you on behalf of the [New Zealand Government](#) to urge the view, which we know you share, that such a joint declaration should make it clear that an attack on one would be regarded as an attack on all. We are telegraphing the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs emphasising these views.

² Not published.

³ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

31 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

31

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*¹

16 July 1941

With reference to your Circular telegram of 15 July [**No. 28**] and my reply of 16 July [**No. 29**], His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have given further consideration to the implications of the proposed denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in the event of steps being taken by **Japan** to obtain bases in Indo- **China**, and they have asked their Prime Minister to draw attention to the proposal contained in your telegram M.93 of 22 May² which in their opinion merits urgent consideration at the present time. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand hold to the belief that the most effective step at this stage would be a joint declaration by the **United Kingdom**, **Australian**, **New Zealand**, **Netherlands East Indies** and **United States** Governments emphasising that any move likely to prejudice the security line which runs from **Malaya** to New Zealand through the **Netherlands East Indies** equally concerns all affected parties and must be regarded as an attack on all. Even if the **United States** find themselves unable to join publicly in this proposed declaration, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are of the opinion that the **British Governments** concerned, together with the Government of the **Netherlands East Indies**, should without delay make known their identity of views and interests on this matter.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

32 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

32

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

17 July 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 12 July [**No. 27**].

All His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions have now concurred in our proposal to proceed at the appropriate moment with the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty. We are accordingly informing the United States Government that we propose to take this step immediately there is any overt act on the part of **Japan**.

2. The Commonwealth Government have stressed to us the importance of following up the above action with intensified economic restrictions. We fully agree with this view and hope to telegraph detailed proposals as soon as we have received a further indication of the United States Government's intentions; see my telegram M.158. ¹

3. In the meantime certain further possible measures have also occurred to us. They are:

- (1) The closing of the Japanese Consulate-General at **Singapore**;
- (2) The placing of Ishihara and Okura on the Statutory List.

4. As regards (1), we have ample evidence of improper activities of the Japanese Consul-General to justify this action and do not consider that it would lead to dangerous reactions in **Japan**. We are, however, as a first step obtaining the views of the Governor of the Straits Settlements. Subject to his raising no objections, we would propose to include this in the list of measures to be taken in the event of a Japanese move.

5. As regards (2), Ishihara is connected specially with Japanese enterprises in **Malaya** and has long been suspected. Okura has always had special connections with **Germany**, and even though the Vladivostok route is at present closed, there would we feel be ample justification for placing this firm on the Statutory List in view of its past behaviour. These firms are, of course, of much less importance than Mitsui and Mitsubishi and action could we think safely be taken against them without risks of adverse effect on the Japanese policy. We have not overlooked the fact that when the listing of Japanese companies was considered earlier in the year as a result of my telegrams [**No. 22**] and D.237, ² the proposal was regarded generally with disfavour, but in view of developments since that date (and of the desirability of

¹ Not published. This telegram reported the United States Government's intention to impose an immediate embargo on exports to **Japan** in the event of 'the contingency contemplated'. Discussion was to take place between representatives of the British Embassy in **Washington** and the State Department on the economic measures each government might apply.

² Not published.

adding weight to the effect of the proposed denunciation of the Commercial Treaty) we hope that the Dominion Governments will now be willing to agree to this action, which we feel would have a good effect in the **United States**. We are consulting His Majesty's Ambassador urgently on this suggestion, and should be grateful for an immediate telegram indicating whether, if Sir Robert Craigie's advice is favourable, the Dominion Governments would concur in our taking this step. ¹

¹ On 19 July the acting Prime Minister replied: 'His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have no objection to offer to the step now proposed by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

33 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

33

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

18 July 1941

My telegram of 17 July. .

We are grateful for your telegram of 16 July [**No. 29**], and note that in the event of it becoming necessary to proceed with the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would wish to take steps at the same time to terminate the trade agreement between New Zealand and **Japan**. We greatly welcome this decision, which would add to the effectiveness of our intended action. The effect would, moreover, be further enhanced by the simultaneous denunciation of the Indo-Japanese Convention, 1934, of which the Government of **India** have authorised us to give notice.

2. As regards procedure, notice of the termination of the Commercial Treaty would be given to [*sic*] His Majesty's Ambassador, **Tokyo**, in a formal note addressed to the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs. The formula which would be used is that, owing to present conditions, the treaty did not carry out the objects for which it was concluded. A separate note would be presented at the same time dealing with the denunciation of the Indo-Japanese Convention.

3. If desired by the **New Zealand Government**, His Majesty's Ambassador could be authorised also to address a note on their behalf giving notice of the termination of New Zealand's trade agreement with **Japan**, and if this course is desired it is suggested that to save time a telegram (which

might be repeated to me) should be sent direct to His Majesty's Ambassador as soon as possible informing him of the exact words which the **New Zealand Government** would wish to be used.

4. Alternatively, the **New Zealand Government** may prefer to give notice of termination themselves through the Japanese Consul-General at **Wellington**,¹ and in that event we would propose to telegraph to you at the same time as instructions to act are telegraphed to His Majesty's Ambassador.

5. We should be grateful for a very early reply indicating which of the above courses the **New Zealand Government** prefer.²

¹ Mr N. Nakafuji.

² The New Zealand Government replied on 20 July that it would give notice of termination, 'if and when the occasion arises', through the Japanese Consulate-General in **Wellington**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

34 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

34

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

22 July 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 15 July [**No. 28**]. .

1. We learn from a most secret source that the new **Japanese Government**³ are proceeding with demands on Vichy, and that unless the French have previously agreed, bases in Indo- **China** will be occupied by force on 24 July. The United States Government have similar information....⁴

3. The State Department have also informed us that they have learned that eleven Japanese troopships left ports in **China** on 21 July, and that a convoy of Japanese troopships has left **Formosa** for an unknown destination.

³ A new Cabinet was formed on 18 July. Prince Konoye remained Prime Minister, but Vice-Admiral Toyoda replaced Mr Matsuoka as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴ A security direction has been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

35 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

35

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

22 July 1941

Circular telegram. . My telegram M. 166, paragraph 1 (a) special. ⁵

My immediately following telegram ⁶ repeats a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** containing an account of detailed steps which the **United States** authorities propose to take in the event of a Japanese move to the south. Before this information had been received we had considered our general policy in the light of the earlier report summarised in the telegram under reference. We were advised that the freezing of Japanese assets, if rigidly applied, would be likely to result in the stoppage of all current trade between the **United States** and **Japan**, and the report contained in my immediately following telegram shows that the **United States** authorities are themselves prepared for this. The position may thus arise under which the Japanese would be confronted with a choice between the alternatives of reversing their pro-Axis policy or of proceeding with their southward move, if necessary to the point of war with the **Netherlands East Indies** and ourselves, in an endeavour to obtain control of the sources of raw materials. The question, therefore, which we are called upon to consider is whether we are prepared to act with the **United States** if they desire to take such drastic action, and if not whether we should attempt to restrain them.

Our policy has hitherto been to do everything possible to avoid war with **Japan** in the absence of a formal guarantee by the **United States** that they will support us if attacked. At the same time the danger

inherent in our lagging behind the **United States** in dealing with **Japan** and thus weakening the ties between us and them is very real. The issue with **Japan** must be faced sooner or later, and the question is whether we should join the **United States** in forcing the issue now over Indo-**China** or whether we should try to dissuade the **United States** from forcing the issue until **Japan** makes a further move, e.g., in **Thailand** or against **Russia**. We do not, however, know whether the **United States** would be prepared to go so far in economic action in the last two eventualities; indeed, we have an indication that in the former case they would not.

Weighing these considerations, the conclusions we have reached are:

- (1) That we must on no account discourage action which the **United States** may wish to take in putting pressure on **Japan**, and must as far as possible associate our action with theirs.
- (2) That we must in the paramount interest of co-operation with the **United States** be prepared to follow a **United States** lead in forcing the issue with **Japan** over Indo-Chinese bases.
- (3) That if we are called upon to go to lengths which involve a plain risk of war with **Japan**, every effort should be made to obtain the clearest possible indication from the **United States** that we can count without reservation on their active armed support.

We hope that these conclusions will commend themselves to His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions.

In view of the expected imminent Japanese move south we are most anxious to make our [group mutilated – intentions?] known to the United States Government at once and should be grateful for the earliest possible expression of views by immediate telegram.

⁵ Not published. Paragraph 1 (a) reads: 'In response to inquiries as to the economic action the United States Government contemplate in the event of **Japan** committing an overt act, the United States Secretary of State said on 19 July that the necessary orders were now before the President. He expected them to include—(a) the freezing of all Japanese and Chinese assets, the latter at the request of the Chinese Government.'

⁶ Not published. This telegram, M.173, despatched on 22 July, was delayed in transmission.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

36 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

36

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

22 July 1941

Circular telegram. My preceding telegram M. 173. ¹ . Following for
Prime Minister:

1. While detailed application of **United States** proposals remains to be
clarified, it is now clear that the measures they have immediately in
mind are:

- (1) The complete freezing of all Japanese assets, which thereafter
would be immobilised except in so far as specific licences might be
granted for particular transactions.
- (2) The subjection of all imports from **Japan** to licensing.
- (3) Further restrictions on exports of petroleum products to **Japan**.
Details of these are awaited and will be telegraphed on receipt.

2. As regards (1), the United States Government apparently anticipate
that the immediate effect of the freezing order will be to bring to a
standstill all trade between **Japan** and the **United States**. But it is clear
that they contemplate that some measure of trade will continue
thereafter. As we understand the position, all business and trade with
Japan will be effectively stopped except that covered by special licences
or permissions given under the freezing order. This will mean that
transactions could only take place with difficulty on a basis equivalent
to barter if so desired by both parties.

3. In accordance with the general conclusions set out in my telegram [**No. 35**], we think it important that we and other British Commonwealth

Governments should follow the **United States** lead as [regards] (1) as closely as we can, and put into effect similar measures throughout the Empire as soon as possible after the United States Government have taken action. The machinery which we ourselves would propose to use would be that provided by Defence (Finance) Regulation 2A in S.R. and O. ² 1329 of 1940 as modified by S.R. and O. 649 of 1941—see my Circular notes 159, 14 August 1940, and 41 of 24 May. ³ (Copies have also been sent by the Bank of England to Reserve Banks.) The application of this regulation to **Japan** would automatically freeze all Japanese assets in this country, and the position thereafter would be regulated in such a way as to accord with developments in the **United States** practically as in paragraph 2 above—it should be noted in this connection that Regulation 2A would apply to residents in **Japan** or concerns controlled for **Japan** and not to Japanese nationals elsewhere.

4. We should be glad to learn by immediate telegram if possible whether the Dominion Governments would be willing to take similar action simultaneously with us. It will be appreciated that the general conception underlying the **United States** proposal is that, while the immediate shock to trade would cause a more or less complete stoppage, the licensing system would afford, within limits, opportunities for obtaining essential imports from **Japan**. If this expectation should be realised such imports could no doubt only be obtained against the equivalent value of exports needed by **Japan**, and it would, of course, be important that licences granted for such exports should formally be confined to commodities other than strategic commodities such as those already restricted below normal.

5. Application of the regulation to **China** (on the lines proposed by the **United States**) raises special questions on which we will telegraph shortly. Apart from the complicated technical aspects involved, it would of course be necessary firstly to obtain the concurrence of the Chinese Government and to make it clear that in the case of **China** the action proposed would be a friendly action intended to give every support to the Chinese monetary authorities.

6. A further telegram will be sent as regards paragraph 1 (2) as soon as we know in more detail the degree of restriction of imports contemplated by the United States Government.

¹ See p. 43, note 6.

² Statutory Rules and Orders.

³ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

37 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO THE RT. HON. P. FRASER (LONDON)

37

The acting Prime Minister to the Rt. Hon. P. Fraser (London)

24 July 1941

Government and War Cabinet have given full consideration to telegrams [Nos. 35 and 36] of 22 July from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (telegram M.173 ¹ not yet received). Whilst we recognise the danger of immediate economic action in relation to the contemplated occupation of Indo- China bases, we are of the opinion that the weight of evidence supports the economic sanctions proposed by the United States. We are satisfied that the southward move to Indo- China, if and when achieved, will not end there but will be used by Japan to strengthen bases and to consolidate for yet a further southward move. It does not appear reasonably possible to avoid conflict with Japan if Indo- China is occupied, and this being so we consider that, if the possibility of conflict is extended by the proposed economic measures proposed and taken by the United States, their co-operation in the conflict should be inevitable. For our part we will take whatever economic steps which the policy of the United Kingdom may determine, and feel that we should give full co-operation to the United States if they decide on the freezing of Japanese assets as proposed. If you are also in agreement with this viewpoint I will be grateful if you would on our behalf immediately convey our concurrence to the United Kingdom Government.

¹ See p. 43, note 6.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

38 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

38

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

25 July 1941

Circular telegram. .

We have considered our conclusions further in the light of views expressed by the Canadian, Commonwealth and New Zealand Governments. We fully appreciate the vital importance, to which all three Governments have called attention, of securing the clearest possible indication that the active armed support of the **United States** will be immediately available if the Japanese force the issue to the point of war. The only question to our mind is how can this best be secured.

2. Having regard to constitutional difficulties in the **United States**, we feel quite certain that to ask the United States Government now to give us such an assurance would be most unwise. Any attempt to attach such a condition to our taking action similar to that which the **United States** are prepared to take might well discourage the **United States** from taking action at all and, in any case, would not in our view produce the desired result.

3. We have considered whether it would be possible to inform the United States Government that we are prepared to take action parallel with theirs, and at the same time to make it clear that we are assuming that if, in consequence, an attack on the **Netherlands East Indies** or ourselves results, they will be prepared to give us armed support. We feel, however, that the United States Government would have no alternative but to

make reservations which would seriously embarrass us.

4. In our view the United States Government will in fact be compelled to support us if the need arises. It is clear that if the Japanese are provoked to extreme measures it will be as a result of the drastic effect of action taken by the United States and not of our co-operation therein. Both by reason of the [group mutilated – vigorous?] war policy of the United States towards us and their special interest in the Far East, we do not believe that they would find it possible not to give us their full support.

5. With these considerations in mind we feel convinced that the proper course is to follow the United States lead boldly and without attaching reservations. If this should lead to a tense situation and Japanese threats of hostile action, then will be the time to raise with the United States with the best prospect of success the question of a guarantee of mutual support.

6. We earnestly trust that His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions will feel able to agree to our taking this line with the United States Government. We feel it essential to make known to the United States Government forthwith our willingness to take parallel action with them, and should be grateful, therefore, for a reply by most immediate telegram.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

39 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

39

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*¹

25 July 1941

Your telegram of 25 July. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are fully in accord with the viewpoint that, should the **United States** act in the manner proposed, the Governments of the British Commonwealth must be prepared to take parallel action. The New Zealand Government recognise the force of the reasons put forward in your telegram under reference in favour of giving concurrence without making at this stage any demands for guarantees of assistance. As stated in my telegram to the Prime Minister of 24 July [**No. 37**], they are of the opinion that the **United States** must inevitably cooperate with the British Commonwealth in any conflict with **Japan** resulting from the contemplated action of the **United States**. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are, moreover, equally of the opinion that there is very real danger of losing American support should there be any hesitancy or failure so to act at the present time.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and to Mr Fraser in **London**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

40 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

40

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

25 July 1941

The following is the text of a statement made in Parliament today by
the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: ²

I ask the leave of the House to make a brief statement on recent
developments in Indo- **China**. The Japanese Government have presented
demands to the Vichy Government for the occupation of naval and air
bases in Southern Indo- **China**. ¹ Although there is as yet no official
news of the conclusion of a definite agreement between the Japanese
and Vichy Governments or of the occupation of further bases by
Japanese forces, it is quite evident that both these events are imminent.
That this new aggression was meditated by **Japan** has been clear for
some time past. I made allusion two days ago to the cloud of accusations
against the authorities in Indo- **China** and allegations that it was the
intention of Great Britain to attack Indo- **China**, not to mention other
assertions of an equally baseless character. Propaganda of this kind is
the customary prelude to a fresh act of violence by the Axis and their
associates. In the present case the fact that the occupation of bases in
Southern Indo- **China** is taking place with the consent of Vichy does not
obscure the fact that **Japan** has achieved her object by making demands
[backed] by threats of force if they were not complied with. The
miserable plight of the Vichy Government in the face of these demands
provides one further example of the blessings of collaboration with the
Axis. To the sorry tale of humiliation to which the Vichy Government
have subjected the French people is added the new indignity of having to

accept the so-called protection of **Japan** against a threat which, as everyone knows, does not exist.

His Majesty's Government regard these developments as a potential threat to their own territories and interests in the **Far East**. In anticipation of them, His Majesty's Government have been in close communication with the United States Government, the Government of the **Netherlands** and, of course, with His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions. The attitude of the **United States** has been publicly announced in no uncertain terms by the acting Secretary of State,² and I am sure that the House will join me in welcoming that timely and salutary statement.

I do not propose today to give an account of the measures which His Majesty's Government have prepared to meet these and other possible developments. I will give the House further information at an early date, but I can state at once that certain defence measures in **Malaya** have already been enforced in view of the plain threat to our territories which the Japanese action implies.

² Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 23 Dec 1940–26 Jul 1945.

¹ A pact granting **Japan** these bases was signed at Vichy on 29 July.

² Mr Sumner Welles.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

41 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

41

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

25 July 1941

**Circular telegram. My telegram of 17 July [No. 32], paragraph 1.
Following for your Prime Minister:**

**. Following on statements regarding the action of Japan made
yesterday by the United States acting Secretary of State and today by
the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (see my telegram [No. 40]), we
are telegraphing instructions to His Majesty's Ambassador, Tokyo, to
proceed forthwith with the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty. It is
contemplated that the announcement will be made here early next
week.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

42 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

42

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

25 July 1941

My telegram [**No. 41**]. .

**It would be appreciated if we could be informed as soon as notice of
termination of New Zealand's trade agreement with Japan has been
given to the Japanese Consul-General.**

**We should also be glad to learn the New Zealand Government's
intentions as to publicity.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

43 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

43

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*¹

27 July 1941

With reference to your telegram of 25 July [**No. 42**]. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are serving notice of denunciation of the New Zealand – **Japan** trade agreement on the Chancellor of the Japanese Consulate, **Wellington**, at 4 a.m., Greenwich mean time, on Sunday, 27 July. Notification that this action has been taken will be published in the press here on Monday morning, 28 July.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

44 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

44

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

1 August 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram M.199. ¹ .

Indications have been accumulating that the Japanese may be contemplating an early move into **Thailand**. Information has reached us from a secret source that the Japanese have already made demands on the Thai Government promising territorial acquisitions in Indo- **China** in return for military co-operation. Both the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (who is very friendly to us) have assured His Majesty's Minister that they know nothing of any Japanese demands, but the Under-Secretary of State had previously sent a secret warning to His Majesty's Minister that something of the sort might be afoot. He explained that he had done this merely as an intelligent observer of coming events. His Majesty's Minister believes that the denials given him are genuine, but fears the Thai Prime Minister may have received demands from the Japanese but has not disclosed them to all the members of his Cabinet.

2. We are not satisfied that the above information concerning Japanese demands is necessarily reliable, but it is clear that Thai Government circles are seriously apprehensive and this apprehension is no doubt reinforced by the continued agitation about **Thailand** in the Japanese press. For example, a recent Domei agency telegram from **Bangkok** alleged increasing British military preparations and pressure on **Thailand** to which sinister purposes are attributed.

3. Further telegrams from His Majesty's Minister report that both the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made earnest appeal to him to the effect that, if **Japan** was not to overwhelm **Thailand** completely, it was imperative that we and the **United States** should come to their assistance in some open and forcible manner. They were convinced that nothing less would suffice than a public warning to **Japan** that any attempt by her to violate the territorial integrity or sovereignty of **Thailand** would involve her in war with the **United States** and ourselves. They fully realise that with our pre-occupation in the West we could not take the lead in this matter, but they repeated that the remedy lay with the United States Government, who had so far failed to show the requisite firmness in their Far Eastern policy.

4. On 30 July His Majesty's Minister reported that the Thai Prime Minister had not only approved and associated himself with this appeal, but had given him the following urgent and very secret message for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

‘It is to be expected that **Japan** will press on him to make military and economic concessions and generally to adopt a policy which will be incompatible with the position of **Thailand** as a neutral power and as a friend of **Britain**. If he refuses these proposals it is possible that **Japan** may threaten force and announce her intention of violating the neutrality of **Thailand** under the pretext of protecting her against ourselves. In that event, what would be the attitude of **Britain** and what course would His Majesty's Government advise him to follow?’

5. We are consulting with the United States Government at once in regard to the **Thailand** situation, with special reference to the Prime Minister's message, and will telegraph further as soon as possible.

¹ Not published. Reported a discussion between the British Minister at **Bangkok** (Sir Josiah Crosby) and the Prime Minister of **Thailand** (Field Marshal Luang Pibul Songgram) on likely Japanese moves against **Thailand**.



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

45 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

45

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

2 August 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 1 August. .

1. The possibility that the Japanese may be contemplating early action in relation to **Thailand** and the message from the Thai Prime Minister have made it imperative that we should take up with the United States Government the advisability of a warning being conveyed to the Japanese before the latter are committed to a further move. We also wish to raise with the United States Government at the earliest possible moment the general question of an assurance that in the event of war with **Japan** we may count upon their armed support—see my telegram to the Commonwealth Government, No. 515. ¹ A third approach is also necessary since such information as has reached us as to the manner in which the **United States** freezing order is to be applied (see my telegram M.193) ² suggests there has been a departure from the policy outlined to us before the freezing order was issued (see my telegram M.173) ³ with the consequent risk that we and other parts of the Empire may in practice find ourselves ahead of the **United States** in our restrictions.

¹ Not published. Discussed the difficulty 'in the present circumstances' of securing a guarantee of armed support from the **United States**.

² Not published. Contained details of the steps being taken by the United States Government to control imports from and

exports to **Japan**.

³ See p. 43, note 6.

2. My three immediately following telegrams ¹ contain instructions which have now been sent to His Majesty's Ambassador, **Washington**, in regard to each of these aspects, viz:

(*a*) The question of an assurance from the **United States**;

(*b*) Warning to **Japan**;

(*c*) The freezing of Japanese assets.

The nature of information reaching us about **Thailand** and the uncertainty in regard to **United States** policy over the application of (*b*) and (*c*) is very urgent; (*a*) is equally pressing, but it is a particularly delicate question and informal discussions here with the United States Ambassador ² have shown that the method of approach is all-important. While, therefore, we have acquainted His Majesty's Ambassador very fully with the point of view of the Dominions and ourselves, we think it necessary as regards (*a*) to await his observations before giving him definite instructions to take action.

¹ Not published.

² Mr J. G. Winant, United States Ambassador to Great Britain, 1941–46.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

46 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

46

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

[Extract]

4 August 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram M.207. ³ .

On 1 August His Majesty's Minister at **Bangkok** was instructed to return an interim reply to the message from the Thai Prime Minister (my telegram of 1 August [**No. 44**], paragraph 4) to the effect that we were in consultation with the United States Government as to measures to restrain further Japanese encroachments, but that our attitude was bound to be affected by the degree of independence which the Thai Government displayed in their dealings with the Japanese. He was also authorised to say that we were proceeding with arrangements for the delivery of oil on the scale previously contemplated (my telegram D.469) ⁴ without waiting for signature of the economic agreement, but that the continuance of these arrangements would obviously depend on the general attitude of the Thai Government.... ⁵

³ Not published. Reported a further appeal by the Thai Prime Minister for support from the **United States** and the **United Kingdom** against 'intense Japanese pressure'.

⁴ Not published.

⁵ The text of telegraphic instructions sent to the British

Ambassador at [Washington](#) has been omitted. These were to inform the United States Government of the instructions sent to His Majesty's Minister at [Bangkok](#), and to invite its views on the policy to be adopted towards [Thailand](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

47 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA¹ TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

47

*The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia*¹ to the
*Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*²

11 August 1941

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

My colleagues and I have given anxious consideration to the Far Eastern position. We have, as you know, always regarded **Singapore and **Malaya** as our vital outpost, and have at all times, as I indicated to the Foreign Office when in **London**, been prepared to join in a guarantee to the **Netherlands East Indies**.**

We have also assumed that in the event of war with **Japan naval reinforcements as discussed in **London**, with a nucleus of five capital ships, would be sent to the **Far East**. We now say and emphasise that an early despatch of capital ships east of **Suez** would itself be the most powerful deterrent and first step.**

We also once more urge that, having regard to the grave tension at present existing, air and military reinforcements to **Malaya should be vigorously expedited. The position of **Thailand** now comes up for early decision, for events appear to be moving rapidly. Two urgent questions emerge:**

- (1) Should we, the British countries, be prepared to make it clear to **Thailand** and to **Japan** that any attack upon **Thailand** by **Japan** will be regarded by us as a *casus belli*?**
- (2) Should we announce this to the countries concerned independently of **United States** action or should we make it**

conditional upon American concurrence and active participation?

We are of the opinion, as the Government of one of the two British Dominions which are most directly affected, that the first question should be answered 'Yes', and that while every pressure should be maintained upon the **United States it would be an error to condition our action upon American action, though actual objection by the **United States of America** would of course be fatal.**

Thailand's strategic position and resources are such that **Japan's occupation of them would gravely imperil the safety of **Singapore**, the effective control of the waters around the Malay Peninsula, the **Philippines** and the **Netherlands East Indies**, and the maintenance of Chinese supplies along the **Burma Road**.**

Having regard to reality in the **Far East, we do not believe **Japan** wants **Thailand** merely as an end in itself. Its capture or control would be plainly the first step, and it is the first step that counts. In this connection we have noted with regret that Mr Sumner Welles' warning to **Japan** seemed to indicate that the objectionable matter would not be the occupation of **Thailand** but only what might happen subsequently.**

The attitude of the **United States, while constitutionally and politically understandable, is disappointing. We have throughout this period felt that a clear and unequivocal [group omitted – answer?] to **Japan** by the **United States** would have stopped aggression. Up to the time of the *coup* in Indo- **China** it had not been made. Later on Sumner Welles made a much more vigorous statement to the Japanese representative, though it is subject to the criticism mentioned above. But the Japanese have still not been given a firm warning. Indications of postponed resistance to aggression are merely encouragement.**

We feel that if we are prepared to fight, **America will not in fact desert us. A bold course might change the whole outlook.**

Naturally in all this we are assuming that whatever we do will be done in the closest consultation and agreement with the **Netherlands**

East Indies. Subject to the above, our view can be summed up as being that if **Thailand** is abandoned and we delay our action we will be one country nearer to war, and that in that war, and in particular in defence of **Singapore, Japan** will be relatively stronger and we relatively weaker than at present.

We express these views frankly and with the realisation of their implications so that you may see the supreme importance which we attach to them.

¹ Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies.

² Repeated to the Prime Ministers of **Canada, South Africa and New Zealand** and to the Australian Minister in **Washington**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

48 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA¹

48

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of
Australia*¹

14 August 1941

Your telegram of 11 August.

1. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand share the anxiety of His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** over the deterioration of the situation in the **Far East**, and they would welcome after full discussion an early definition of some common policy.
2. They concur in the viewpoint that **Singapore** and **Malaya** are vital outposts, and it is a matter of the gravest concern to them that the United States Government do not apparently hold similar views as to the vital importance of **Singapore**. Under certain circumstances they agree that it may be necessary to pursue an independent line of policy

¹ Repeated to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Prime Ministers of **Canada** and South Africa.

without waiting for active **United States** collaboration, but His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would, for the reasons set down below, much prefer to delay forcing the issue, and in the meantime to continue to exert the utmost pressure on **Japan** by economic and other means.

3. With the views of His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** regarding the issue of a mutual guarantee to and from the **Netherlands East Indies**, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are

in full accord, and they too have on several occasions made representations in support of this proposal to His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.

4. They have always assumed that, in the event of an outbreak of war, effect would be given to the assurances of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** that capital ships would be transferred to the Far Eastern area. While they fully agree that the presence now of British capital ships in **Singapore** would act as a powerful deterrent upon the Japanese, they are not without doubts as to the wisdom of denuding the British fleets in the **Atlantic** and the **Mediterranean** to the extent proposed, at a time when a number of capital ships are under repair and so long as there remain in existence heavy units of the German and Italian navies. Until the **United States** have agreed to take over a more active role in the **Atlantic** and have transferred sufficient capital ships to balance the withdrawal of British naval units, it would in their opinion be dangerous to remove five capital ships from the actual theatres of war.

5. It is agreed that an early discussion concerning the British attitude *vis-à-vis* **Thailand** is urgently required. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully realise the importance to British interests of maintaining the integrity of **Thailand**, but here again they are not without doubts as to the practicability and the wisdom of issuing a warning from the British countries alone that any attack on **Thailand** by **Japan** would be regarded as a *casus belli*. It seems to them unwise to take such action unless and until there is available a force sufficiently strong to ensure successful resistance to **Japan** in the area threatened. The result of any hasty or ill-conceived guarantee might well be a repetition of the circumstances surrounding the British guarantee to **Poland** in 1939. ¹

6. It appears to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand moreover that, having encouraged **Thailand** to resist, the British Commonwealth may in a very short time be called upon to render active assistance, and the time has arrived, if it is not already overdue, to consider whether or not the British nations are in a position to render immediate and effective

assistance.

¹ See Vol. I, *Outbreak of War and Declarations: Germany*.

7. The force of the arguments put forward by His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth for making a stand is fully admitted but the question of expediency cannot be overlooked. Before any clear definition of policy can be agreed upon, it seems necessary to ascertain what military resources are available in the **Far East** and whether or not effective assistance can in fact be offered to **Thailand**.

8. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would therefore welcome a very early appreciation of the strategical position in regard to **Thailand**. They feel that the result of a defeat in this region such as we experienced in **Norway**, in **Belgium**, in **Greece** and in **Crete**, arising from any premature or ill-conceived attempt to assist the Thais, could not fail to have the most disastrous results, particularly in the **United States**.

9. The choice seems to be not so much one of abandoning **Thailand** or of delaying action against **Japan** as whether or not it is possible to give effect to a guarantee to **Thailand**, and until an appreciation of the facts of the position is available, and until there is a clearer definition of the views of the **United Kingdom** and also the **United States** attitude in the event of a Japanese move in this direction, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would prefer to wait before deciding on the course of action proposed.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

49 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

49

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

27 August 1941

Circular telegram.

1. We have received from the United States Government information as to communications made by them on 17 August, i.e., since the President's return from his meeting with the Prime Minister, ¹ to the Japanese Ambassador ² in regard to the situation in the Pacific. The United States Government have particularly requested that these communications should be regarded as especially secret.
2. The first communication refers briefly to Japanese action in Indo-China and the attitude of the United States Government thereto, and closes with a warning in the following terms: 'This Government now find it necessary to say to the Government of Japan that if the Japanese Government take any steps in pursuance of a policy or programme of military domination by force or the threat of force of neighbouring countries, the Government of the United States will be compelled to take any and all steps which it may deem necessary towards safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the United States and American nationals, and towards ensuring the safety and security of the United States'.
3. The second communication indicates the readiness of the United States to seek a general settlement in the Pacific area which would comprise equal opportunity of economic development for all, if Japan is

ready to suspend her expansionist policy, readjust her position, and embark on a peaceful programme consistent with the principles to which the **United States** have long been committed. The communication indicates, however, that before negotiations on this basis could be resumed, it will be necessary for the **Japanese Government** to furnish a clearer statement than they have yet done of their present attitude and plans.

4. We are considering what further action we ourselves should now enforce in relation to **Japan**.

¹ The meetings took place on 9–12 August on board HMS *Prince of Wales* and the **United States** cruiser *Augusta* in Placentia Bay, **Newfoundland**.

² Admiral K. Nomura, Japanese Ambassador in **Washington**, February–December 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

50 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

50

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

28 August 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram of 27 August.

We have now given further consideration to the question of the action which it would be appropriate for us to take in respect of **Japan** to reinforce the warning which has been delivered to that country by the United States Government. In his broadcast of 24 August the Prime Minister made it clear that we should range ourselves at the side of the **United States** if the latter became involved in war with **Japan**, but we feel it is desirable to warn the **Japanese Government** on our own part, and directly, that apart from our support of the **United States**, we should be compelled in the interests of the security of our own territories to take counter measures in the event of further Japanese expansion.

We should prefer to link our own warning specifically with that given by the **United States**, but this, we feel, would require the concurrence of the latter. We should also prefer adherence to the wording elaborated at the Prime Minister's recent meeting with President Roosevelt unless the United States Government see serious objection. In these circumstances His Majesty's Minister at **Washington** ¹ has been instructed to inform the United States Government that we should propose to request His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** to address the **Japanese Government** in the terms of Formula 1 contained in my immediately following telegram. If the United States Government, on the other hand, would prefer that we did not specifically mention the

warning conveyed to **Japan** by them, we should propose that our communication should follow the terms of Formula 2, the text of which is also contained in my immediately following telegram. In either case it is proposed that communication should be made orally, though an *aide-memoire* of what is said might be communicated to the Japanese authorities.

We are making it clear to the United States Government that our communication would be subject to the concurrence of His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions. We hope the Dominion Governments would agree in principle with the line which we propose to take, and would also be prepared to make similar communication to the **Japanese Government** or authorise us to do so on their behalf.

We will telegraph further as soon as we receive a reply from His Majesty's Minister at **Washington** as to the United States Government's attitude. In the meantime I should be grateful to learn whether you concur generally in the action proposed.

¹ Rt. Hon. Sir Ronald Campbell, PC, GCMG, CB; United Kingdom Minister in **Washington**, 1941–45.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

51 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

51

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

28 August 1941

Circular telegram. My immediately preceding telegram. The following are the terms of Formula 1:

‘His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are aware of the communication which President Roosevelt made to the Japanese Ambassador on 17 August regarding the concern of the United States at Japanese military activities in Indo- China and the steps which the United States Government would be compelled to take if the Japanese Government pursued a similar policy in regard to neighbouring countries. His Majesty's Government share the concern of the United States Government and cannot disregard the plain threat to the security of British territories which such a policy on the part of Japan would constitute.

‘His Majesty's Government, therefore, who have for their part no aggressive intentions either against the countries bordering on British territories or against Japan herself, feel it necessary in the interests of peace to let the Japanese Government know that any further Japanese encroachment in the South-West Pacific area would compel His Majesty's Government to take counter measures, even though these might lead to war between Great Britain and Japan.’

The following are the terms of the second formula:

‘His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have watched

with grave concern successive encroachments of Japanese armed forces in Indo- **China** and accumulating evidence of an intention on the part of the **Japanese Government** to continue this policy of expansion by force or threat of force into countries bordering on British territories. They cannot disregard the plain threat to the security of those territories which such a policy would constitute.

‘His Majesty’s Government, therefore, who have for their part no aggressive intentions either against these countries or against **Japan** herself, feel that the time has come for most complete candour. They accordingly find it necessary in the interests of peace to let the **Japanese Government** know that any further Japanese encroachment in the South-West Pacific area would compel His Majesty’s Government to take counter measures, even though these might lead to war between Great Britain and **Japan**.’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

52 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

52

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*¹

30 August 1941

Your telegrams of 28 August.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully concur in the proposal of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to reinforce the warning issued to **Japan** by the **United States**, and for their part they would much prefer that this should be done in terms of **Formula No. 1**.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are, moreover, willing to authorise His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to make on their behalf a declaration in similar terms to the **Japanese Government**, but they wish that this should be done in association with and at the same time as similar declarations are made for the other Dominions.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

53 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

53

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime Minister of New Zealand

2 September 1941

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 28 August [No. 51].

His Majesty's Minister at **Washington** reports that the United States Secretary of State, while showing no reluctance in regard to the proposed warning, indicated his preference for the second formula and the avoidance of mention of the **United States** lest it should appear that our warning was being given merely at their instance. Mr Hull also suggested:

- (That (as had been our intention) our warning should be made a) confidentially to the **Japanese Government** and that the text of it, at any rate, should not be made public.
- (That our objection to Japanese encroachment should not relate b) to the 'South-West Pacific area' but be made more broadly and take the form of a warning against continuance of the war and expansion policy and the programme of conquest by force. The basis of this suggestion is the desire of the **United States** to meet the suspicions of **China** and **Russia**, the former of whom might read into our formula the possibility that we should leave her in the lurch if our territory were safeguarded, while the latter might think we were seeking to divert **Japan** from our territory towards **Russia**. (It appears that the **United States** authorities have grounds for believing that such apprehensions exist, and that the words 'neighbouring countries' in the **United States** warning were adopted largely to meet the suspicions of the above Governments.)
- (That the express mention of the word 'war' be avoided on the c) grounds that public opinion in **Japan** is in a state of ferment and the

situation between the Japanese Prime Minister and the extremists is delicate.

2. As regards **United States** negotiations with **Japan**, Hull indicated that the message from Prince Konoye of 28 August had made resumption possible, ¹ and he said that if the conversations reached a stage where a basis was found for negotiation of a general settlement of the **Pacific** situation he would inform us. He was determined to adhere strictly to his basic principles, and he thought the **United States** negotiations had one chance in twenty-five or fifty of succeeding. If they failed he would perhaps have gained useful time, while if they succeeded so much the better. He was, however, thoroughly alive to the various dangers of his policy, e.g., that **Japan** after a settlement might break it in a few months' time, in which case the effect on the morale of the Chinese army and people might be serious. He would have to bear such dangers constantly in mind.

3. Recent events such as the President's warning and the Prime Minister's broadcast, the United States Government's oil policy in respect of **Russia** and **Japan**, and the despatch of a United States Military Mission to **China**, ² had caused violent reactions in the Japanese press and public opinion. Prince Konoye (with what sincerity Hull did not know) had begged that no pretext should be given to Japanese extremists to upset him on a charge of sacrificing Japanese Imperial policy.

4. Further consideration in the light of the above is being given to the question of the action to be taken by us.

¹ Konoye suggested a meeting between himself and President Roosevelt 'to explore the possibility of saving the situation'.

² Under the leadership of Brigadier-General John Magruder, the mission arrived at Chungking in November 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

54 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

54

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*

2 September 1941

**Following is a most secret and personal message from the Prime
Minister for the Prime Minister:**

Events about **Japan seem to have taken a favourable turn in the last
month. The Japanese were then threatening to invade **Siam** as well as to
make jumping-off grounds in Indo- **China** on the approaches to
Singapore. However, as you will have seen from the telegrams sent you
about our Atlantic Conference, I persuaded the President to take a hard
line against further Japanese encroachments in the South Pacific, and
he was also willing to add the North-Western Pacific. You will have seen
the Notes delivered by the United States Government to **Japan**. The
President and the State Department think it a good thing to gain time,
be it thirty days or ninety days, so long as there are no further
encroachments, and the Japanese seem disposed to parley on this basis.
Our interests are served by a [group mutilated – standstill] and the
Japanese for their part want to know what is going to happen to **Russia**.**

**2. As soon as the President had made these declarations I made the
statement in my broadcast which conformed to all we had agreed upon
with you and the other Dominions beforehand and has since been
endorsed by all. Encouraged by this, **Russia** comes along with a very stiff
answer to the Japanese complaint about American supplies entering
Vladivostok. The Russian Siberian Army has been very little diminished
so far and their **Air Force** is capable of heavy and much-dreaded bombing**

of **Japan**. We have thus got very heavy forces, to wit, Great Britain and **Russia**, coming into line, with the **United States** in the van, and in addition **Japan** is sprawled in **China**. They would thus have about three-quarters of the human race against them, and I do not wonder that they are plunged in deep anxiety and hesitation. I cannot believe that the Japanese will face the combination now developing around them. We may therefore regard the situation not only as more favourable but as less tense.

3. Nevertheless, the growth of our battleship strength, the ravages made in the German Navy, which is now reduced, apart from the *Tirpitz* and the U-boats, to very [group mutilated – modest] proportions, and the measure we now have of the Italian Navy, will make it possible in the near future for us to place heavy ships in the **Indian Ocean**. The Admiralty are carefully considering what is the best disposition to make. But I should like to let you know that, as they become available, we contemplate placing a force of capital ships, including first-class units, in the triangle **Aden – Singapore – Simonstown** before the end of the year. All this will be without prejudice to our control of the Eastern Mediterranean. I can assure you we are giving constant attention to all this, and you may be sure that we shall never let you down if real danger comes.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

55 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

55

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

19 September 1941

My telegram of 2 September [No. 53].

We have now given full consideration to the question whether it would be desirable to convey a formal warning to **Japan** as to the consequences which would follow any further encroachments on their part in the **Far East**.

It will be remembered that in his broadcast of 24 August the Prime Minister, referring to the menace created by **Japan's** latest expansionist activities, said, 'It is certain that this has got to stop', and added that if the efforts of the **United States** to bring about an amicable settlement in the **Far East** failed, 'we shall, of course, range ourselves unhesitatingly at the side of the **United States**'. This followed communication by the United States Government of a memorandum to the Japanese Ambassador at **Washington**, which closed with a warning in the terms given in my telegram of 27 August [No. 49].

A subsequent discussion with the United States Secretary of State indicated that the **United States** authorities would prefer that we should not link up any warning on our part with theirs, but that they would prefer us on the other hand to adopt a formula which would be as wide as theirs and would omit mention of the word 'revised'.²

We have ourselves reached the conclusion that in the present circumstances no useful purpose would now be served by the issue of a

warning by us at once so wide and so relatively vague as that of the **United States**. We feel this would add nothing to the warning conveyed already in the Prime Minister's broadcast and might even detract from its force. The broadcast made clear both our attitude towards the Japanese expansionist policy and our complete support of the **United States**, and has, we feel sure, been taken by the **Japanese Government** as complementary to the **United States** warning. Unless, therefore, events show the need for something more, we consider it better to let the matter rest where it is.

We should propose, therefore, that the United States Government be informed accordingly. It is, however, important that the United States Government should be given no grounds for thinking that we had not taken action in this matter fully corresponding to their own. We propose, therefore, to word our communication so as to indicate that if they thought that we could usefully make any further statement we would do so, but that in our judgment it was undesirable to add anything at this stage to the Prime Minister's broadcast.

We should be glad to learn as soon as possible whether His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions concur in a communication being addressed to the United States Government on the above lines.

¹ Mr Fraser arrived back in New Zealand on 13 September.

² The word revised in the draft formula was 'war'. See **No. 53, paragraph 1 (c)**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

56 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

56

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

21 September 1941

**His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully concur in the
proposal of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to address
a communication to the United States Government on the lines set out
in your telegram of 19 September.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

57 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

57

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

24 October 1941

Circular telegram. .

The following is a repetition of a telegram sent to His Majesty's
Ambassador, **Washington**, on 18 October:

‘Since your conversation with Mr Hull the **Japanese Government**
have fallen, ¹ apparently on the issue of the **Washington** conversations,

¹ In the new Japanese government formed on 17 October,
General H. Tojo was Prime Minister and Mr S. Togo Minister for
Foreign Affairs.

and the conduct of affairs has been put into the extremists' hands.
It is therefore necessary in conjunction with the United States
Government to take stock of the situation in regard to (*a*) the stimulus
which the German advance on **Moscow** is giving to those in **Japan** in
favour of early action, and (*b*) the effective pressure of our economic
embargo on **Japan**.

‘2. It is possible that the direction which the Japanese will take is
southward, e.g., into **Thailand**, and we have had an urgent appeal from
the Thai Prime Minister for co-operation. **Japan** knows, however, that
this choice is likely to bring her into collision with the ABCD ¹ front.
This risk is less in the north, where **Japan** has already a strong

concentration of military forces. **Japan** may also hope that the departure of the Government from **Moscow**² and the consequent weakening of its authority may lead to some disintegration of the Soviet forces in Siberia. We have to reckon therefore with the possibility of an attack upon **Russia** in the fairly near future.

‘3. Even though there is little effective action that we could take in this eventuality (and you should make it clear that we have taken no decision on the point) it is desirable that we should enter into consultation with the United States Government at once. So long as our Russian allies are resisting **Germany** in the west it is important that we should not weaken or discourage their resistance by a failure to support them to the best of our ability in the **Far East**. We have also to consider the position of our Dutch allies and the effect on the spirit of the **Netherlands East Indies** if we were to fail the Russians.

‘4. Still more important is the question whether we can afford to allow **Japan** to attack us “one by one” and, having disposed of the Russians, be able to turn on us, strengthened and freed from the Russian danger, at the moment which suited her best, and which would no doubt coincide with the moment at which **Germany** in the West should be free to do the same.

‘5. Indo- **China** has already gone³: **Japan** has established her bases there, and if she is allowed to free herself by an attack on **Russia** from the present threat to her rear, the danger to ourselves will be very serious indeed.

‘6. We have been well content to leave the handling of the Japanese problem to the **United States** and to follow the **United States** in their policy of maximum economic pressure. The Prime Minister made it clear, moreover, in his broadcast of 24 August, that should their attempt to reach a peaceful solution fail, we should range ourselves by their side. This remains the position. While, as stated above,

¹ American, British, Chinese and Dutch.

² On 16 October it was announced that the Soviet Government was evacuating **Moscow** owing to the rapid advance of German forces.

³ See p. 49, note 1.

positive action by ourselves alone is unlikely to be very effective, we are prepared to support any action, however serious, which the **United States** may decide to take.

‘7. Naturally we should still prefer if possible to keep **Japan** out of the world conflict and to detach her from the Axis by some means short of war. If there is anything which the United States Government think we can do to deter **Japan** from war we should be glad to give it immediate consideration.

‘8. Please communicate the foregoing to Mr Hull and ask whether he can inform us of the action which the United States Government contemplates in the event of a Japanese attack on **Russia**.’

See also my immediately following telegram.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

58 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

58

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

24 October 1941

Circular telegram. . My immediately preceding telegram.

- 1. Lord Halifax has reported that he has raised the matter with Mr Hull and we are awaiting a definite and considered reply.**
- 2. In the meantime we have been approached by the Soviet Ambassador¹ with the request that we and the United States Government should issue a strong warning to **Japan** now. He felt this would check the **Japanese Government** and that nothing else might suffice to do so. He was told in reply that we were already in communication with the United States Government about the general situation in the **Far East** and would communicate with him further on receipt of their reply.**
- 3. We have reason to believe that the United States Ambassador is also raising the matter with his Government.**

¹ M. Ivan Maisky, USSR Ambassador in Great Britain, 1932–43.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

59 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

59

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

31 October 1941

WINCH No. 4. ²

My telegram of 2 September [No. 54].

1. I am still inclined to think that **Japan** will not run into war with the ABCD powers unless or until **Russia** is decisively broken. Perhaps even then they will wait for the promised invasion of the **British Isles** in the spring. Russian resistance is still strong, especially in front of **Moscow**, and winter is now near.
2. Admiralty dispositions had been to build up towards the end of the year with the *Rodney*, ¹, *Nelson* ² and four R's, ³ based mainly on **Singapore**. This, however, was spoiled by the recent injury to the *Nelson*, which will take three or four months to repair.
3. In the interval, in order further to deter **Japan**, we are sending forthwith our newest battleship, the *Prince of Wales*, ⁴ to join the *Repulse* ⁵ in the **Indian Ocean**. This is done in spite of the protests of the Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, and is a serious risk for us to run. The *Prince of Wales* will be noticed at **Capetown** quite soon. In addition the four R battleships are being moved as they become ready to Eastern waters. Later on the *Repulse* will be relieved by the *Renown*, ⁶ which has a greater radius.
4. In my view the *Prince of Wales* will be the best possible deterrent, and

every effort will be made to spare her permanently. I must, however, make it clear that the movements of the *Prince of Wales* must be reviewed when she is at **Capetown** because of the danger of the *Tirpitz* breaking out and other operational possibilities before the *Duke of York*⁷ is ready in December.

² Personal messages between Mr Churchill and Mr Fraser sometimes carried the distinguishing codenames **W_{INCH}** and **P_{EFRA}**, derived from the christian name and surname of the sender of the message.

¹ HMS *Rodney*, 33,900 tons, nine 16-inch guns, 23½ knots.

² HMS *Nelson*, 33,950 tons, nine 16-inch guns, 23½ knots.

³ *Royal Sovereign* class battleships: *Royal Sovereign*, *Resolution*, *Ramillies* and *Revenge*.

⁴ HMS *Prince of Wales*, 35,000 tons, ten 14-inch guns, 27 knots.

⁵ HMS *Repulse*, 30,755 tons, six 15-inch guns, 29 knots.

⁶ HMS *Renown*, 32,000 tons, six 15-inch guns, 29 knots.

⁷ HMS *Duke of York*, 35,000 tons, ten 14-inch guns, 30 knots.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

60 — THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA⁸

60

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of Australia*⁸

31 October 1941

While His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are largely in agreement with the views expressed in your most secret telegram No. 444 of 31 October,⁹ and while in the case of an attack by **Japan** on **Russia** it appears inevitable that the British Commonwealth will declare war against **Japan**, they feel that the decision to be taken in this most difficult and delicate matter is so substantially dependent upon the views of the United States Government that it would be unwise to make the contemplated suggestion until the views of the United States have been obtained in accordance with Dominions Office circular telegrams of 24 October [**Nos. 57** and **58**]. They are not entirely convinced that it would be wise to make this *démarche* without the concurrence of the **United States**, and they are not entirely without apprehension lest such a step without **United States** co-operation might lead the Japanese to believe that they had successfully driven a wedge between the British Commonwealth and the **United States**.

Another serious factor of the existing situation which makes them hesitate to agree to the proposed declaration at the moment is our knowledge of the obviously limited scale of operations which, in fulfilment of the declaration, could be launched against **Japan** without **United States** assistance—a fact with which the **Japanese Government** are quite conversant. In such circumstances the **New Zealand Government** fear that the proposed declaration would fail as a deterrent, that it might in fact be viewed by **Japan** as a challenge to immediate

action, and be considered as premature and too precipitate by the **United States**. On receipt of the views of the United States Government, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will review the position and will communicate with the Commonwealth Government. I shall be grateful if a copy of this communication can be shown to the Hon. Mr Nash. ¹

⁸ Mr Menzies resigned on 29 Aug 1941 and was succeeded by Mr A. W. Fadden, who in turn resigned on 7 October after being defeated in a division on the Budget. A new government was formed by Mr J. Curtin, leader of the Australian Labour Party.

⁹ Not published. The Prime Minister of **Australia** requested New Zealand's comments on the draft of a proposed warning to **Japan** that any attack by her on **Russia** would be resisted by force by the British Commonwealth.

¹ Mr Nash was in **Australia** for discussions on the trans- **Pacific** air service.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

61 — THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

61

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

1 November 1941

PEFRA No. 4.

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

**Very many thanks for your telegram W_{INCH} No. 4. I quite understand
the position and warmly welcome the steps that you are taking.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

62 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

62

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

1 November 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram of today, Circular D.660. ² .

The following is the text of a further telegram received from His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** regarding his interview of 29 October with the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs:

'I had intended to confine my remarks about Indo- **China** to the particular question of recent acts by occupying authorities infringing French sovereignty, but the Minister for Foreign Affairs was clearly anxious to carry the matter further, observing that these were only symptoms of the trouble and that it was important to bear constantly in mind the underlying reasons for the stationing of Japanese troops in Indo- **China**. These he defined as:

(The defence of the security of **Japan** and of areas in South-
a) Eastern Asia vital to such defence;

(The defence of **Japan's** economic position, which had now
b) become a vital matter.

'2. As regards (a), I said that the plea of a threat to Japanese security simply did not hold water, seeing that **Japan's** southward advance had now proceeded to a point 1500 miles from **Tokyo** and only some miles from British territory: on the contrary, the threat was obviously now to our security. As regards (b), I could see no possible necessity for military occupation to secure economic advantages which, in any case, had subsequently been accorded to **Japan** in full measure by

the Vichy Government. On this, the Minister for Foreign Affairs added as a further reason the necessity for ensuring the safety of Japanese troops which had been sent earlier to Tongking as part of the campaign against **China**. In any case, he added, the important thing was now to prevent any aggravation of the situation, which in the present critical state of affairs might in turn necessitate an extension of **Japan's** military measures. (While he had mentioned no country other than Indo- **China**, he was clearly hinting at the possibility of some advance beyond the border of Indo- **China**.)

‘3. I said that on this question of further southward expansion I thought it best to be perfectly frank and definite, while inviting His Excellency to take my observations in the same friendly spirit in which they were offered. The change in strategical equilibrium brought about by the Japanese occupation of Southern Indo- **China** had constituted a threat to our neighbouring territory and, given the disposition of Japanese troops and air bases, could only be aimed at us. We had hitherto confined our counter measures to the economic field, but I was personally convinced that any further aggressive action on the part of the Japanese military in these regions would provoke immediate counter action on our part, the time for words and protests having passed. **Japan** had now pushed forward right up to our vital line running through **Malaya** and the **Netherlands East Indies** and **Australia** and New Zealand: we and other powers concerned in the defence of that line would in no circumstances agree to any impingement on it or to any further weakening of our security in that area. We at the [same] time wished to avoid trouble with **Japan**, the effects of which for both our countries would be incalculable and from which **Germany** only would benefit; but let the Japanese armed forces not conclude from this that we were afraid of **Japan** or insufficiently armed and prepared to meet any further movement imperilling our security in these regions.

‘4. The Minister for Foreign Affairs made no comment on these candid observations beyond acknowledging the friendly purpose of my remarks and repeating that they showed how vitally concerned was

Great Britain in preventing any further aggravation of the present situation in South-Eastern Asia.'

² Not published. Reported a discussion on 29 October between His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo and the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs on Japanese military infringement of French sovereignty in Indo- **China**.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

63 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

63

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

3 November 1941

W_{INCH} No. 5.

**Your P_{EFRA} No. 4. Nothing is so good as having something that can
catch and kill anything. It keeps them bunched. Good wishes.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

64 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

64

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

17 November 1941

Circular telegram. Reference my telegram of 27 October, M.339. ¹

The United States reply observed that it had been the policy of the United States Government to give sympathetic consideration to priority of export applications from the Thai Government, and that the Thai Minister in **Washington** had been informed that the **United States** would place **Thailand** in the same category as **China** were the former to be attacked and endeavour to defend herself. In so far as we were unable to spare further aircraft for **Thailand** from **Singapore**, the United States Government would agree to the release to that country of aeroplanes being supplied to us from the **United States** should we desire this course. The question of the release to **Thailand** of aviation spirit and lubricant oil was still under consideration by the **United States**.

2. In view of urgent representations by the Thai Prime Minister we have felt it desirable not to delay the further offer of assistance, and His Majesty's Minister at **Bangkok** has accordingly been authorised to inform the Prime Minister in the following sense:

(An attitude of resolute independence will do much to hamper
a) Japanese plans and constitute the surest means of winning external support for **Thailand** if attacked.

(We are, however, fully alive to the Japanese menace and have a
b) natural interest in frustrating it.

(Military assistance to **Thailand** must be discussed on a realistic

- c) basis. It is on our successful defence of **Singapore** that the ultimate fate of **Thailand** depends, and it is essential that this should not be jeopardised by dissipation of forces.
- (Should it be necessary for us to meet the Japanese menace in the
- d) Kra Isthmus, it is important for us to be assured that we shall not meet with Thai opposition. We hope we may count on active co-operation, since only by our success can the final independence of **Thailand** be assured.
- (We are prepared to authorise the Commander-in-Chief Far East to
- e) send an expert adviser in aerodrome defence, and His Majesty's Minister is to offer twenty-four 4·5-inch howitzers and twelve field guns, with British instructors. If the offer is accepted, twelve howitzers with 1000 rounds of ammunition per gun would be released at once from **Malaya**, other guns being sent in batteries of twelve at intervals of from two to three months.
- (In view of the immense calls on our resources, we cannot offer
- f) aircraft at present and are doubtful whether a supply of fighter or bomber aircraft can be arranged from any other source, though we are making inquiries. We are also inquiring into the possibility of the supply of [group mutilated – similar?] training aircraft, and are prepared to supply limited quantities of aviation petrol—adequate for the current needs of the Thai Air Force.
- (If the reaction of the Thai Prime Minister is favourable we are
- g) prepared to consult the United States Government as to what further can be done.
3. Sir J. Crosby reports he is at once communicating with the Thai Prime Minister in the above sense.
4. The Thai Prime Minister has recently accepted our proposal to increase our staff of the Assistant Military Attaché in **Bangkok** to four, thus raising our military representation to five against eight Japanese officers.

¹ Not published. Reported proposals to supply assistance to **Thailand** in answer to the Thai Prime Minister's appeal.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

65 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

65

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

20 November 1941

Circular telegram. .

Mr Hull sent for His Majesty's Minister on 18 November to inform him of the position of the conversations with the Japanese. The following is the text of a telegram from Sir R. Campbell reporting Mr Hull's remarks, which the latter asked should be treated with a special degree of secrecy and given the most limited circulation:

'After recapitulating the history of these conversations, their interruption by Japanese action in Indo- **China**, their resumption with Konoye's message to the President, and re-emphasising their exploratory character and the United States Government's stand on basic principles, he said Mr Kurusu ¹ had expressed great anxiety to avert a clash of arms, but had said opinion in **Japan** was such that an explosion might occur if agreement between the two Governments could not be reached. Mr Hull had, in turn, stated the anxiety of the United States Government to avoid war, but had laid stress on principles which the United States Government could not abandon. In the first place, there could be no hitch-up between peaceful settlement between the **United States** and **Japan** and the Axis. If Japan had any different ideas on this point he could tell them that they would not get six inches in a thousand years with the United States Government, who would not have anything to do with the greatest butcher in history. In the second place, **Japan** must withdraw her troops from **China**. The United States could

not find a basis for negotiation of a general settlement unless this was done. Kurusu said that Japanese opinion was such that the Government could not do this, at any rate at once, and **Japan** would have to have some troops in **China**. The Secretary of State said in that case no agreement could be reached on this point.

‘2. Mr Hull said Mr Kurusu had been “in a great state” over the breakdown on all these three points and had asked whether there was not some way round the difficulty. Could not some means be found of giving the **Japanese Government** time to educate public opinion away from its present state of mind towards one in which a basis of negotiation with the **United States** would be possible? For instance, if the Japanese were now to withdraw their troops from Indo- **China**, could the United States Government and other countries concerned ease their economic pressure to the point of sending small quantities of rice and oil, far below the full requirements of **Japan**,

¹ Mr S. Kurusu, Japanese Minister in **Washington**, November-December 1941.

the Japanese guaranteeing that nothing would find its way to the Japanese forces? Mr Hull replied that he was ready to think whether this suggestion was attractive enough to warrant its being tried at least.

‘3. The Japanese were now communicating with their Government. In the meantime the Secretary of State wished His Majesty's Government to be informed of the position reached in case they desired to make any comments.

‘4. The Chinese Ambassador ¹ was received just after me. I saw His Excellency afterwards. He had received similar information and expressed satisfaction over the position taken by Mr Hull.’

We will telegraph further as soon as possible.

¹ **Dr Hu Shih, Chinese Ambassador to the United States, 1938–42.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

66 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

66

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

22 November 1941

My telegram of 20 November. .

1. In a further telegram His Majesty's Minister, **Washington**, says that he should have added to his report that:

‘**When the Secretary of State informed the Japanese a) representatives that the United States Government required the withdrawal of Japanese troops from **China**, Kurusu advanced the need to retain a certain number of garrisons. This idea Mr Hull rejected out of hand.**

‘**The Secretary of State said that as far as he was aware Kurusu b) had brought no message for the President and had no special instructions.**’

2. Sir R. Campbell further understands that the Secretary of State gave the Australian Minister a similar account of the conversations with the Japanese and said that he had maintained a ‘take it or leave it’ attitude. He added that he had made it clear to the Japanese that no ‘arrangement’ that might be possible between **Japan** and the **United States** would have much lasting value unless at the same time **Japan** turns away from the Axis connection and aggressive ambitions. The Secretary of State went on to say that he would regard Kurusu's proposition (evacuation of Indo- **China** in exchange for limited supplies for **Japan**) merely as a ‘truce’. If the **Japanese Government** show signs of agreement with such a proposal it might be useful as giving us all some more time.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

67 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

67

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

22 November 1941

My telegram of 20 November [**No. 65**], paragraph 3. .

The following is the text of a telegram giving our comments, which
was sent yesterday to the Chargé d'Affaires at **Washington**:

‘We greatly appreciate the manner in which Mr Hull handled Mr
Kurusu, and feel that his forthright statement of the principles on which
any settlement acceptable to the **United States** must be based can have
done nothing but good. We are in complete agreement with the United
States Government that nothing should be ceded to **Japan** except in
return for recognition of those principles, and concrete action in
accordance with them.

‘2. We find it difficult to believe that any **Japanese Government**
could withdraw from Indo- **China** on the compromise terms suggested by
Mr Kurusu, and can only wait the outcome of the matter of reference to
his Government. But if the **Japanese Government** were prepared in fact
to move their troops out of Indo- **China**, this would not only transform
the situation to the benefit of all countries now threatened by their
presence there, including **China**, but would also be *prima facie* evidence
of a genuine desire to go some considerable way to meet our point of
view. Our first reaction is, therefore, that unless the Japanese offer were
accompanied by unacceptable conditions regarding the future position of
Japan in Indo- **China** it would be worth while to respond, provided that

this can be done in such a way that there is no semblance of abandoning [China](#) or disinteresting ourselves in the ultimate settlement of the China Incident on the basis laid down by the United States Government, which, of course, we entirely support. We should ourselves prefer that no relaxation of economic pressure should take effect, even on a limited scale, without some kind of understanding regarding that settlement, and this seems likely to be the view of the United States Government also.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

68 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

68

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

23 November 1941

My telegram of 22 November. .

His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** has reported an interview on the morning of 23 November between the United States Secretary of State, the Australian and Dutch Ministers, ¹ and himself, in which they were joined by the Chinese Ambassador.

2. Hull recalled the past history of Japanese talks as reported in my telegram of 20 November [**No. 65**], and added that in the latest conversation with Kurusu and the Japanese Ambassador he had emphasised the **United States** view that **Hitler's** attempt to dominate the world was being supported by a small **Hitler** group in **Tokyo**, and that the **United States** were no more likely to stop giving aid to **China** than they were likely to stop giving aid to the British Commonwealth.

3. The two governing motives in his mind in regard to these conversations had been: (*a*) to strengthen the peace party in **Japan**, (*b*) to gain vital time. As to the first, Kurusu had emphasised the urgent importance of giving the peace party some evidence of progress, however small, and as to the second, the United States Navy and Army were most anxious to gain time for further strengthening of the **Philippines**. Hull had, therefore, while standing, as he said, 100 per cent firm in all vital principles, done his best to keep the conversations going. He thought the position had now been reached where little further delay was

possible.

4. On the night of 20 November the Japanese communicated to Hull a document, of which the text is contained in my immediately following telegram.

5. Hull said that when he saw the Japanese again his inclination was to make an alternative proposal to them on the following lines:

‘The United States Government, while maintaining their position on fundamental points, would be willing to consider the conclusion of some limited agreement which might give time for wider discussions, but which would probably not last more than two or three months unless progress could be made on the larger questions. The basis of such an agreement might be that **Japan** should agree to withdraw the bulk of her troops out of Indo- **China**, leaving in Indo- **China** only a few thousand, roughly approximating to what was envisaged under their agreement with Vichy in August.’

In return it might be possible by general agreement with the **United States**, the British Commonwealth and the Dutch, to give **Japan** some relief from the present economic pressure. At one point Hull spoke of getting **Japan** to agree to make no aggressive move in any other direction, but His Majesty's Ambassador did not gain a clear impression whether this was to be a specific part of the limited agreement.

6. Hull inquired what view other Governments would be likely to take of this kind of suggestion which, he thought at best, if the Japanese were really seeking for a way out [group mutilated – for the?] new policy, might lead to a wider settlement, and at worst would have the effect of gaining valuable time. He thought that, from the point of view of **China**, it would be of considerable value to **Chiang Kai-shek** to have the menace to Indo- **China** removed. Hull emphasised that the United States Government had as yet taken no decisions and were anxious for comments or suggestions from other Governments before doing so, for they might at any moment find themselves confronted with the

necessity for prompt action. Although he thought there was an outside chance of something coming out of it, he was not hopeful.

7. His Majesty's Ambassador informed Hull in reply of the contents of my telegram of 22 November [**No. 67**]. The Dutch Minister emphasised the importance of any concession in the matter of oil, on which Hull observed that any oil supplied would need to be strictly limited and, in his opinion, should not include the highest grade. In any case, if the Japanese were allowed any oil from the **United States**, it would take a month for them to fetch it.

8. Subsequent to the foregoing conversation Hull suggested to His Majesty's Ambassador that representatives of the Governments concerned might be given authority to take decisions on the amount of economic relief which their Governments would be willing to concur in giving to the Japanese on the basis suggested. He felt the general situation to be critical, and one that might not permit the delay involved in reference to Governments on all points.

9. His Majesty's Ambassador considers that Hull has in mind a limited and probably temporary arrangement only designed to enable the position for conversations on a wider issue to proceed. These would include a general **Pacific** settlement, a settlement between **China** and **Japan**, and the attitude of **Japan** under the Tripartite Pact. He thinks the question as Hull sees it is whether the **United States** should proceed to try and effect some temporary arrangement or should continue to stand out for some larger settlement, and that Hull, impressed by the desirability of gaining time, favours an attempt at the former. The State Department are considering what might be the lines of an all-round **Pacific** settlement, but Hull realises that this is not yet practical politics and, if and when the time comes, would naturally have to be discussed with the other Governments concerned.

10. The Chinese Ambassador expressed the fullest confidence in Hull, and admitted that it would be a great relief to have the Japanese menace from Indo- **China** withdrawn, but he made the points that—

(under this plan, **Japan** would remain free to prosecute the war in
a) **China**;

(the Chinese Government regard economic pressure on **Japan** as of
b) vital importance to **China**, and would be very reluctant to see it
seriously reduced at this stage.

His Majesty's Ambassador had the impression that Hull would be very
careful of Chinese feelings.

11. Hull emphasised again his desire that this matter should be treated
within as restricted a circle as possible in view of the paramount
importance of secrecy.

12. We will telegraph further as soon as possible.

¹ Dr A. Loudon, Netherlands Minister to the **United States**, Dec
1938 – May 1942; Ambassador, May 1942 – Jul 1947.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

69 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

69

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

23 November 1941

My immediately preceding telegram.

The following is the text of the document handed over to the United States Secretary of State by the Japanese Ambassador on 20 November:

‘1. Both the Governments of **Japan** and the **United States** undertake not to make any armed advance into any of the regions in South-Eastern Asia and the Southern Pacific area excepting the part of **French Indo-China** where Japanese troops are stationed at present.

‘2. The Japanese Government undertake to withdraw its troops now stationed in **French Indo-China** upon either the restoration of peace between **Japan** and **China**, or the establishment of an equitable peace in the **Pacific** area. In the meantime, the Government of **Japan** declares that it is prepared to remove its troops now stationed in the southern part of **French Indo-China** to the northern part of the said territory upon the conclusion of the present arrangement, which shall later be embodied in a final agreement.

‘3. The Governments of **Japan** and the **United States** shall cooperate with a view to securing the acquisition of those goods and commodities which the two countries need in the **Netherlands East Indies**.

‘4. The Governments of **Japan** and the **United States** mutually undertake to restore their commercial relations to those prevailing prior

to the freezing of assets. The Government of the **United States** shall supply **Japan** with a required quantity of oil.

‘5. The Government of the **United States** undertake to refrain from such measures and actions as will be prejudicial to endeavours for the restoration of general peace between **Japan** and **China**.’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

70 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

70

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

24 November 1941

The views of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand on the points raised in your telegrams [Nos. 68 and 69] and M.378 ¹ of 23 November are as follows:

1. They are, in general, opposed to any steps that would be regarded by **Japan** as an indication of any relaxation of our determined opposition to further aggression, of any sympathy with the Japanese New Order, or of her continued association with the Axis powers.

2. In particular, they would deplore any step taken in this connection which might have the effect of increasing the Japanese pressure upon **China**.

3. While they would regard the terms of the document handed to the United States Secretary of State by the Japanese Ambassador on 20 November as entirely unacceptable, they are generally in sympathy with Mr Cordell Hull's comments as set out in Circular telegram M.378, and would favour an attempt being made to reach a temporary understanding on the basis of those comments.

4. They are particularly impressed by the desirability of working in the closest co-operation with the United States Government, and if that Government wish to proceed on these lines they are strongly of opinion that the Governments of the British Commonwealth should concur. If such an arrangement were ultimately found to be possible (as to which

they must express some doubt) then the general effect on the world situation of a Japanese withdrawal from Indo- **China** must be most salutary, while the prospect of a successful attack upon the **Burma Road** must be materially decreased. If it failed, the time that would be gained would be exceedingly valuable to our cause, provided care is taken to ensure that the negotiations are not accepted by **Japan** as a mark of weakness.

¹ Not published. Contained Mr Hull's personal marginal comments on the Japanese document quoted in No. 69.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

OUTBREAK OF WAR: JAPAN AND THAILAND

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

71 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

71

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

29 November 1941

Circular telegram. JAPAN.

My immediately preceding telegram M.403, paragraph 2. ¹

1. The [**United States**] Secretary of State told the Australian Minister that he was depressed by the turn of events. He blamed the Chinese principally for the dropping of the *modus vivendi*, ² but said he would have liked stronger support from the British and Dutch Governments. He did not stress the latter point, but said it would have been impossible to implement the *modus vivendi* in the face of strong Chinese opposition and that he had now dropped it entirely. The Australian Minister suggested that further discussion with the Chinese might save the position, but the Secretary of State thought it was now too late.

2. The Australian Minister later saw the Under-Secretary of State, who said it was apparent that the Japanese had started their military operations at least some days ago.

3. The Australian Minister tried to draw out both the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State as to what action the **United States** would take if the Japanese invaded **Thailand**, but they would not make any commitments.

¹ Not published. Paragraph 2 read: 'The Secretary of State told the Australian Minister that nothing of consequence happened at

the meeting between the President and Japanese representatives on 27 November. Both sides restated their position. Kurusu had had no instructions from his Government to return.'

² This was a proposal by Mr Hull for an interim agreement with Japan, by which, in return for economic concessions, Japan was to withdraw her troops from southern Indo- China and reduce her forces in Indo- China.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

72 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

72

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

29 November 1941

My immediately preceding telegram.

Lord Halifax saw the Under-Secretary of State yesterday and has telegraphed the following account of the conversations:

‘1. I asked Welles whether things had moved at all since the President's interview with the Japanese. Welles told me that nothing further had transpired since the President's talk and the handing over of the general note to the Japanese.

‘2. From intercepted telephonic conversations, the United States Government understood there was an internal crisis going on in **Japan**, and that communication by cable from **Japan** had been suspended for some hours today between 10.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. They had no information as to the reason for this. Meanwhile, the Japanese here were presumably awaiting instructions.

‘3. He showed me the record Hull had made of the President's conversation with the Japanese. The character of this had been quite general, the Japanese taking the line of regret that no temporary agreement had been found possible, and the President developing the argument that, anxious as the **United States** were for peace, they could not make any effective advance to this end nor would there be any substantial hope of such efforts being effective so long as the Japanese pursued the policy of aggression in support of **Hitler**. He emphasised the

incompatibility of the Japanese actions with any substantial hope of improvement in relations and of securing peace. He said that the temper of **United States'** public opinion was such, and the issues at stake in the world were so sharply outlined, that the **United States** could not bring about any substantial relaxation in the economic situation unless **Japan** gave the **United States** some clear manifestation of peaceful intentions. If, however, **Japan** were able so to act, the **United States** would respond with concrete steps. If Japan followed **Hitler** and pursued the course wanted [?] the President was convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that **Japan** would be the ultimate loser.

'4. I asked Welles whether he could give me any indication what would be the **United States** attitude in the event of a Japanese attack on **Thailand**. He said that he could not answer this question officially until they had further discussion with the President after his return on Tuesday, but speaking for himself he said he felt that **Japan** had come to [group omitted – realise?] that any further Japanese aggression should be resisted by the **United States of America**.

'5. He thought the Japanese were likely to move during the next few days rather than fill up Indo- **China** with troops and wait.

'6. Your telegram M.402 just received. ¹ As you will have seen from my telegrams, the United States Government are at present no longer regarding the *modus vivendi* as practical politics, contributory causes being the Chinese reaction, the suggestions of His Majesty's Government which did not appear to Hull capable of inclusion in the interim agreement and, I fancy, their own reconsiderations in the light of comments received.'

¹ Not published. This telegram to the British Ambassador in **Washington**, repeated to New Zealand, gave the United Kingdom Government's comments on the proposal by Mr Hull to try to reach an interim agreement with **Japan**. The main British comments were that the proposal contained terms so favourable to **Japan** that they left no room for bargaining and that it took

too little account of the Chinese position and of probable Chinese reactions.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

73 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

73

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

30 November 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram of 29 November [No. 72].

1. There are important indications that **Japan** is about to attack **Thailand** and that this attack will include a seaborne expedition to seize strategical points in the Kra Isthmus.

2. The **Royal Air Force** are reconnoitring on an arc 180 miles from Kota Bharu for three days commencing 29 November, and the Commander-in-Chief Far East has requested the Commander-in-Chief United States Asiatic Fleet ¹ at **Manila** to undertake air reconnaissance on the line **Manila** - Camranh [group mutilated – if possible?] on the same days. The Commander-in-Chief Far East has asked for permission to move into the Kra Isthmus if reconnaissance establishes the fact that escorted Japanese ships are approaching the isthmus, and he is pressing for an immediate decision on this point. Time is the essence of this plan, particularly at this season of the year when the Kra Isthmus is waterlogged. Consequently great tactical advantage lies with the side which gets there first.

3. Our military advisers fear the operation might lead to a clash which might involve us in war, and they have always emphasised that, unless our vital interests were immediately threatened, this should be avoided so long as we have no certainty of **United States** support. In view [group mutilated – however?] of the United States Government's constitutional

difficulties, any prior guarantee of such support is most unlikely.

4. In these circumstances His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** has been instructed to explain the position at once to the United States Government and to take the following line. To allow the Japanese to establish themselves so near the Malay frontier would be an [group mutilated – obvious?] threat to **Singapore**, even though at the present season it might not develop at once. We have also to bear in mind the encouragement which the Japanese success would give their extremists. The Japanese appetite would inevitably grow, and other Far Eastern peoples would be correspondingly depressed. It looks therefore as though, to ensure the defence of **Singapore** and for wider reasons, we might have to take the proposed action to forestall the Japanese.

5. Lord Halifax is to ask for an urgent expression of the United States Government's views and has been reminded of the importance of ensuring ourselves of **United States** support in the event of hostilities.

6. We should be grateful for your views by most immediate telegram.

¹ Admiral T. C. Hart, USN; Commander-in-Chief Asiatic Fleet, Jul 1939 – Jun 1942; commanded Allied Naval Forces, ABDA Area, Jan – Feb 1942

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

74 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

74

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

30 November 1941

My telegram [**No. 73**]. The following is the text of two telegrams received in reply from His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington**.

First telegram begins:

'Have seen Hull who left me in no doubt as to his own personal opinion, which would be to do immediately what we want. He is telephoning the President, who is in the country, and advised me to make our Naval Staff Mission at once see Stark, ¹ asking the latter also to call on the President.'

Second telegram begins:

'1. After telephoning the President, Stark has told the Commander-in-Chief Asiatic Fleet to make the desired reconnaissance flights. Aircraft have been instructed not to approach Japanese ships in a manner to indicate offensive intention, but are authorised to defend themselves if attacked.

'2. The Secretary of State has given the President the message in your telegram [**No. 73] and the President will telephone the Secretary of State tomorrow (Sunday) morning. The President is expected to be back in **Washington** on Monday.**

'3. You cannot count on the President taking a decision on policy

before his return, and he has so far given no indication whether he will feel able to take a decision in favour of supporting us, to which he will undoubtedly feel inclined. The Secretary of State will tell me anything he can after his telephone talk to the President tomorrow (Sunday) morning.'

¹ Admiral H. R. Stark, USN; Chief of Naval Operations, 1939–42; commanded US Naval Forces in [Europe](#), 1942–45.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

75 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

75

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

1 December 1941

Your most secret telegram of 30 November [**No. 73**]. The views of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are as follows:

1. An immediate approach to the Thai Government would seem to them desirable, informing the Thais of the apprehensions of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** and of the United States Government, and of the facts upon which these apprehensions are based, calling their attention to the markedly disadvantageous position in which they and we would be placed in the event of an unopposed Japanese landing on the Kra Isthmus, and suggesting that they might consider most urgently the possibility of inviting us, in the circumstances envisaged, to defend this territory in collaboration with Thai forces under the most definite and explicit assurances of respect for Thai sovereignty and independence. In the event of such a request being received from the Thais, then clearly it would be advisable (subject to the general considerations set out in paragraph 3) to forestall any Japanese occupation of Thai territory. Should the Thais refuse to extend such an invitation, then the matter would again be at large and should be decided in the light of the considerations set out below.

2. With or without such a Thai invitation, the **New Zealand Government** feel that if the United States Government are in general agreement and are willing to proffer such assurances of assistance as the American constitutional situation will allow, then again an attempt should be

made to forestall a Japanese occupation. It might, if time allows, be advisable also to attempt to persuade the United States Government to join us in the intimation to the Japanese suggested by the Thai Prime Minister, as set out in your telegram M.400 of 28 November, ² that if **Japan** goes to war with **Thailand** she will find herself at war with us.

3. In the contingency, which they feel is not unlikely, of a Thai refusal to receive assistance and a **United States** inability to promise co-operation, then the matter must be decided on general considerations of the strength available in the locality, the means available to us to prevent a landing, the undesirability of allowing a territory of such high strategical value to fall into enemy hands without an attempt on our part to prevent it, and the effect on world opinion, both enemy and friendly, of such inaction on our part.

¹ This message was repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² Not published.

4. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand do not feel that they are in a position to pass any considered judgment of real value on some of the considerations outlined in the last preceding paragraph, and while they assume, of course, that no action will be taken unless and until it is an established fact that Japanese ships are approaching the Isthmus or have, in fact, crossed the ADB line, ¹ they are prepared to leave the decision to His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** with the assurance that, whatever the decision of the British Government, the **New Zealand Government** will adopt it and support it.

5. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand assume that the **Netherlands** authorities are being taken into full consultation with a view to their maximum co-operation with us.

¹ As defined in the report of the American-Dutch-British

conversations at Singapore in April 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

76 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

76

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

1 December 1941

My telegram of 30 November [No. 74].

The following is the text of a further telegram received last night
from His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington**:

‘1. Have seen Hull who tells me that the President will not decide
anything in advance of discussions which he will have, it seems, on
return to **Washington**, probably 12 noon, Monday. I will telegraph again
as soon as possible thereafter.

‘2. Hull said it would, of course, be helpful if we could possibly get
the Thais to invite us in, and also added that he scarcely supposed they
would do this until it was too late.

‘3. Even if the President does not give an immediate affirmative
answer to our questions and although prophecy is dangerous, I find it
very difficult to believe that the United States Government would not
support us in the event of hostilities; I know Hull, Stimson ² and Knox ³
would wish to do so. There would be much less difficulty with public
opinion over war with **Japan** than with **Germany**; and both public
opinion and the Government are very sensitive about the **Pacific**
position from the point of view of **United States** interests.

‘4. The real question to my mind is how quickly the **United States**
would join us. About that we may know more tomorrow.’

In a later telegram Lord Halifax reports that the Japanese are seeing the Secretary of State at their request at 10 a.m. today (Monday). Mr Hull does not know for what purpose.

² Mr Henry L. Stimson, United States Secretary of War, Jul 1940 – Sep 1945.

³ Mr Frank Knox, United States Secretary of the Navy, Jul 1940 – death, 28 Apr 1944.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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77 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

77

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

2 December 1941

My telegram of 1 December, last paragraph.

The following telegram has been received from Lord Halifax with reference to the meeting of Japanese representatives with the Secretary of State this morning (Monday):

'1. Hull telephoned that he had seen the Japanese, who had not received any instructions from **Tokyo**. They had reverted to one or two points in their own interim proposals and Hull reported himself as having spoken very stiffly to them and put them on the defensive.

'2. He reminded them that [group mutilated – previously?] he had said the United States Government were unable to meet them on three important points of their proposals which covered—

(the stopping of aid to **China**;

a)

(b) giving them some oil

(c) the retention in Indo- **China** of more than a token number of troops.'

Lord Halifax added that, when he telephoned, Mr Hull had not yet seen the President, but expected a United States Cabinet meeting to be held later in the day.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

78 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

78

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

3 December 1941

My telegram M.412. ¹

**After consideration of Lord Halifax's account of his discussion with
the President, the following reply is being despatched to Lord Halifax
this evening:**

**'1. We entirely agree with President Roosevelt that we and the
United States Government (and the Netherlands Government) should be
clear as to what action we shall respectively take in the various
situations likely to arise.**

**¹ Not published. In this telegram the Dominions Secretary
repeated to the Prime Minister the text of a telegram from Lord
Halifax reporting on his interview with the President.**

**'2. Of the hypotheses in paragraph 6 of your telegram, the first two
seem to us for practical purposes indistinguishable. ¹ All our information
goes to show that reinforcements have been arriving for some time and
are still continuing. The only question, therefore, appears to be what we
should do if the Japanese reply to President Roosevelt's inquiry is
unsatisfactory. We feel the proper reaction would be simultaneous
warnings to **Japan** by the **United States**, the Dutch and ourselves to the
effect that if she uses Indo-Chinese territory as a base for further
aggression, she will do so at her peril. If such warnings are given it is**

necessary to be clear as to the action which we shall all take if they are ignored. We read the President's assurance of support recorded in paragraph 8 of your telegram to mean armed support,² and on this assumption we should ourselves be prepared to put into effect the operation referred to in my telegram [**No. 73**] if there were a [group mutilated – direct?] Japanese attack or threat of immediate attack on the Kra Isthmus. Under hypothesis (c) the threat to **Singapore** might be less immediate, but we should still think it wise to put into operation the same plan, provided we had a similar assurance that we would have the armed support of the **United States** if our action resulted in hostilities with **Japan**. If the President's wishes suggested any other form of action in which he would be disposed to participate, we should of course be glad to consider it. We note particularly the President's statement that in any direct attack on ourselves or the Dutch we should all be together.³ We fully endorse this statement.

‘3. We have already been considering the possibility of some arrangement with the Thai Government under which our entry into the Kra Isthmus, at whatever stage it might take place, would be by their invitation. The difficulty at present is that we are not militarily in a position to give direct assistance to the Thai Government in the protection of the rest of their territory. The proposal to occupy a very small part of the Kra Isthmus is therefore unlikely to appeal to them, and we fear the same applies to an undertaking from us to guarantee their ultimate full sovereignty and independence. It would, we feel, be asking a good deal of them to expect them to accept the virtual certainty of partial extinction in order to ensure their ultimate independence.

¹ Paragraph 6 read: ‘He wished me accordingly to ask you what His Majesty's Government would do in the event of (a) the Japanese reply being unsatisfactory, reinforcements not yet having reached Indo- **China**, and (b) the reply being unsatisfactory, reinforcements having in the meantime reached Indo- **China**, and (c) a Japanese attack on **Thailand** other than an attack on the Kra Isthmus, attack covering in his mind such

Japanese pressure on Thailand as to force concessions to the Japanese dangerously detrimental to the general position.'

² **The reference to support in paragraph 8 read: 'On the immediate question asked in your telegram [No. 73] he said we could certainly count on their support, though it might take a short time, he spoke of a few days, to get things into political shape here....'**

³ **See p. 91, note 1.**

'4. The Thai Prime Minister has forcibly represented to us that the only way to save Thailand is by a public warning to Japan by the United States and ourselves that if she went to war with Thailand she would find herself at war with us both as well. If he knew a warning of the type suggested in paragraph 2 above had been delivered, even though it were not made publicly, his outlook might change. We feel, however, that any communication to him about our plans in the Kra Isthmus would be useless until such a warning has been delivered, and there is in addition a very great risk of leakage to the Japanese. For the moment we are confining our action to informing Sir J. Crosby of our plan so that he may be able to make a communication at short notice.

'5. We would propose to make it clear in any such communication or in any announcement which might accompany our [group mutilated – plan?] that we should restore in full to Thailand any territory which we might occupy, and that our aim is to ensure the full independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Thailand.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

79 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

79

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

3 December 1941

My telegram M.412, paragraph 3. ¹ The following is the text of a document given by the President to the Under-Secretary of State, and handed over by the latter to the Japanese representatives yesterday morning, 2 December.

‘I have received reports during the past days of continuing Japanese troop movements to Southern Indo- **China**. These reports indicate a very rapid and material increase in the forces of all kinds stationed by **Japan** in Indo- **China**.

‘It was my clear understanding by the terms of the agreement, and there is no present need to discuss the nature of that agreement, between **Japan** and the French Government at Vichy that the total number of Japanese forces permitted by the terms of that agreement to be stationed in Indo- **China** was very considerably less than the total amount of forces already there. The stationing of these increased Japanese forces in Indo- **China** would seem to imply the utilisation of these forces by **Japan** for purposes of further aggression, since no such number of forces could possibly be required for the policing of that region. Such aggression could conceivably be against the Philippine Islands; against many islands of the East Indies; against **Burma**; against **Malaya**, or the whole through coercion or through actual use of force for the purpose of undertaking the occupation of **Thailand**. Such new aggression would, of course, be additional to the actual aggression

already against **China**, our attitude towards which is well known, and has been repeatedly stated to the **Japanese Government**.

‘Please be good enough to request the Japanese Ambassador and Ambassador Kurusu to inquire at once of the **Japanese Government** what the actual reasons may be for the steps already taken, and what I am to consider is the policy of the **Japanese Government** as demonstrated by this recent and rapid concentration of troops in Indo- **China**. This Government has seen in the last few years in **Europe** a policy on the part of the German Government which has involved a constant and steady encroachment upon territory and the rights of free and independent peoples through utilisation of military enterprise of the same character. It is for that reason and because of the broad problem of **United States** defence that I should like to know the intentions of the **Japanese Government**.’

¹ Not published. Paragraph 3 read: ‘He [President Roosevelt] then discussed at great length the Japanese reinforcement of Indo- **China** and said he had been considering the possibility of some concerted parallel statement with us. He thought, however, that the wiser course was to begin by making a communication to the Japanese in the form of a question, which he proposed to instruct Welles to give to the Japanese this evening (Monday) or tomorrow morning. I saw Welles when I had finished with the President and he undertook to let us have a copy....’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

80 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

80

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 December 1941

My telegram [**No. 78**].

The following reply, dated 3 December, has been received today from
His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington**:

‘I saw the President with the Under-Secretary of State this evening
and read to him your telegram. ¹ The President agrees with the [group
mutilated – interpretation in your?] second paragraph that the first two
hypotheses are, in practice, indistinguishable. Before giving a definite
reply on your suggestion of a simultaneous warning, he wished to be
clear on the following points:

‘1. Do you mean by the words, “If she uses Indo- **China** as a base for
further aggression”, some actual act of jumping-off by **Japan** or the
building-up of a base which clearly must be intended for further
aggression?

¹ See **No. 78**.

‘2. I said I read your telegram to mean the first, although it was
plain that the building-up of a base would *pro tanto* diminish Japanese
dependence on vulnerable supply lines. The President was much alive to
this, but I think his own mind leant in favour of making a warning, if
given, [group mutilated – conditional on?] actual jumping-off.

'3. The point also arose in the discussion whether your wording, "as a base for further aggression", was or was not intended to cover the hypothesis of intensified attack on the **Burma Road from **Thailand**. The President, however, said he thought that was academic as the concentration of troops in Southern Thailand could hardly be intended for attack on the **Burma Road** by land except through **Thailand**, in which case the issue would be clear. The only practicable alternative in his view would be for the Japanese to bomb **Rangoon**, when again the issue would be clear.**

'4. The President assented to the interpretation of support as recorded in paragraph 8, my telegram M.412, ¹ as meaning armed support. The character of this armed support must be decided by the staffs.

'5. In the circumstances of hypothesis (c), the President indicated assent to our putting the Kra Isthmus plan into operation in this eventuality, and I have no doubt in this case you can count on the armed support of the **United States.**

'6. I read the President the last two sentences of paragraph 2 of your telegram, ² to which he gives assent. In this connection he said their information led them to think it probable that Japanese attacks might be directed against the **Netherlands East Indies, particularly against some islands north of **Sumatra**. He made the comment on this that any action of the kind would prove more easy of presentation to **United States'** public opinion on the ground of threat to the **Philippines** by encirclement.**

'7. He recognised the force of your paragraphs 4 and 5 concerning the proposed guarantee to **Thailand, and the intimation at the present moment to the Thai Prime Minister of [group omitted – our?] intention. He thought, however, that you might consider two other suggestions. First, that we should make a private communication to **Thailand** that we had no intention of invading them but that if the Japanese, with or without **Thailand's** agreement, went in, we should immediately do the**

same in our own self-defence. Second, that in view of Japanese-inspired propaganda intimating that we intended to invade **Thailand**,

¹ See p. 86, note 2.

² See No. 78.

you might make a public statement now to the effect that His Majesty's Government had no intention of committing aggression against **Thailand** and were only concerned to see her sovereignty and independence preserved.'

A further telegram will be sent as soon as possible.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

81 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

81

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 December 1941

Your telegram of 1 December [**No. 75**].

We were most grateful for your timely and valuable telegram and
have had very fully in mind the considerations you mention.

You will since have seen from my telegrams M.412 ¹ and [**No. 78**]
the substantial advance which has been made in our discussions with
the **United States**.

We have considered most carefully the suggestion made in paragraph
1 of your telegram, but have come to the conclusion that, for the
reasons given in paragraphs 3 and 4 of my telegram [**No. 78**], any
immediate approach to the Thai Government would involve serious risks.
As however there indicated, we are explaining the position to His
Majesty's Minister at **Bangkok** in order that he may be able to make an
approach to the Thai Government at short notice as circumstances may
require.

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

82 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

82

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

5 December 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram of 4 December [**No. 80**].

The following telegram dated 5 December has been sent to His
Majesty's Ambassador, **Washington**:

‘1. Your telegram of 3 December (Action in the event of further
Japanese aggression). ²

‘2. I should like you to express our very deep appreciation for the
President's prompt and helpful response. We are particularly grateful for
his confirmation of our interpretation of his assurance of support in the
circumstances contemplated in my telegram of 30 November [**No. 73**].

‘3. As regards the scope of the warning, it would apply to an attack
by **Japan** on **Thailand**, **Malaya**, or the **Netherlands East Indies**, and also
to an attack on the **Burma Road** from Indo- **China**.

‘4. We are dealing with the **Netherlands East Indies** aspect (your
paragraph 6) separately.

‘5. Our proposed action with regard to **Thailand** must of necessity be
of a forestalling nature. Consequently we cannot technically give the
Thais a guarantee of non-aggression. But we do wish to encourage them
to resist Japanese encroachment, and we should like therefore to assure
them that in the event of attack by **Japan** we will both help them to the

best of our ability.'

² **See No. 80.**

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83 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

83

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

5 December 1941

Circular telegram. NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES.

In view of President Roosevelt's attitude as indicated in paragraph 7 of my telegram M.412 ¹ and confirmed by paragraph 6 of my telegram [No. 80] and in face of the present Japanese threat, we feel that we should go beyond the previous oral assurance given to the Dutch (my telegram of 6 September, M.295). ² We are therefore communicating with them today proposing a military understanding whereby each party would undertake to co-operate immediately to the fullest extent of its available resources in the event of the other party being forced to take military action to repel an attack upon any of its territories in the **Far East**. We are adding that we have reason to believe that our views are shared by His Majesty's Governments in the Commonwealth of **Australia** and in New Zealand, and that if the Netherlands Government are prepared to enter into such an understanding with us we will at once suggest to those Governments that they should also participate. The text of the Note will be telegraphed as soon as possible. President Roosevelt is being advised of the communication which we are making to the Netherlands Government, and informed that we feel sure he will agree that the Dutch should from now on be brought fully into our discussions of the measures to be taken to counter further Japanese moves.

¹ Not published. Reporting on his interview with President Roosevelt, Lord Halifax in paragraph 7 of his telegram of 2 December said *inter alia* that he thought that President Roosevelt would be disposed to support whatever action His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** were prepared to take in the event of the Japanese reply to the Note of 2 December being unsatisfactory or of a Japanese attack on **Thailand**. Halifax added: 'At one point he [Roosevelt] threw in an aside that in the case of any direct attack on ourselves or the Dutch, we should obviously all be together....'

² Not published. This assurance, at first given orally and then supported by a Note on 5 September from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Netherlands Minister in **London**, stated that the United Kingdom Government 'consider themselves to have already assumed the duty of safeguarding and restoring the possessions and rights of the **Netherlands** to the best of their ability', and that 'an attack upon the **Netherlands East Indies** would lead them to do the utmost in their power to this end'. The British Government, however, reserved the right to decide whether military action was practicable.

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84 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

84

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

5 December 1941

My telegrams of 4 and 5 December [**Nos. 80 and 82**].

The position is that we have now received an assurance of armed support from the **United States**:

(If we find it necessary either to forestall a Japanese landing in
a) the Kra Isthmus or to occupy part of the Isthmus as a counter to Japanese violation of any other part of **Thailand**;

(if the Japanese attack the **Netherlands East Indies** and we go at
b) once to the support of the latter;

(if the Japanese attack us.

c)

2. We have accordingly instructed the Commander-in-Chief Far East that he should take action as he has suggested (see **paragraph 2 of my telegram of 30 November [No. 73]**) without reference to us if either:

(He has good information that a Japanese expedition is advancing
a) with the apparent intention of landing on the Kra Isthmus, or,

(The Japanese violate any other part of **Thailand**.

b)

3. The Commander-in-Chief Far East has also been authorised, in the event of a Japanese attack on the **Netherlands East Indies**, to put into operation without further reference to us the plan already agreed with the **Netherlands** authorities.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

85 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

85

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

5 December 1941

THAILAND.

My telegrams [**Nos. 78**], paragraphs 3-5, [**No. 80**], paragraph 7, and [**No. 82**].

1. We have explained to His Majesty's Minister at **Bangkok** for his most secret and personal information the nature of the Kra Isthmus plan and the circumstances in which it would be put into operation. We are also consulting him on the following lines:

- (1) It is important that, if and when the operation is carried out, it should not meet with Thai resistance. It is in our view our best first strategical move in the circumstances envisaged, not excluding further possibilities, and represents the best means of helping **Thailand**.
- (2) We have it in mind, therefore, in order to prepare the way, to give **Thailand** an assurance that in the event of a Japanese attack we will help them to the best of our ability.
- (3) We hope this promise to assist might encourage **Thailand** to resist **Japan**, and that the Thailand Government, if compelled to abandon **Bangkok**, would transfer themselves to British territory while their troops retired southwards to link up with our own.
- (4) We understand the Thai position to be that no military arrangement of any kind is practicable without a definite warning to **Japan** by the **United States** and ourselves. We are consulting the United States Government about the possibility of a warning, but Sir J. Crosby should make no approach to the Thai Government pending

further instructions.

2. A further telegram will be sent on receipt of Sir J. Crosby's reply. In the meantime we have informed His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington that we are consulting Sir J. Crosby in this sense. We hope (see paragraph 5 of [No. 82]) that the United States Government may feel able to join with us in the assurance as in paragraph 1 (2) above.

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IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

86 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

86

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

5 December 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram of 5 December [**No. 83**]. NETHERLANDS

EAST INDIES

The following is the text of the Note handed to the Netherlands
Minister ¹ today:

‘In my Note of 5 September ² I explained to Your Excellency the
attitude of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** towards an
attack on the **Netherlands East Indies**. The Note stated that His
Majesty's Government considered themselves to have already assumed
the duty of safeguarding and restoring the possessions and rights of the
Netherlands to the best of their ability during the war and at the peace.
It followed therefore that an attack upon the **Netherlands East Indies**
would lead them to do the utmost in their power to this end, though His
Majesty's Government must remain the sole judge of what action or
military measures on their part were practicable and likely to achieve
the common purpose.

‘2. His Majesty's Government have again reviewed the position in the
light of recent developments, and they feel it is of urgent importance to
provide the firmest basis for effective co-operation in meeting the
present Japanese threat. They are accordingly, for their part, prepared to
enter at once into a mutual understanding with the Netherlands
Government whereby each party will undertake to co-operate

immediately with the other to the fullest extent of its available resources in the event of the other party being forced to take military action to repel an attack upon any of its territories in the **Far East.**

‘3. His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that their views are shared by His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, and if the Netherlands Government are prepared to enter into such an understanding, His Majesty's Government will at once suggest to the Governments of the two Dominions that they should also participate.**

‘4. The question of the form in which the understanding should be recorded and the further question of whether, and if so, at what moment, publicity should be [group omitted – given?] to it can be further discussed if the Netherlands Government accept the suggestion in principle.’

¹ **Jonkheer E. M. van Verduynen, Netherlands Minister to the **United Kingdom**.**

² **See p. 91, note 2.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

87 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

87

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

6 December 1941

My telegram of 5 December [**No. 82**]. The following reply has been received from Lord Halifax this afternoon (Friday):

‘1. I had a long talk with the President this evening (Thursday) and gave him the message in your second paragraph.

‘2. On the question of warning in your third paragraph, he was very doubtful about the wisdom of including attack on the **Burma Road**. Apart from the fact that the Chinese war stood on a different footing to some new aggression, his recollection was that in the summer of 1940 the Japanese had blocked the Indo-Chinese route to **China** at Hanoi, where the **United States** had supplies for **China**, which had consequently been obstructed without, he thought, any serious protest in the **United States**. This precedent made it difficult for him to take so much stiffer a line now as regards an attack on the **Burma Road**. Moreover, if hostilities come he will have to make his case solely on defence grounds, which he feels he can well do on the other cases you mention but not on the **Burma Road** issue. He hopes, therefore, that you may not think it necessary to include this in the warning.

‘3. Subject to the above and to paragraph 5 below, he agrees to the warning covering any attack by **Japan** on **Thailand**, **Malaya**, or the **Netherlands East Indies**. He thinks that if warning is given by the **United States**, ourselves and the Dutch, we should act independently all within

twenty-four hours, using different language to mean the same thing. I read him again the language in the second paragraph of your telegram [No. 78], which he thought quite all right. He would prefer the **United States** to get in first. On account of the political consideration here it was important that their action should be based on independent necessities of **United States** defence and not appear to follow on ourselves. He assumed you would be concerting with the Dutch

‘4. He said, however, that he had received an indirect communication from Kurusu that matters were not yet hopeless and that a direct approach to the Emperor ¹ might produce result. Kurusu had also said that if the President would make the move it still might not be impossible to secure a truce and even a settlement between **Japan** and **China**. Kurusu had sketched possible lines of a meeting provided the President would endeavour to act as “introducer” between **China** and **Japan** with a view to their dealing directly with each other. These possible lines of [group mutilated – action?]: a truce and withdrawal of the bulk of the Japanese [group mutilated – troops?] in Indo- **China** and withdrawal of the Japanese troops [group mutilated – from?] North China on a timetable to be agreed between the Japanese and Chinese military, with an American assessor or arbitrator (he was not clear which). The President said that the Japanese would obviously want some economic relief. He did not attach too much importance to this approach, but was naturally reluctant to miss any chance and thought a communication to the Emperor would strengthen his general case if things went wrong. He asked my opinion.

‘5. In answer, I said in the question of the approach to the Emperor the main point seemed to be the danger of delay in putting in a warning on the assumption that Kurusu's approach was worthless. Could he make his communication to the Emperor if he made it serve as a definite warning? The President agreed and said he could, and would include such a warning, if he decided to do it, tomorrow morning after he has received the Japanese reply to his question two

days ago. As to the treatment of Kurusu's approach generally, I said no doubt he would be particularly careful not to put a foot wrong with the Chinese after last week's experience, and, therefore, it might be wiser to avoid any detailed suggestion at the first stage, merely confining the message and warning to a hint; if the Emperor gave him any reason to think it would be helpful he might be able to make a suggestion that would assist the maintenance of peaceful relations. The President agreed.

'6. He will decide whether he does or does not communicate with the Emperor tomorrow (Friday) morning, and meanwhile wishes us to suspend delivery of the warning while making all preparation for it with the Dutch. If he does approach the Emperor he would hope that the three-power warning might be deferred till he had the Emperor's reply, for which he would ask urgently.

'7. Your paragraph 5. ¹ He agrees on the proposal in the last sentence, and promised to instruct the State Department to give **Thailand** the assurance there suggested. But he still thinks it would be useful if you told **Thailand** that whatever happens now, and even if their sovereignty is temporarily destroyed by **Japan**, His Majesty's Government in conjunction with the Allies would restore it.'

¹ No. 82.

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IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

88 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

88

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

6 December 1941

Circular telegram. My telegram [**No. 87**]. The following reply was
sent to Lord Halifax last night:

‘1. I am greatly relieved to hear that the President agrees to the
warning and I accept his procedure. I understand his difficulties about
making the warning apply to the **Burma Road** and I am content to
accept his guidance in this respect.

‘2. We will at once concert with the Dutch the wording of our
respective warnings and have them ready.

‘3. We shall be interested to hear whether the President decides to
make a communication to the Emperor and the form it will take. I
approve of what you said as reported in paragraph 5 of your telegram.

‘4. We shall wait for word from the President before communicating
our warning to the Japanese.

‘5. We will also give an assurance to **Thailand** as proposed.’

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89 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

89

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

6 December 1941

Circular telegram. JAPAN.

My telegram [**No. 87**], paragraph 7, and my telegram [**No. 88**],
paragraph 5.

The following further telegram dated 5 December has now been
received from Lord Halifax:

‘Welles has just telephoned to say that the President has changed his
mind and wished to suspend decision about conveying assurances to
Thailand, in the sense of paragraph 7 of [**No. 87**], until he has decided
about the message to the Emperor. He will discuss the question with me
again when he has made up his mind about the Emperor. I am trying to
see someone to whom I can point out the dangers of delay, both of the
assurance to **Thailand** and of a communication in some form to the
Japanese.

‘2. This is most annoying. Nevertheless, in view of the urgency of
the situation revealed in recent **Bangkok** telegrams, ¹ I do not think you
need hesitate about giving an assurance to **Thailand** on behalf of His
Majesty's Government if you want to, since the **United States** attitude to
a Japanese invasion of **Thailand** is, in my opinion, now sufficiently
clear.’

¹ **Not published.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

90 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

90

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

[Extract]

7 December 1941

**My telegram of 6 December [No. 89]. The following is the text of a
further telegram from Lord Halifax dated 5 December:**

**‘I saw Hull this evening (Friday). He told me he had seen the
Japanese this morning, who had given him a reply, which was brief, to
the President's inquiry about troops in Indo- **China**. The substance of the
reply was that the Chinese had been reinforcing opposite Indo- **China**
and the Japanese felt primarily on that account obliged to add to their
own strength. Hull had asked them whether it was really intended that
the **United States** should believe in the defensive character of this
Japanese move and a good deal more in the same sense. The
conversation produced no result and the Japanese [group mutilated –
informed?] Hull that their view had not moved an inch.... ¹**

¹ Text omitted reported **Halifax's** discussion with Mr Hull on
proposals that the President should send a message to the
Emperor of **Japan** and that the **United States** should send
Thailand an assurance of support.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

91 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

91

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

7 December 1941

1. A report was received by the Admiralty from the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet ² on the afternoon of 6 December, to the effect that two Japanese convoys comprising thirty-five transports escorted by eight cruisers and ten destroyers had been sighted at between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. GMT by reconnaissance aircraft off Cambodia Point. ³ The convoys were preceded by an advance guard of three destroyers and were steaming westwards.

2. A later report from the Commander-in-Chief stated that the advance guard had altered course north-west.

3. A further telegram on this movement will be sent as soon as possible, but the information available is not yet sufficient to establish whether the Japanese are making for:

(1) Kra Isthmus,

(2) **Bangkok**,

(3) An anchorage in Indo- **China** between Cambodia Point and the **Thailand** border.

The Admiralty advise that the last-mentioned possibility can by no means be excluded.

² Admiral Sir Tom Phillips commanded the Eastern Fleet from 3 to 10 Dec 1941. He lost his life when his flagship, the *Prince of Wales*, was sunk by Japanese air attack.

3 The southernmost point of French Indo-China.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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92 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

92

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 December 1941

My immediately preceding telegram

1. Since the possibility remains open that the immediate destination of the Japanese convoys is another port in Indo- China, there may still be time for a warning to Japan by the United States, the Dutch and ourselves on the lines contemplated in the recent exchange with President Roosevelt. We have therefore thought it desirable to continue preparations for delivery of such a warning in order to be in a position to proceed with it if and when the President should give the signal to do so.

2. We have not yet heard whether the President has decided to send a message to the Emperor or not. If he has not yet made up his mind, his decision may now be influenced by the news of the sailing of the Japanese convoys. We must assume in any event that he may wish to proceed with some form of warning at any moment, in which case warnings from ourselves and the Dutch may be required to follow almost immediately afterwards.

3. It would, we feel, add greatly to the impressiveness of the warning (if the President should wish us to proceed with it) if it could be delivered on behalf of all His Majesty's Governments jointly. We very much hope His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions will feel able to concur with this course and identify themselves in this manner with the warning proposed.

4. In view of the urgency of the matter, as explained in paragraph 2, we have thought it desirable to prepare and telegraph to His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** a draft note to the **Japanese Government** conveying a warning in the sense agreed in recent discussions with the President. The text is contained in my immediately following telegram, and it will be seen that, in the hope that the suggestion made in paragraph 3 above will be acceptable, it has been drafted as a joint communication. Sir R. Craigie has been instructed to hold this draft note in reserve, pending receipt of further instructions, and it has been explained to him that the text as well as the form is subject to the concurrence of His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions. The draft has been telegraphed simultaneously to His Majesty's Ambassador in **Washington** for the observations of the President. It has also been shown to the Netherlands Government, which is entirely in agreement with the line taken in it and is preparing to act similarly.

5. We should be grateful if we could be informed by most immediate telegram whether you concur in the terms of the draft note and in the procedure suggested. In the circumstances it would be helpful if you would cause your reply to be repeated to His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo**.

6. It will be appreciated that in drafting the note we were presented with a special difficulty owing to the desire of the President that the **Burma Road** should be omitted from the warning (see my telegrams [No. 87], paragraph 2, and [No. 88], paragraph 1). In the circumstances we have thought it would be best to relate the warning directly to the concentration of troops in Southern Indo- **China**. The draft note thus brushes aside the Japanese explanation about North Indo- **China** and leads logically to the Japanese threat to **Thailand** as well as, of course, the **Netherlands East Indies**. This has the merit of being in accordance with immediate realities, and the fact that the **Philippines** are also omitted (in accordance with paragraph 3 of my telegram [No. 87]) should, we feel, make the absence of mention of the **Burma Road** less noticeable.

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93 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

93

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 December 1941

My immediately preceding telegram.

The following is the text draft of the note:

‘I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have been instructed to make the following communication to the Imperial Japanese Government on behalf of His Majesty's Governments in the **United Kingdom, Canada**, the Commonwealth of **Australia**, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa, who have followed closely, in consultation with the United States Government, the negotiations in which the latter have been engaged with the **Japanese Government** with a view to relieving the present tension in the **Far East**. His Majesty's Governments view with the same concern as the United States Government the rapidly growing concentration of Japanese forces in Indo- **China**, which prompted the inquiry addressed by the United States Government to the **Japanese Government** on 2 December. ¹ They have found the Japanese reply to that inquiry extremely disquieting. ² Whatever [group mutilated – may be?] the explanation in regard to [two groups mutilated – this concentration?]
—as to which they expressly reserve their views—the reply entirely fails to explain the fact that the bulk of the Japanese forces are stationed in South Indo- **China** and are being constantly and heavily augmented.

‘There is no threat from any quarter against Indo- **China**, and this

concentration is only explicable on the assumption that the **Japanese Government** are preparing for some further aggressive move directed against the **Netherlands East Indies, Malaya, or Thailand.**

‘The relations between the Governments of the British Commonwealth and the Netherlands Government are too well known for the **Japanese Government** to be under any illusion as to their reaction to any attack on the territories of the **Netherlands**. In the interests of peace His Majesty's Governments feel it incumbent upon them, however, to remove any uncertainty which may exist as regards their attitude in the event of an attack on **Thailand**. His Majesty's Governments have no designs against **Thailand**. On the contrary, the preservation of the full independence and sovereignty of **Thailand** is an important British interest. Any attempt by **Japan** to impair that independence or sovereignty would affect the security of **Burma** and **Malaya**, and His Majesty's Governments could not be indifferent to it. They feel bound, therefore, to warn the **Japanese Government** in the most solemn manner that if **Japan** attempts to establish her influence in **Thailand** by force or threat of force she will do so at her own peril, and His Majesty's Governments will at once take all appropriate measures. Should hostilities unfortunately result, the responsibility will rest with **Japan.**’

¹ See No. 79.

² See No. 90.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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94 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

94

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 December 1941

THAILAND.

My immediately preceding telegram.

- 1. The Prime Minister is proposing in accordance with President Roosevelt's suggestion (see my telegrams [No. 80] and [No. 87], paragraph 7) to send an immediate personal message to the Thai Prime Minister warning of imminent Japanese danger, urging him to fight if attacked, and saying we will come to his assistance to the utmost of our power. The text has been telegraphed to Washington for the President's observation.**
- 2. In the meantime, His Majesty's Minister at Bangkok has been authorised to let the Thai Prime Minister know privately that we are in consultation with the United States Government in regard to warning Japan in the sense he has been pressing.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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95 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

95

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

7 December 1941

Your most secret telegrams of 7 December [Nos. 91– 94]. On the assumption that the Government of the USA take prior and similar action, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand agree with the course proposed, and fully associate themselves with the text of the contemplated communications to the Japanese Government.

¹ Repeated to the British Ambassador, Tokyo.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

96 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

96

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 December 1941

Circular telegram. JAPAN. My telegrams [Nos. 88 and 92].

**The following telegram, dated 6 December, was received from Lord
Halifax this morning:**

**‘1. I communicated your telegram [No. 88] to the President when I
saw him this evening (Saturday). He is sending a message to the Emperor
for delivery, by Japanese time, on Sunday morning. If no answer has
been received by Monday evening, Washington time, he will publish
here. As at present advised, if no reply is made or if the answer is
unsatisfactory, he will send a warning note to the Japanese Government
on Tuesday afternoon or evening, and suggested that we and the Dutch
should act similarly on Wednesday morning. All this timetable is subject
to speeding up if the Japanese move faster. The President does not think
they will, but Hull does.**

**‘2. He told me the best information the United States could obtain
was that the Japanese had about 105,000 troops in Indo- China, 30,000
in the north and 75,000 in the south. These figures did not include the
numbers on troop transports that the President thought might be
another 20,000 or 30,000.**

**‘3. He told me that he thought seriously of a possible Japanese
threat to Rangoon from land or air.’**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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97 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

97

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 December 1941

Circular telegram. THAILAND. My telegram [No. 94].

1. Lord Halifax has reported that the President welcomes also the proposal to send a message to the Thai Prime Minister.

2. The President was himself sending a message to the Thai Prime Minister in confidence last night (Saturday), on the following lines:

(**That the United States will regard it as a hostile act if the
a) Japanese invade Thailand, Malaya, Burma, or the Netherlands East Indies;**

(**That when peace comes, no matter what happens meanwhile,
b) unless the Thais aid the Japanese, the United States and Great Britain would work for the complete restoration of Thailand's independent sovereignty.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

98 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

98

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 December 1941

JAPAN. My telegram [No. 96].

The following is the text of the President's message to the Emperor:

‘Almost a century ago the President of the **United States addressed to the Emperor of **Japan** a message extending an offer of friendship of the people of the **United States** to the people of **Japan**. That offer was accepted, and in the long period of unbroken peace and friendship which has followed, our respective nations, through the virtues of their peoples and the wisdom of their rulers, have prospered and have substantially helped humanity.**

‘Only in situations of extraordinary importance to our two countries need I address to Your Majesty messages on matters of state. I feel that I should now so address you because of the deep and far-reaching emergency which appears to be in formation.

‘Developments are occurring in the **Pacific which threaten to deprive each of our nations and all humanity of the beneficial influence of the long peace between our two countries. Those developments contain tragic possibilities.**

‘The people of the **United States, believing in peace and in the right of nations to live and let live, have eagerly watched the conversations between our two Governments during these past months. We have hoped**

for a termination of the present conflict between **Japan** and **China**. We have hoped that a peace of the **Pacific** could be consummated in such a way that nationalities of many diverse peoples could exist side by side without fear of invasion; that the unbearable burdens of armaments could be lifted for them all; and that all peoples would resume commerce without discrimination against or in favour of any nation.

‘I am certain that it will be clear to your Majesty, as it is to me, that in seeking these great objectives both **Japan** and the **United States** should agree to eliminate any form of military threat. This seems essential to the attainment of the high [group omitted – objectives].

‘More than a year ago, Your Majesty's Government concluded an agreement with the Vichy Government by which 5000 or 6000 Japanese troops were permitted to enter Northern **French Indo-China** for the protection of Japanese troops which were operating against **China** further north. And this spring and summer the Vichy Government permitted further Japanese military forces to enter Southern **French Indo-China** for the common defence of **French Indo-China**. I think I am correct in saying that no attack has been made on Indo- **China**, nor that any has been contemplated.

‘For the past few weeks it has become clear to the world that Japanese military, naval and air forces have been sent to Southern Indo- **China** in such large numbers as to create a reasonable doubt on the part of other nations that this continuing concentration in Indo- **China** is not defensive in its character.

‘Because these continuing concentrations in Indo- **China** have reached such large proportions, and because they extend now to the south-east and the south-west corners of that peninsula, it is only reasonable that the people of the **Philippines**, of the hundreds of islands of the East Indies, of **Malaya** and of **Thailand** itself are asking themselves whether these forces of **Japan** are preparing or intending to make an attack in one or more of these many directions.

‘I am sure that Your Majesty will understand that the fear of all these peoples is a legitimate fear inasmuch as it involves their peace and their national existence. I am sure that Your Majesty will understand why the people of the **United States in such large numbers look askance at the establishment of military, naval and air bases manned and equipped so greatly as to constitute armed forces capable of measures of offence.**

‘It is clear that a continuance of such a situation is unthinkable.

‘None of the peoples whom I have spoken of above can sit either indefinitely or permanently on a keg of dynamite.

‘There is absolutely no thought on the part of the **United States of invading Indo- **China** if every Japanese soldier or sailor were to be withdrawn therefrom.**

‘I think that we can obtain the same assurance from the Governments of the East Indies, the Governments of **Malaya and the Government of **Thailand**. I would even undertake to ask for the same assurance on the part of the Government of **China**. Thus a withdrawal of the Japanese forces from Indo- **China** would result in the assurance of peace throughout the whole of the South Pacific area.**

‘I address myself to Your Majesty at this moment in the fervent hope that Your Majesty may, as I am doing, give thought in this definite emergency to ways of dispelling the dark clouds. I am confident that both of us, for the sake of the peoples not only of our own great countries but for the sake of humanity in neighbouring territories, have a sacred duty to restore traditional amity and prevent further death and destruction in the world.’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

99 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

99

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

8 December 1941

JAPAN.

Although hostilities have now broken out ¹ we do not intend ourselves to declare war on **Japan** immediately.

We understand the United States Congress has been summoned to meet this morning, 8 December, when the President will recommend an immediate declaration of war by the **United States**.

We contemplate that our own declaration should then follow at once, and the House of Commons is being summoned to meet at 3 p.m. In the meantime we are taking immediately all operational and security measures as if a formal state of war already existed.

¹ At 7.55 a.m. on 7 December Japanese carrier-borne aircraft launched a surprise attack on the United States Pacific Fleet in **Pearl Harbour, Hawaii**. Simultaneously, Japanese forces landed at Kota Bharu in **Malaya** and at Singora in **Thailand**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

100 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

100

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

8 December 1941

Hostilities have now broken out with Japan. War is inevitable and will be formally declared this afternoon, 8 December. All security measures appropriate for the war stage are being taken at once.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

101 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

101

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

8 December 1941

His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo** has been instructed to make the following communication at once to the **Japanese Government**:

‘On the evening of 7 December His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** learned that Japanese forces, without previous warning either in the form of a declaration of war or of an ultimatum with a conditional declaration of war, had attempted a landing on the coast of **Malaya** and bombed **Singapore** and **Hong Kong**.

‘In view of these wanton acts of unprovoked aggression committed in flagrant violation of International Law, and particularly of Article 1 of the Third Hague Convention relative to the opening of hostilities,¹ to which both **Japan** and the **United Kingdom** are parties, I have the honour to inform the Imperial Japanese Government in the name of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** that a state of war exists between our two countries.’

¹ Article 1 of the Third Hague Convention (18 Oct 1907) reads:

‘The contracting parties recognise that hostilities between themselves must not commence without a previous explicit warning in the form either of a reasoned declaration of war or of an ultimatum with conditional declaration of war.’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

102 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

102

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

9 December 1941

The existence of a state of war with **Japan** has been declared here as
from 11 a.m. New Zealand summer time on 8 December 1941. ²

C. L. N. NEWALL

Governor-General.

² The text of the Proclamation, published in a *New Zealand
Gazette* Extraordinary on 9 Dec 1941, was as follows:

His Excellency the Governor-General has it in command
from His Majesty the King to declare that a state of war exists
between His Majesty and the Emperor of **Japan**, and that such a
state of war has existed in respect of New Zealand, from 11 a.m.
New Zealand Summer time, on the eighth day of December,
1941.

Given at **Wellington** this ninth day of December, 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

103 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

103

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

9 December 1941

THAILAND. My telegram of 7 December [No. 94].

**The following is an extract from a telegram from His Majesty's
Representative at **Bangkok** of 8 December:**

**'I have just come from the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He tells me
that under duress the Thai Government reports an agreement with the
Japanese Ambassador this morning allowing the passage of Japanese
troops across **Thailand** to attack **Malaya** or **Burma**. The Prime Minister
expresses to us the deepest regret. In response to a specific inquiry from
myself he has given me a verbal assurance that if we resist the Japanese
on Thai territory, Thai forces will not oppose us.'**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

104 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

104

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

19 December 1941

Circular telegram. THAILAND.

The situation in **Thailand** is obscure. Secret information tends to confirm the sequence of events as described in my telegram of 9 December, but whether the Thai Government's attitude as reported in that telegram was genuine or purely tactical must remain a matter of opinion. From a broadcast by the Thai Prime Minister on 12 December, the full text of which is not available, and from other indications, it seems probable that a more far-reaching agreement has since been signed between the Thai and Japanese Governments providing for active military co-operation by **Thailand**. There is as yet no definite evidence of such co-operation, but a report has been received from **Burma** to the effect that there are indications that the Thais are making some concentration on the border of **Burma**.

2. Until the situation is clearer we are inclined to consider it premature to declare that a state of war exists with **Thailand**. We intend, however, to attack Japanese forces wherever we find them, and since they are in occupation of **Thailand**, we shall not hesitate to operate in or over that country and its territorial waters if it were desirable for military reasons to do so. We think, therefore, that our policy should be as follows:

(Our forces should take no unprovoked action against the Thais;
a) but

(if the Thais attempt to obstruct the operations of our troops, or if

b) in the opinion of local commanders the presence of Thai forces constitutes a threat to their security, they should be treated as enemies; and

**(that if any concentration of Thai forces indicates the possibility
c) of a threat to the security of **Burma**, the Thai Government should be warned that such action will be regarded as a hostile act.**

3. For the time being we are treating **Thailand for economic warfare and other purposes as enemy-occupied territory and we deeply regret that the next step should be to withdraw His Majesty's Minister with his diplomatic and Consular staffs. The Swiss Government, who are prepared, subject to the consent of the Thai Government, to assume the protection of our interests, informed us on 13 December that His Majesty's Legation was closed and under guard of Japanese troops and that telephonic communication with the Legation was cut off.**

4. The Netherlands Government informed us on 15 December that they were proposing to break off diplomatic relations with **Thailand, but we understand that they are postponing action pending the clarification of our own attitude and that of the United States Government.**

5. His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington has been instructed to consult the United States Government urgently and ascertain whether they have any further information or comments on our attitude and what action they have taken or propose to take.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

105 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

105

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

29 January 1942

Circular telegram. THAILAND.

My telegram of 19 December.

As stated in paragraph 5, His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington has been instructed to consult with the United States Government urgently, who have now replied that they [group omitted – agree?] generally with our views as set forth in paragraphs 2 and 3 of my telegram under reference. Meanwhile, however, there have been three main developments:**

- (**Reports, officially confirmed, of the entry of Thai troops into a) **Burma** territory in co-operation with Japanese forces.**
- (**Reports, not as yet officially confirmed, of the participation of b) Thai aircraft in attacks on British territory.**
- (**Reports from Japanese sources that in [group mutilated – c) **Bangkok?**] the Thai Government formally declared war against the **United Kingdom** and the **United States**. No official intimation of such a declaration has as yet been received, but this may be due to the fact that the Thai Government have not yet asked any foreign power to take charge of their interests in this country.**

We are now considering what action we could suggest might be appropriately taken in consultation with other interested Governments and hope to telegraph our considered views to you shortly.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

106 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

106

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 February 1942

Circular telegram. THAILAND.

My telegram of 29 January. The Swiss Government state that the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified the Swiss Consulate that 'by Royal Command declaration of war on Great Britain and the **United States of America has been made as from noon of 25 January.'**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

107 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

107

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

6 February 1942

Circular telegram. My Circular telegram of 4 February.

**We announced in today's official *Gazette* that in view of this
communication a state of war exists between the **United Kingdom** and
Thailand. We shall regard this state of war as having existed as from 5
a.m. GMT on 25 January 1942.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

108 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

108

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

16 February 1942

**The existence of a state of war with Thailand has been declared from
5 p.m. New Zealand summer time on 25 January 1942**

¹ This telegram was repeated to the Prime Ministers of **Australia**
and **South Africa**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

COMMAND IN THE PACIFIC: ABDA AND ANZAC AREAS

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

109 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA¹

109

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
Australia*¹

11 December 1941

Your telegram of 8 December, No. 778.²

We fully understand your wish to have a general review of the new war situation which has now developed, but things are moving so fast that a telegram drafted in the morning is often out of date by the evening. We are hard at work examining the position and considering what re-disposition of our naval forces should now be made and what and how reinforcements can be sent to the **Far East**.

2. We are of course in for an anxious time in the **Pacific**. Sir Earle Page,³ who attended a meeting of the **War Cabinet** yesterday evening, will no doubt tell you how we view the general situation confronting us. We must not forget that **Germany**, who is still the main enemy, is in serious and increasing difficulties both in **Russia** and in **Libya**.

3. It is not considered that there is any immediate large-scale threat to the territory of **Australia** and much less of New Zealand. There is the possibility of raids by enemy cruisers accompanied by seaborne aircraft, generally under conditions similar to those set out in paragraph 34 of the **Far East** appreciation contained in my telegram of 12 August 1940, Z.214,⁴ to the United Kingdom High Commissioner.

4. The potential threat to our sea routes in the Far Eastern area has of course greatly increased and the situation is largely that set out in paragraphs 30 to 33 of telegram Z.214 already referred to. Admiralty

instructions with regard to convoying and routing are contained in Admiralty telegram 1915/10 to the **Australian Commonwealth Naval Board** and the New Zealand Naval Board. ⁵

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

² Not published. The Australian Government had asked for an up-to-date appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff on the situation in the **Pacific** now that war had broken out with **Japan**.

³ Rt. Hon. Sir Earle Page, PC, GCMG, CH; Special Australian Envoy to British War Cabinet, 1941–42; Member of Australian War Cabinet, 1942–43.

⁴ See **Appendix IV**.

⁵ Not published.

5. As regards local Australian defence, until we know more of the Japanese intentions we do not recommend any changes in those dispositions decided on as a result of consideration given to the subject at the time of Mr Menzies' visit (see paragraphs 23 to 26 of our reply of 18 April). ¹

6. A further telegram will be sent to you as soon as the new situation has been fully examined.

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

110 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

110

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

13 December 1941

The following is a report prepared for our military advisers on the methods open to **Japan** and those likely to be adopted:

‘1. **Russia's** continued neutrality is, for the purpose of the report, assumed.

‘2. **Japan's** object is to gain complete control and freedom of movement in East Asia by eliminating Allied power in that area. The capture of **Singapore** and **Manila** are necessary, and control of the East Indies area providing vital economic resources, particularly oil, would follow.

‘3. **Japan's** main course of action must therefore be:

(Denial to us and the Americans with a view to the easiest
a) possible capture of:

(1) **Malaya**, particularly **Singapore**;

(2) The **Philippines**, particularly **Manila**, to protect sea communications;

(3) **Hong Kong**.

(Repetition of air attacks on **Hawaii** to impede the repair of naval
b) units and dockyard.

‘4. Other operations.

(Operations which might be carried out simultaneously with or
a) independently of the above:

- (1) Attack on the Dutch submarine base at **Sourabaya**;
- (2) Attack on the Panama Canal by carrier-borne aircraft—difficult and risky, but prize very great;
- (3) Occupation of islands near the Equator on which air bases are being constructed, e.g., [group omitted—Christmas?] Island (**Pacific**) and Canton Island;
- (4) Raid by cruisers and minelaying of ports and their approaches in the **Pacific Islands**, **Australia**, New Zealand and **India**, and attacking shipping in the **Pacific** and Indian Oceans;
- (5) The acquisition of a refuelling base in Madagascar is a remote possibility.

(Developing from the main operations, **Japan** may attempt the
b) occupation of:

- (1) Key points in **Borneo**.
- (2) **Sumatra** and **Java**, to close the entrance from the west to the China Seas.
- (3) Air bases in the **Celebes** and **Halmahera**.’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

111 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

111

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

29 December 1941

Following from my Prime Minister to Prime Minister of New Zealand:

I send you subjoined the all-important agreement between the President and myself ¹ which has been approved by Cabinet. The President proposes to announce that it was at his suggestion, endorsed by his advisers, that General Wavell was chosen. ² I have the fullest confidence in General Wavell, who has unique experience in handling three or four separate theatres simultaneously. It is necessary that the announcement should be made by 1 January at the latest, and I hope that I may have your early agreement to an arrangement designed to be a help and security for New Zealand and to enable the war against the Japanese to be prosecuted with the utmost vigour.

Text of the agreement is contained in my immediately following telegram.

¹ Mr Churchill conferred with President Roosevelt at **Washington** between 22 Dec 1941 and 14 Jan 1942.

² Fd Mshl Earl Wavell, PC, GCB, GCSI, GCIE, CMG, MC (then General Sir Archibald Wavell); GOC-in-C **Middle East**, 1939–41; GOC-in-C **India**, 1941–43; Supreme Commander, South-West Pacific, Jan-Mar 1942; Viceroy and Governor-General of **India**, 1943–47; died 24 May 1950.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

112 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

112

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

29 December 1941

My immediately preceding telegram. Text of agreement:

- (That unity of command shall be established in the South-West
a) Pacific. Boundaries are not yet finally settled, but presume they would include the Malay Peninsula, including **Burma**, to the Philippine Islands, and southwards to necessary supply bases, principally Port Darwin, and supply line in Northern Australia.
- (That General Wavell should be appointed Commander-in-Chief, or
b) if preferred, Supreme Commander, of all **United States**, British, Empire and Dutch forces of land, sea, and air who may be assigned by the Governments concerned to that theatre.
- (General Wavell, whose headquarters should in the first instance
c) be established at **Sourabaya**, would have an American officer as Deputy Commander-in-Chief. It seems probable that General Brett ¹ would be chosen.
- (That American, British, Australian and Dutch naval forces in the
d) 'theatre' should be placed under the command of an American Admiral, in accordance with the general principle set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b).
- (It is intended that General Wavell should have a staff in the
e) South Pacific portion, as Foch's ² High Control Staff was to the great [group mutilated-General?] Staffs of the British and French armies in **France**. ³ He would receive his orders from an appropriate joint body, who will be responsible to me as Minister of Defence and to the President of the **United States**, who is also Commander-in-Chief of all **United States** forces.
- (Principal commanders comprised in General Wavell's sphere will
f) be Commander-in-Chief **Burma**, Commander-in-Chief **Singapore** and

Malaya, Commander-in-Chief Netherlands East Indies, Commander-in-Chief **Philippines, and Commander-in-Chief of Southern Communications, via South Pacific and North Australia.**

¹ Lt-Gen George H. Brett; appointed Deputy Supreme Commander, **South-West Pacific Area**, Jan 1942; appointed Commander of all **United States** troops in **Australia**, Mar 1942; Commander-in-Chief Allied Air Forces in **Australia**, 1942.

² Marshal Foch was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in **France** in April 1918.

³ In the draft manuscript of the British official history, ***Grand Strategy***, Vol. III, Chap. 16, this sentence reads: 'It is intended that General Wavell should have a staff in the same sort of proportion as Foch's High Control Staff was to the great Staffs of the British and French armies in **France**.'

(**India**, for which an acting Commander-in-Chief will have to be g) appointed, and **Australia**, who will have their own Commander-in-Chief, will be outside General Wavell's sphere, except as above mentioned, and are the two great bases through which men and material from Great Britain and the **Middle East** on the one hand and the **United States** on the other can be moved into the fighting zone.

(The United States Navy will remain responsible for the whole h) Pacific Ocean east of the Philippine Islands and Australasia, including **United States** approaches to Australasia. ¹

(A letter of instruction is being drafted for the Supreme i) Commander safeguarding the necessary residuary interests of the various Governments involved and prescribing in major outline his tasks.

¹ Rapid changes in the Far Eastern situation during the next fortnight resulted in modifications in this proposed organisation. Headquarters of the Supreme Commander ABDA area were set up near **Bandoeng** on 10 Jan 1942, on the arrival of General Wavell from **Singapore**, and he took over the command (with the exception of the Philippine Islands) on 15 January. Major-General Brett was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander. On 22

February (six days before the Japanese invaded Java) General Wavell discussed with the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies a proposal that Headquarters of the ABDA area should be dissolved. The Chiefs of Staff concurred and the headquarters accordingly closed down on 25 February, when command was handed over to the Dutch.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

113 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

113

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*²

30 December 1941

Your telegrams of 29 December [Nos. 111 and 112].

Following for your Prime Minister:

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are in cordial agreement with the proposal to appoint General Wavell, in whose capacity they have every confidence and for whose character and standing they have the highest regard, to the supreme command of that portion of the **Pacific** to which the proposed arrangement relates.

2. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand the proposals do not go far enough. The defeat of **Japan** is essentially a question of sea power. Our object must be to regain that command of the Western Pacific Ocean which is now completely in Japanese hands. Once we can cut the Japanese sea communications, we shall regain any possessions which we have lost and can ensure the defeat of **Japan** by economic pressure as well as by military means. To attain this object the **New Zealand Government** feel that it is essential that all naval forces in the Pacific Ocean, including the **United States Pacific Fleet** and the **British Eastern Fleet**, should be under one unified command, which might well be exercised by an American Admiral working in the closest possible co-operation with General Wavell.

3. Until the above policy can be implemented, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are willing to concur with the proposals in general. At

the same time, they are not without doubt on certain aspects on which they have made the assumptions set out below. They would be glad to have confirmation of these assumptions or further information.

(It is assumed that General Pownall ¹ now becomes 'Commander-
a) in-Chief Singapore and **Malaya**', and that the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet is to be superseded by the 'American Admiral' referred to in paragraph (*d*), who is to be subordinate to General Wavell.

(It is noted that naval command in the area 'east of the
b) **Philippines** and Australasia' is to be American. They presume that the ambiguous term 'Australasia' is intended to include New Zealand, and that the line of demarcation is intended to follow the line of the ABC-1 Report. ² If this is so it appears that New Zealand must be dependent upon the joint resources of the **Royal Australian Navy** and the Royal New Zealand Navy for naval defence within this area, and that the land and air defence of **Fiji** will remain a New Zealand commitment. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are particularly concerned that this point should be clarified, and that a definition should also be given of naval responsibility for the protection of the line **New Hebrides – Fiji – Tonga**, which is at present apparently protected only by an inadequate air patrol operating from **Fiji** and such small naval forces as can be made available from **Australia** and New Zealand. ³

(It is assumed from paragraph (*f*) that General Wavell's authority
c) is to include lines of communication from **America** to the area in question, and the **New Zealand Government** are not without doubt as to whether this would give him authority over **Fiji**, which is one of the essential bases for these lines of communication. They would raise no objection if this is the proposal, but they would call attention to the paramount importance of sea power to the safety of **Fiji**, which would appear to depend upon the American Fleet at least until **Fiji** is powerfully reinforced.

(No reference is made in paragraph (*d*) to New Zealand naval
d) forces. It is presumed that they are intended to be included.

4. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have two further observations to offer:

(While they fully realise the necessity in time of war of making
a) very urgent decisions, they feel that it will be realised in **London** and in **Washington** that the short time at their disposal may not have given them adequate opportunity to study the proposals with the care

that they require, and that further observations may become necessary after further study.

(If General Wavell's proposed command impinges directly or
b) indirectly upon the defence of New Zealand or **Fiji** they would wish to institute from the outset some form of direct liaison between them and the General, perhaps by representation on the joint staff referred to in paragraph (e), and they would also wish to be represented on the 'appropriate joint body' also referred to in paragraph (e), as to the constitution of which they would be glad of further information.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

¹ Lt-Gen Sir Henry Pownall, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC; Commander-in-Chief Far East, Dec 1941 – Jan 1942; Chief of Staff ABDA Command, Jan – Feb 1942; GOC **Ceylon**, Mar 1942 – Mar 1943; Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943–44.

² See p. 34, note 3.

³ See

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

114 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

114

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 January 1942

My telegram of 29 December [No. 112]. The following is the directive sent to General Wavell: ¹

‘By agreement among the Governments of Australia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, hereinafter referred to as the ABDA Governments—

‘1. Area: A strategic area has been constituted, to comprise initially all land and sea areas including the general regions of Burma – Malaya – Netherlands East Indies and the Philippine Islands: more precisely defined in Annex 1. This area will be known as the ABDA area.

‘2. Forces: You have been designated as Supreme Commander of the ABDA area and of all armed forces, afloat, ashore and in the air, of the ABDA Governments, which are or will be:

(stationed in the area;

a)

(located in Australian territory when such forces have been

b) allotted by the respective Governments for service in or in support of the ABDA area.

You are not authorised to transfer from the territories of any ABDA Government land forces of that Government without the consent of the local Commander or his Government.

‘3. The Deputy Supreme Commander, and if required a Commander

of the combined naval forces and Commander of the combined air forces, will be jointly designated by the ABDA Governments.

‘4. No Government will materially reduce its armed forces assigned to your area [group mutilated – nor] any commitment made by it for reinforcing its forces in your area except after giving to other Governments and to you timely information pertaining thereto.

‘5. *Strategic Concept and Policy*: The basic strategic concept of the ABDA Governments for the conduct of the war in your area is not only in the immediate future to maintain as many key positions as possible, but to take the offensive at the earliest opportunity and ultimately to conduct an all-out offensive against **Japan. The first essential is to gain general air superiority at the earliest moment through the employment of concentrated air power. The piecemeal employment of air forces should be minimised. Your operations should be so conducted as to further preparations for the offensive.**

‘6. *General Strategic Policy* will be therefore:

(To hold the Malay barrier, defined as a line of the Malay
a) Peninsula, **Sumatra, Java, North Australia, as the basic defensive position of the ABDA area, and to operate sea, land and air forces in as great a depth as possible forward of the barrier in order to oppose the Japanese southward advance.**

(To hold **Burma** and **Australia** as essential support positions for the
b) area, and **Burma as essential to the support of **China** and to the defence of **India**.**

(To re-establish communications through the Dutch East Indies
c) with Luzon, and to support the Philippine Islands garrison.

(To maintain essential communications within the area.
d)

‘7. *Duties, Responsibilities and Authorities of Supreme Commander*: You will co-ordinate in the ABDA area the strategic operations of all armed forces of the ABDA Governments; where desirable, to arrange the formation of task forces, whether national or international, for executing specific operations; and appointing any officers, irrespective of seniority or nationality, to command such task

forces.

‘8. While [group mutilated – you should therefore] have no responsibilities [group mutilated – in respect of the internal] administration of the respective forces under your command, you are authorised to direct and co-ordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

‘9. You will dispose of reinforcements which from time to time may be despatched to the area by the ABDA Governments.

‘10. You are authorised to require from the Commanders of the armed forces under your command such reports as you deem necessary in discharging your responsibilities as Supreme Commander.

‘11. You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

‘12. Through the channels specified in paragraph 18, you may submit recommendations to the ABDA Governments on any matters pertaining to the furthering of your mission.

‘13. *Limitations:* Your authority [group mutilated – and control] with respect to the various positions of the ABDA area and to the forces assigned thereto will normally be exercised through the Commanders duly appointed by their respective Governments. Interference is to be avoided in the administrative processes of the armed forces of any of the ABDA Governments, including free communication between them and their respective Governments. No alteration or revision is to be made in the basic tactical organisations of such forces, and each national component of a task force will normally operate under its own Commander and will not be subdivided into small units for [group mutilated – attachment to] other national components of task forces, except in cases of urgent necessity. In general, your instructions and orders will be limited to those necessary for the effective co-ordination of forces in the execution of your mission.

‘14. *Relations with ABDA Governments:* The ABDA Governments will jointly and severally support you in the execution of duties and responsibilities as herein defined, and in the exercising of authority herein delegated and limited. The Commanders of all sea, land and air forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with the provisions of this directive will be considered by such Commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

‘15. In the unlikely event that any of your immediate subordinates, after making due representation to you, still considers that obedience to your orders would jeopardise the national interests of his country to an extent unjustified by the general situation in the ABDA area, he has the right, subject to your being immediately notified of such intention, to appeal direct to his own Government before carrying out the orders. Such appeals will be made by the most expeditious methods, and copies of the appeals will be communicated simultaneously to you.

‘16. *Staff and Assumption of Command:* Your staff will include officers of each of the ABDA Powers. You are empowered to communicate immediately with national Commanders in the area with a view to obtaining staff officers essential to your earliest possible assumption of command. Your additional staff requirements will be communicated as soon as possible to the ABDA Governments through the channels of communication described in paragraph 18.

‘17. You will report when you are in a position effectively to carry out the essential functions of the Supreme Command, so that your assumption of command may be promulgated to all concerned.

‘18. *Superior Authority:* As Supreme Commander of the ABDA area you will be directly responsible to the ABDA Governments through the agency defined in Annex 2.

‘The ABDA area is bounded as follows:

‘On the north: by the boundary between **India and **Burma**, thence eastward along the Chinese frontier and coastline to latitude 030 degrees north, thence along the parallel 030 degrees north to meridian 140 degrees east. (*Note: Indo- **China** and **Thailand** are not included in this area.*) On the east: by meridian 140 degrees east from 030 degrees [north] to the Equator, thence east to longitude 141 degrees east, thence south to the boundary of Dutch **New Guinea** on the south coast, thence east along the southern **New Guinea** coast to meridian 143 degrees east, then south down this meridian to the coast of **Australia**. On the south: by the northern coast of **Australia** from meridian 143 degrees east, westward to meridian 114 degrees east, thence north-westward to latitude 015 degrees south, longitude 092 degrees east. On the west: by meridian 092 degrees east.**

‘2. Forces assigned to ABDA and adjacent areas are authorised to extend their operations into other areas as may be required.

ANNEX 2

‘(1) On all important military matters not within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Commander of the ABDA area, the United States Chiefs of Staff and the representatives in **Washington of the British Chiefs of Staff will constitute the agency for [group mutilated – developing] and submitting the recommendations for decisions by the President of the **United States** and by the British Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. Amongst the chief matters on which decisions will be required are:**

- (a) Provision of reinforcements.**
- (b) Major changes in policy.**
- (c) Departures from the Supreme Commander's directive.**

‘(2) This agency will function as follows:

- (a) Any proposals coming either from the Supreme Commander or from any of the ABDA Governments will be transmitted to the Chiefs of Staff Committee both in **Washington** and in **London**.**

(The Chiefs of Staff Committee in **London** will immediately
b) telegraph to their representatives in **Washington** to say whether or
not they will be telegraphing any opinion.

(On the receipt of these opinions, the United States Chiefs of Staff
c) and the representatives in **Washington** of the British Chiefs of Staff
will develop and submit their recommendations to the President and
by telegraphing to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. The
Prime Minister will then inform the President whether he is in
agreement with these recommendations.

‘(3) Since London has the machinery for consulting Dominion
Governments, and since the Dutch Government is in **London**, the British
Government will be responsible for obtaining their views and agreement
and for including these in the final telegrams to **Washington**.

‘(4) Agreement having been reached between the President and the
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the orders to the Supreme
Commander will be despatched from **Washington** in the name of both of
them.’

¹ Mutilations in the text of this telegram as received in New
Zealand have been corrected from the version published in the
British official history, *The War Against Japan*, Vol. I, Appendix
20.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

4 JANUARY 1942

4 January 1942

My telegram of 29 December [**No. 112**]. The following is the directive sent to General Wavell: ¹

'By agreement among the Governments of Australia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, hereinafter referred to as the ABDA Governments—

'1. Area: A strategic area has been constituted, to comprise initially all land and sea areas including the general regions of Burma – Malaya – Netherlands East Indies and the Philippine Islands: more precisely defined in Annex 1. This area will be known as the ABDA area.

'2. Forces: You have been designated as Supreme Commander of the ABDA area and of all armed forces, afloat, ashore and in the air, of the ABDA Governments, which are or will be:

(stationed in the area;

a)

(located in Australian territory when such forces have been

b) allotted by the respective Governments for service in or in support of the ABDA area.

You are not authorised to transfer from the territories of any ABDA Government land forces of that Government without the consent of the local Commander or his Government.

'3. The Deputy Supreme Commander, and if required a Commander of the combined naval forces and Commander of the combined air forces, will be jointly designated by the ABDA Governments.

'4. No Government will materially reduce its armed forces assigned to your area [group mutilated – nor] any commitment made by it for

reinforcing its forces in your area except after giving to other Governments and to you timely information pertaining thereto.

'5. *Strategic Concept and Policy:* The basic strategic concept of the ABDA Governments for the conduct of the war in your area is not only in the immediate future to maintain as many key positions as possible, but to take the offensive at the earliest opportunity and ultimately to conduct an all-out offensive against **Japan**. The first essential is to gain general air superiority at the earliest moment through the employment of concentrated air power. The piecemeal employment of air forces should be minimised. Your operations should be so conducted as to further preparations for the offensive.

'6. *General Strategic Policy* will be therefore:

- (To hold the Malay barrier, defined as a line of the Malay a) Peninsula, **Sumatra**, **Java**, North Australia, as the basic defensive position of the ABDA area, and to operate sea, land and air forces in as great a depth as possible forward of the barrier in order to oppose the Japanese southward advance.
- (To hold **Burma** and **Australia** as essential support positions for the b) area, and **Burma** as essential to the support of **China** and to the defence of **India**.
- (To re-establish communications through the Dutch East Indies c) with Luzon, and to support the Philippine Islands garrison.
- (To maintain essential communications within the area. d)

'7. *Duties, Responsibilities and Authorities of Supreme Commander:* You will co-ordinate in the ABDA area the strategic operations of all armed forces of the ABDA Governments; where desirable, to arrange the formation of task forces, whether national or international, for executing specific operations; and appointing any officers, irrespective of seniority or nationality, to command such task forces.

'8. While [group mutilated – you should therefore] have no responsibilities [group mutilated – in respect of the internal] administration of the respective forces under your command, you are

authorised to direct and co-ordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

‘9. You will dispose of reinforcements which from time to time may be despatched to the area by the ABDA Governments.

‘10. You are authorised to require from the Commanders of the armed forces under your command such reports as you deem necessary in discharging your responsibilities as Supreme Commander.

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‘14. *Relations with ABDA Governments:* The ABDA Governments will jointly and severally support you in the execution of duties and responsibilities as herein defined, and in the exercising of authority herein delegated and limited. The Commanders of all sea, land and air

forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with the provisions of this directive will be considered by such Commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

‘15. In the unlikely event that any of your immediate subordinates, after making due representation to you, still considers that obedience to your orders would jeopardise the national interests of his country to an extent unjustified by the general situation in the ABDA area, he has the right, subject to your being immediately notified of such intention, to appeal direct to his own Government before carrying out the orders. Such appeals will be made by the most expeditious methods, and copies of the appeals will be communicated simultaneously to you.

‘16. *Staff and Assumption of Command:* Your staff will include officers of each of the ABDA Powers. You are empowered to communicate immediately with national Commanders in the area with a view to obtaining staff officers essential to your earliest possible assumption of command. Your additional staff requirements will be communicated as soon as possible to the ABDA Governments through the channels of communication described in paragraph 18.

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‘18. *Superior Authority:* As Supreme Commander of the ABDA area you will be directly responsible to the ABDA Governments through the agency defined in Annex 2.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

ANNEX 1—BOUNDARIES OF THE ABDA AREA

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‘2. Forces assigned to ABDA and adjacent areas are authorised to extend their operations into other areas as may be required.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

ANNEX 2

ANNEX 2

‘(1) On all important military matters not within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Commander of the ABDA area, the United States Chiefs of Staff and the representatives in **Washington of the British Chiefs of Staff will constitute the agency for [group mutilated – developing] and submitting the recommendations for decisions by the President of the **United States** and by the British Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. Amongst the chief matters on which decisions will be required are:**

- (a) Provision of reinforcements.**
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‘(2) This agency will function as follows:

(a) Any proposals coming either from the Supreme Commander or from any of the ABDA Governments will be transmitted to the Chiefs of Staff Committee both in **Washington and in **London**.**

(b) The Chiefs of Staff Committee in **London will immediately telegraph to their representatives in **Washington** to say whether or not they will be telegraphing any opinion.**

(c) On the receipt of these opinions, the United States Chiefs of Staff and the representatives in **Washington of the British Chiefs of Staff will develop and submit their recommendations to the President and by telegraphing to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. The Prime Minister will then inform the President whether he is in agreement with these recommendations.**

‘(3) Since London has the machinery for consulting Dominion Governments, and since the Dutch Government is in **London, the British Government will be responsible for obtaining their views and agreement and for including these in the final telegrams to **Washington**.**

‘(4) Agreement having been reached between the President and the

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the orders to the Supreme Commander will be despatched from [Washington](#) in the name of both of them.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

115 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

115

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

6 January 1942

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have noted the directive sent to General Wavell as Supreme Commander of the ABDA area. They are, however, particularly concerned with the situation in that part of the South-Western Pacific which is not included in this area. In this connection they observe that General Wavell's command does not include the communications across the Pacific from the American continent to Australia, notwithstanding the reference to the matter in your telegram dated 29 December [No. 112].

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of Australia.

They assume, therefore, that the larger question of unification of the whole Pacific Ocean with the ABDA area, particularly as regards the naval forces, raised in my telegram of 30 December [No. 113], and also that of the Prime Minister of Australia to the Australian Minister, Washington, on 30 December,¹ is still under discussion.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful if specific information could be given as soon as possible of the measures contemplated to ensure co-ordination of naval, military and air defence in the whole of the Pacific area, including New Zealand and Fiji, as the apparent isolation of New Zealand at the present time is causing them considerable anxiety.

¹ **Not published.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

116 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

116

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

8 January 1942

Following from Prime Minister to Prime Minister of New Zealand:

Your telegram of 31 December to **Washington**.²

We are trying our best in consultation with the **United States** authorities to meet your most urgent requirements. A list of what we and the Americans can do will have reached you already from **London**.

2. You will see that we have been able to make up a fairly good [group mutilated – instalment?] and will try and do more as soon as we can.

3. It was not possible to consult you more fully about the South-West Pacific Supreme Command as speed of execution was essential, but I hope the results are satisfactory to you.

4. I am trying hard to get the Americans to assume naval responsibility for the area south of the Equator and west of 180 degrees up to the east coast of **Australia**, and I think they will probably agree. The Australian and New Zealand naval forces in the area would, of course, come under American operational command.

5. I am doing my utmost to build up and restore the Allied position in the **Far East** as soon as possible. We are all deeply grateful for the splendid courage and loyalty to the mother country shown by New Zealand under stress of danger.

² See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 262.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

117 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

117

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

12 January 1942

The following is from the Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:

We have been considering with the greatest of care the present position of the war, especially the situation that has arisen in the Pacific as the result of the outbreak of hostilities with Japan, and I am setting out in this telegram, as fully and frankly as I know you would wish me to do, our reflections and, so far as they can at present be formed, our conclusions on this matter which so vitally affects the people of this Dominion in particular and those of the British Commonwealth in general.

1. General Observations:

(i) The New Zealand Government have, throughout the whole course of hostilities, endeavoured to consider the problems of the conflict from the widest point of view, and we have we think succeeded, generally speaking, in looking upon the situation as a whole. We have never deviated from a complete recognition of the fact that the critical theatre of war has, up to the present at any rate, been the European theatre, and we have never allowed our preoccupations and apprehensions for the safety of this Dominion to interfere with what we considered to be our primary duty of applying the greatest force that we could provide at the most useful point. We feel that our efforts in this direction have not been less than those of any other portion of the British Commonwealth.

(ii) We have never, however, allowed our attention to be entirely monopolised by the European theatre. Though we still accept the principle that the continued defence of the **United Kingdom** is the most vital necessity in our conduct of the war, we have throughout attached great importance to developments, for example, in the **Atlantic** and in the **Middle East**, where indeed New Zealand's main forces are at present employed.

(iii) While the remarkable successes of the Russians over the Germans and the comparatively encouraging results so far of the battle in the **Western Desert** ² have removed any immediate fear of untoward developments in the **Middle East**, nevertheless we retain our apprehensions as to the situation that may before long develop there.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² On the night 17–18 Nov 1941 the **Eighth Army** under Lt-Gen Sir Alan Cunningham crossed the Egyptian frontier to begin the Second Libyan Campaign. By the end of the first week of January the enemy had been driven back to **El Agheila**, from which on 21 January he launched a counter-offensive which, in turn, drove the **Eighth Army** back to the **Alamein** line.

We cannot believe that **Hitler**, having assumed the command of the German forces, will be content to retire into winter quarters. It seems to us most probable that he will endeavour to regain his lost prestige by some lightning blow in another area, and a likely field for this attempt is in the direction of North Africa. He would certainly have the troops available for a considerable adventure in this part of the world, and he has at his choice several methods of approach. We have noted the opinion of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff that such a move need not be anticipated for some lengthy period to come, but this does not entirely allay our apprehensions.

(iv) The Battle of the **Atlantic** seems for the moment to be going

strongly in our favour, and we hope will continue to do so, though it would not appear to be improbable that the attention of the **United States** will now be diverted to some extent to the **Pacific**, and this may consequently increase the burden upon British forces in the **Atlantic**.

(v) By far the most serious development in recent months has been the outbreak of hostilities with **Japan**. Clearly the intervention of **America**, which this has brought about, is of the utmost importance to our cause and will almost certainly prove to be the decisive factor, but the crippling of the United States Fleet in **Hawaii** and the success of the Japanese attacks upon the **Philippines** and **Malaya** have produced what is now, and must for some time to come continue to be, an extremely critical situation in this theatre of war.

(vi) It is clear that this is recognised by yourself and your colleagues, and of course we greatly appreciated the attempt that was made to help us by the despatch to these waters of HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*. But, to be completely frank, we have not always felt that the potential problems of the **Pacific** have had the importance attached to them in **London** which we, more intimately concerned therewith, have considered that they have perhaps deserved. Whether this be so or not, it seems essential that the position in the **Pacific** should be treated now as one of at least equal importance to that in **Europe** and in the **Middle East**, and we are most concerned to see that the very best means are adopted to retrieve the early and most serious reverses that we and the Americans have met with in this area.

2. The Pacific Area generally:

(i) We have noted with the greatest of interest your discussions on this matter with President Roosevelt, and I must at once say that, though we fully endorse the desirability, indeed the necessity, of the unity of command which was the principal objective of those talks, we have felt that there were many aspects of the arrangements proposed in **Washington** which we did not fully understand or of which, as far as we understood them, we did not fully approve. We certainly assumed,

however, that these proposals were the first of a series designed to provide for the fullest co-operation, at least throughout the whole **Pacific** area if not in all theatres of war, and not to be confined to the particular area referred to in the Secretary of State's message to us of 29 December [**No. 112**] as the 'South-West Pacific' (a phrase which we consider to be inaccurate and likely to be misleading in view of the problems that will have to be considered in connection with what we conceive to be the South-West Pacific proper, namely, the Southern Pacific Islands, New Zealand, and **Australia**).

(ii) We did make in connection with these proposals, and conveyed to the Secretary of State in my telegram of 30 December [**No. 113**], certain assumptions on which we have had as yet no further information, but we are not without doubt, as the result of a subsequent communication on the subject, whether similar collaboration in other areas is intended or will be found to be possible.

(iii) On the actual proposals for the ABDA area as set out in the directive to General Wavell contained in the Secretary of State's telegram of 4 January [**No. 114**], we have the following comments to make:

(a) As it seems to us, there is one main problem and one alone in the whole area of the **Pacific** and Indian Oceans, and that is the defeat of **Japan**, and that object in our opinion cannot be attained except with great delay and at great expense in life and treasure unless the problem is treated as one whole and not piecemeal.

(b) As we see it, any attempt, such as the ABDA proposal, to divide this area into smaller areas must have the effect of dissipating our efforts. General Wavell is to command in the ABDA area at sea, on land, and in the air. At the moment there is a general understanding that an American Admiral is to command in the remainder of the **Pacific** and a British Admiral to command in the **Indian Ocean**. Frankly this seems to us to be a step in the wrong direction. If it is not possible to have one strategic command of the whole **Pacific** and **Indian Ocean** area then at least it becomes completely essential in our opinion that there should be means established for the fullest co-operation not only within the ABDA area itself, but also between the ABDA area and (i) the remainder of the **Pacific**, and (ii) the area of the

Indian Ocean, as well as a more clearly defined and practicable means of co-operation in the remainder of the **Pacific**.

(We observe that New Zealand is not to be concerned in any way
c) with the ABDA area, and I must say at once that we are not content to accept this position. It is a fact that we have very few troops in that area, but it is similarly a fact that our safety in New Zealand depends to a very real extent upon operations and conditions in that area, and there must, I suggest, be some means found of associating New Zealand with the conduct of affairs in that area.

(The means proposed for consultation with the Dominions, namely
d) through the Chiefs of Staff in **Washington** and **London** via the British Government to the Dominions, seems to us to be quite inadequate for any decision of emergency and importance.

(We note that as the result of the appointment of General Wavell
e) the position of Resident Minister at **Singapore**¹ has now been considered superfluous, and I am bound to say that here also we wonder whether this is correct. In addition to the operations that will be necessary in that area, there must arise in the very nature of things innumerable problems of a highly political order which it would seem could most conveniently be dealt with there, as in similar circumstances they are dealt with by the Minister of State in **Cairo**.² If not there they must certainly be dealt with somewhere, and wherever they are dealt with this Dominion would wish to be represented.

(The problems of the ABDA area will spill over from that area into
f) the **Indian Ocean** area and into the **Pacific** area proper, and there must be some body established somewhere to deal with these wider and, in our opinion, even more vital problems. Wherever this body is established New Zealand will wish to be represented.

(Our main criticism of the ABDA proposal is shortly this: that it
g) professes to provide, and does provide, for only one portion of the problem, and by isolating that problem from the rest of the **Pacific** fails to deal with the situation as a whole.

(I cannot too strongly express the strength of our view that the very
h) first step to be taken to defeat **Japan** is to obtain naval supremacy in the **Pacific**, and our belief that this object cannot be obtained by setting up one command in the ABDA area, another command with a strong (though, in comparison with the Japanese, inferior) fleet in the **Indian Ocean**, and still another command with a strong (though, in comparison with the Japanese, probably inferior) fleet in the remainder

¹ Viscount Norwich, PC, GCMG, DSO (then Rt. Hon. Alfred Duff Cooper); Resident Minister for Far Eastern Affairs, Singapore, 10 Dec 1941–10 Jan 1942.

² Capt the Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, PC, DSO, MC; Minister of State in the Middle East, Jul 1941 – Feb 1942.

of the Pacific Ocean. It seems patently obvious to us that we must concentrate our forces or we will run a serious risk of being defeated piecemeal, as the tragic history of Europe has recently indicated.

(iv) Finally, on this aspect of the matter I wish to say this, that during the period when the war, though world-wide, had its principal manifestations in Europe we were content very largely to abide by the decisions of the British Government and the British Chiefs of Staff, who were not only closer to the problems but more vitally affected by the repercussions of any immediate decision that was taken. Now, however, that the war has moved to our doorstep, I am sure you will agree that where the matters under discussion are of immediate and direct concern to us there must be some method devised by which we can intelligently form and explicitly express our views before action is taken. How this is to be brought about is, of course, a most difficult question. It may well be that some supreme directing body must be set up either in London or in Washington, but whether this be so or not we are all convinced here that some means for the better co-ordination of the views of the various Allied powers, including the Dominions, now engaged in this struggle must be established and that New Zealand must have some method of association. I notice that Mr Eden has recently announced that Canada and New Zealand are satisfied with the existing situation in this connection, but this is not strictly accurate. What I said in London was that I did not consider it feasible for the Prime Ministers of the Dominions to be constantly or substantially in session in London, and thus be away from their own more immediate responsibilities, or for one Prime Minister to represent all the Dominions. I did, however, make it

plain that I would be ready to consider any other method that could be devised to improve consultation, and I am more than ever ready to consider this problem now, as I say, that the war is on our doorstep.

3. New Zealand's own Position:

(i) You are already aware in some detail of the deficiencies in the armaments necessary to defend this Dominion and also **Fiji** ¹ which, as you know, we are defending not only as an outpost of the defence of New Zealand but as a vital link in the connecting line of reinforcement from the American continent. We are, as you will have realised, exceedingly short of the implements of war, in many cases as a result of denuding ourselves to strengthen **Fiji**. This we feel is not our fault. We have for a very lengthy period past requisitioned for what we have considered to be necessary, and have from time to time, within what we considered to be the limits of propriety, pressed our

¹ See

needs to the utmost. We have, however, always been restrained in the past by a knowledge that the war was after all as yet many thousands of miles away from us and that other portions of the British Commonwealth and the Allied countries might well have more pressing claims.

(ii) Now, however, all this is changed. We have seen within a few short weeks the United States Pacific Fleet crippled. We have seen the **Philippines** practically captured. ¹ We have seen **Malaya** in dire straits and **Singapore** in the greatest peril. We have seen the two magnificent ships which were sent out destroyed by the air arm in a few minutes. ² And we foresee for a considerable period ahead the Japanese in complete command of the **Pacific** and, for all practical purposes, without restraint on further activities except the use already being made of their resources and their estimate of the value to them of any further operations. Such being the case, we are bound by our duty to our own people to consider most carefully the situation in this part of the world, always having, we hope, due regard to larger issues.

(iii) I am sure you will agree with me that we have in the course of this war seen tragic instances in which the most competent opinion has been rapidly falsified by the event, and I am sure you will agree with me also that, as those responsible for the lives and safety of the people of this Dominion, we cannot wholly divest ourselves of this responsibility in favour of expert opinion, however authoritative, though of course we would wish to attach all due weight to such opinion.

(iv) In considering the military opinion so far as it affects ourselves, we have noted in the first place that in New Zealand itself we have been told by the highest military authority only a few months ago that New Zealand and **Fiji** were in no danger of serious attack unless in the 'unthinkable' contingency of the British and American Fleet being driven from the **Pacific** and **Singapore** having fallen, and that this could

not happen under six months. Our reflection on this is that the unthinkable is now in everybody's mind. We have been warned that the Japanese are preparing for a southward advance and, as you know, the Joint Staffs in **Washington** have expressed the unofficial opinion that an attack on **Fiji** may be expected at any time after 10 January. So far as New Zealand is concerned, our own Chiefs of Staff have reduced the six months' period in respect of this Dominion to three months.

(v) We have noted also the opinion constantly expressed in the past by the Chiefs of Staff, both in the **United Kingdom** and in New Zealand, that there is no 'immediate large-scale threat to the territory

¹ The Japanese landed in the **Philippines** on 10 Dec 1941. The garrison on Corregidor held out for five months before surrendering on 6 May 1942.

² HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* were sunk off **Malaya** by Japanese air attacks on 10 Dec 1941.

of **Australia** and much less of New Zealand', a phrase taken from the Secretary of State's telegram of 11 December last [**No. 109**]. Frankly we do not accept this, and, even if we did accept it, prudence and the demands of our own people would oblige us to prepare against the worst. This we are doing without dismay, but we do feel entitled to ask of you what we know you are—and are confident you will continue to be—very willing to grant, namely, the utmost degree of assistance in the provision of implements of war that is consistent with necessary demands elsewhere.

4. To sum up, we have very little knowledge indeed of the intentions of the higher direction of the war, whatever be the authorities now responsible for it, either in **London** or in **Washington**. Indeed, so far as American intentions are concerned, we have practically no knowledge at all. We feel that we must be informed. We feel that we must have an eye, an ear, and a voice wherever decisions affecting New Zealand are to be

made, and we are by no means happy with the arrangements, so far as we know them, for the conduct of the war against **Japan**. And, finally, we feel that both in **Fiji** and in New Zealand we must prepare urgently for a possible attack on a substantial scale.

5. I do most earnestly apologise for adding this additional burden to your shoulders, which I know are very much strained with other and more immediate perplexities, but I am sure were you in our place here you would feel much as we do, and I do hope that you will find time at an early date to let us have your comments on this communication.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

118 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

118

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

13 January 1942

It is felt to be very important that Wavell should exercise supreme command without delay, as soon as he reports himself ready to do so. So far as **United Kingdom** forces are concerned, the Commander-in-Chief Far East has already relinquished command and Wavell has assumed command.² We accordingly suggest that as soon as Wavell reports himself as ready he should be formally authorised to assume supreme command without prejudice to further discussion of the machinery for consultation outlined in Annex 2 of the Supreme Commander's directive.

¹ This message was also sent to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² See p. 114, note 1.

2. The United States Chiefs of Staff agree. A similar suggestion is being made to the Dutch.

3. We should be grateful for your earliest reply.¹

¹ Mr Fraser replied on 14 January that the **New Zealand Government** had no objection.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

119 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

119

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

14 January 1942

WINCH **No. 1**

Following are proposals which have been agreed to by the **United States of America** Naval Staff and by the President for establishing a new naval area to be known as Anzac:

'1. Definition of Area: A new naval area to be called Anzac area is to be established. The boundaries of this area will be as follows:

(From longitude 141 degrees east eastward along the Equator to
a) the longitude of 170 degrees east; thence south-eastward to latitude 020 degrees south, longitude 175 degrees west, thence south along meridian 175 degrees west.

(From a point on the Equator southwards along meridian 141
b) degrees east to the south coast of **New Guinea, thence east along the southern **New Guinea** coast to the meridian 143 degrees east, thence in sea areas south along this meridian to the Pole.**

'2. Designation: This area is designated as an adjunct of the Pacific Ocean area, and naval forces operating therein will be considered to be an adjunct of the United States Pacific Fleet.

'3. Command Relations:

(The command of naval forces of associated powers operating in
a) the adjunct area will be vested in a United States Flag Officer directly responsible to the Commander-in-Chief United States Pacific Fleet,² and under his strategic direction.

(**The Commander-in-Chief United States Pacific Fleet will exercise**
b) general supervision over the operations in the adjunct area and will correlate them with operations when adjacent to the areas; but he may not change the allocation of the vessels assigned to the adjunct [area].

'4. Allocation of the Forces within the Area:

Proposed initial assignments of forces located in the adjunct area:

(**by the British—one aircraft carrier;**

a)

(**by the United States—one heavy or light cruiser;**

b)

(**by Australia—two heavy cruisers, one old light cruiser, three**
c) armed merchant cruisers, three destroyers, three sloops, two anti-submarine patrol vessels;

(**by New Zealand—two light cruisers, one armed merchant cruiser.**

d) Note: (1) The remainder of Royal Australian Navy vessels other than local defence forces to be assigned to ABDA area. (2) All local defence armaments to remain at the disposal of Australia and New Zealand. (3) The United States will undertake to furnish to the Australian and New Zealand Governments all practical assistance in ships, planes, munitions, etc., to be manned by Australia and New Zealand.

'5. Assignment of Tasks:

The tasks assigned to the forces of the associated powers in the adjunct area are:

(**to cover the eastern and north-eastern approaches to Australia**
a) and New Zealand;

(**to safeguard by all practicable escorting and covering operations**
b) convoys in the adjunct area;

(**to support the defence of islands in the adjunct area, with**
c) particular emphasis on its key points; to attack adjacent enemy key points;

(**to correlate operations with the forces in the ABDA area and with**
d) the United States Pacific force.

'6. Forces assigned to the adjunct and adjacent areas are authorised to extend their operations into other areas as may be required.'

You will realise that decisions had to be taken at once, and I hope you will agree that this is a valuable step forward to meeting the position which you have represented to us. I have communicated in the same sense to Mr Curtin.

² Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN; Commander-in-Chief US Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Area, 1942–45.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

120 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

120

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of Australia

16 January 1942

The Prime Minister of the **United Kingdom** has conveyed to me the proposals agreed to by the United States Naval Staff and by the President for the establishment of a new naval area to be known as Anzac, and has informed me that he has communicated with you in the same sense.

In general, we consider that the proposals have the following advantages:

- (a) They indicate the importance attached by the British and the United States Governments to the problems of the area in question.
- (b) They make some provision for necessary co-operation with the adjacent areas.
- (c) They make some provision for reinforcements which are urgently required.
- (d) They provide some measure of direct American naval assistance.

From these points of view, therefore, the proposals are a distinct advance on any which have yet been put forward.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to reply at the earliest possible moment in the form set out below. Before doing so, however, they would be grateful to be advised without delay of the tenor of the reply to be sent in this connection by His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia**, and they would be glad also of the Australian Government's very early comments ¹ on the following draft

reply:

‘My colleagues and I have studied the proposals put forward in your telegram WINCH No. 1 of 14 January, which we welcome from the point of view of the closer association with the **United States Forces which they will necessarily involve. We accept the proposals in their entirety. We assume that the technical disadvantages of operating a fleet which is predominantly British under the command of an American Admiral have received full consideration, and that this has been accepted because of the close American co-operation which it ensures.**

‘We assume also that the present proposals are an interim measure to cover immediate requirements while Allied forces in this theatre of war necessarily remain on the defensive.

‘We feel that you are well aware that from the broadest aspect the present proposals leave untouched the main problem to which we have previously drawn attention. These proposals, with those for the ABDA area, divide the theatre of operations into individual and to some extent artificial areas. Unified command over all naval forces engaged in the war against **Japan, and the eventual formation of a fleet superior to the Japanese, capable of wresting from our enemies the command of the Western Pacific, remain, in our opinion, essential to the defeat of **Japan**.**

‘I take it that you will by now have seen my telegram of 12 January,² and I do hope that when you have the time to comment on that communication you will let us know why it has not yet been found practicable to adopt the course which is so necessary for conducting operations in this part of the world.’

¹ On 22 January Mr Curtin sent to New Zealand a copy of his own reply to Mr Churchill. This telegram is not reproduced.

² No. 117.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

121 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

121

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

17 January 1942

Your telegram of 12 January [**No. 117**]. Following from Prime
Minister for your Prime Minister:

1. I am grateful to you for your telegram. I welcome, as always, the frank expression of your views, with which, in the main, I am much in sympathy, and the well-balanced reasoning with which you have presented them to me.
2. I fully endorse the remarks in your opening paragraphs. The Government and people of New Zealand have always adopted a helpful and realistic attitude to this war, which, beginning in the narrow confines of **Europe**, has gradually spread over almost the entire world and is now at the doorstep of New Zealand.
3. If you have thought us unmindful of your necessities in the past, although indeed we have never been so, I can assure you that the vast distance in miles which separates **London** from **Wellington** will not cause us to be unmindful of you or leave you comfortless in your hour of peril.
4. You will, I am sure, forgive me if in the time at my disposal I do not take up each of your points in detail. From the telegram which you have now received since sending your telegram to me, you will know of the army and air reinforcements which we and **America** are sending to you. ¹
The establishment of a new Anzac naval area will, I hope, also be

agreeable to you. Moreover, the **United States** contemplate the despatch at an early date of considerable land and air forces to the **Far East** area.

5. Nevertheless, you would not expect me to make promises of support which cannot be fulfilled, or of the early redress of a situation in the **Far East** which must take time to rectify, as rectified it will be.

6. I sense your [reproach at our] ² having been misled by a too complacent expression of military opinion in the past on probable dangers in the **Pacific** area in general and to New Zealand in particular. But who could have foretold the serious opening setback which the United States Fleet suffered on 7 December, with all that this, and the subsequent losses of our two fine ships, entails? The events of this war have been consistently unpredictable, and not all to our disadvantage. I am not sure that the **German General Staff** have always forecast events with unerring accuracy. For example, the Battle of **Britain**, the Battle of the **Atlantic**, and the Russian resistance must have shaken **Hitler's** faith in careful calculation of military appreciations.

7. Turning now to the strategic areas in the **Pacific**, you suggest that the establishment of the ABDA area under General Wavell is too narrow in conception, and should be extended to cover the whole of the **Pacific** and Indian Oceans. Frankly, I find this idea more attractive in theory than, in my view, it could work out in practice, unless it were possible for the United States Navy Department and the British Admiralty, with the Naval Boards of **Australia** and New Zealand and of the Dutch Government, to be merged into one large United National Navy Department.

8. As at present arranged, the United States Navy will have control in the **Pacific**, Anzac and, under General Wavell's general direction, the ABDA areas. This is no rigid line of responsibility and ensures that the predominant Allied naval power in the **Pacific**, i.e., the **United States**, exercises naval control in all three areas.

9. In establishing the ABDA area there was no intention to ignore or to

starve the other **Pacific** areas, but to ensure a virile defence, and in due time offence, in the area which must bear the first shock of the attack and, if held, will secure the vital lines of communication to **Australia** and New Zealand.

10. Our object, and in this I include all the ABDA powers, is to hold **Singapore** and to build up a fleet in the **Pacific** which will wrest naval control from the Japanese. All this is being worked out with the greatest despatch and in ceaseless consultation with our American allies.

11. I and my advisers have given much thought to the question of Dominion representation on our war councils, and in this connection I am not referring to the larger question of an **Imperial War Cabinet**. In considering this we have not been free agents. We have had to take into full account the views of the **United States** and Dutch Governments. It would be lamentable if, after appointing General Wavell to his great responsibilities, we were at the same time to impose a controlling machine which, by its ponderous workings, would make rapid decisions virtually impossible. I am, however, entirely sympathetic to your feelings that New Zealand should have its rightful place in the framing of major military policy in the **Far East**. I have therefore suggested to my colleagues that a body should be formed in **London**, with representatives, on a Ministerial plane, of the Australian, New Zealand and Dutch Governments, to which major [group mutilated – **Pacific?**] problems, and in particular, problems raised by General Wavell in accordance with his directive, would be referred. I would propose myself to preside over this body. Our view would, of course, have to be concerted with the President and the United States Staff in **Washington**. In the Staff sphere it has already been proposed that the service representations of **Australia** and New Zealand and the Dutch should be given [group mutilated – expression?] in **London**.

12. I have had a preliminary report from General Wavell, whom I expect to assume supreme command any day now. Whilst acknowledging the gravity of the present situation, he takes a robust view of the final outcome, and I am most anxious he should feel at the outset of his

difficult task that he will receive our unstinted and united confidence.

¹ Not published.

² The words in brackets are not included in the copy of this telegram on the Prime Minister's Department file but are included, in square brackets, in the version published in Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 12. See also No. 124.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

122 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

122

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

18 January 1942

Your telegram No. 28 of 14 January.²

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have no observations to offer, other than that they consider an effective method of liaison should be established between them and General Wavell's headquarters and hope that this can be arranged.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² Not published. This message contained General Wavell's plan for the organisation of ABDA headquarters. Australian and New Zealand agreement was asked for.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

123 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

123

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

19 January 1942

Following from Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:

In amplification of my telegram [**No. 121**], following are proposals for the machinery in **London** to secure the full and continuous association of the Australian, New Zealand and Netherlands Governments with the whole conduct of the war against **Japan**. A **Far East Council** shall be established on a Ministerial plane. I would preside, and other members would be the Lord Privy Seal ³ (who is my Deputy on the **Defence Committee**), Duff Cooper, and representatives of **Australia**, **New Zealand** and the **Netherlands**. The Australian member would presumably be Earle Page, and the New Zealand representative might be the High Commissioner ⁴ to begin with. There would also be a Dutch Cabinet Minister. The Council would be assisted by a staff group of Dominions liaison officers in consultation with the **United Kingdom** joint planners. The duties of the Council will be to [group mutilated – focus?] and formulate the views of the represented powers to the President, whose views will also be brought before the Council. Do you agree? I am also consulting Curtin and the Netherlands Government.

³ Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee; Lord Privy Seal, May 1940 – Feb 1942.

⁴ Rt. Hon. Sir William Jordan, PC, KCMG (at this date the Hon. W. J. Jordan); High Commissioner for New Zealand in the **United Kingdom**, 1936–51.



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

124 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

124

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

20 January 1942

From Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:

I am most grateful to you for your telegram in reply to mine of 12 January [No. 117]. I fully realise how impossible it is for you to traverse at once and in detail the points that we have thought it desirable in complete frankness to raise, but there are, we feel, matters of substance in our comments which we trust will be considered in London and will in due course form the subject of a further consultation whether by telegram or otherwise.

I should like at once to remove what appears to be a misconception as to our reaction to the military appreciations we have received from time to time as to probable developments in this part of the world. The fact is that we have never been 'misled' by these appreciations which have, generally speaking, seemed to us to be more optimistic than the situation as we saw it warranted.

We are fully appreciative of the measures that are now being taken to provide us from both United Kingdom and American sources with the equipment that is necessary for the defence of New Zealand and of Fiji, but our needs are still great and urgent. ¹

I shall not in this telegram touch upon the division of this theatre of war into separate areas under separate commands or upon the vital necessity, as we see it, of concentrating our forces at the earliest

possible moment to regain naval supremacy in the **Pacific**. I have no doubt that a further opportunity will arise for the discussion of these and the other points referred to in my telegram, and I propose now to set out our tentative views on your proposal for a consultative body in **London**.

We warmly welcome the object which the proposal is intended to serve, and particularly what we earnestly ask you to believe we regard as the inestimable advantage of your presence and chairmanship, and we will willingly pursue with you and the other Governments interested the possibilities involved in your proposal. Probably no perfect solution can be found of this most intricate and perplexing problem. But I am bound to say at once that we do not regard this proposal as meeting fully the point of view expressed in Part 2 of my telegram of 12 January. As it seems to us, such a consultative body should include not only, as you suggest, the **United Kingdom**, **Australia** and New Zealand, and the **Netherlands**, but all the powers at present actively associated in the conduct of the war against **Japan**, and particularly the **United States of America**. In this connection you will, of course, readily recognise the fact that the **United States** are now charged with the sole responsibility for the naval defence of the **Pacific** and Anzac areas, including, of course, this Dominion, and in view of this fact it seems to us to be quite essential—and I cannot too strongly impress upon you the firmness of our conviction in this sense—that some means must be found by which New Zealand can be brought at a conference table into direct touch with representatives of the **United States** and the other associated powers in the **Pacific**.

We assume (and would be glad of confirmation) that, as contemplated by you, the proposed body would have authority to deal not only with all major **Pacific** problems and with those questions raised by General Wavell in accordance with his directive, but also with any points that might arise from time to time in connection with the co-operation between the ABDA area and the **Pacific** area, or between the ABDA area and the Anzac area, or between the Anzac area and the

Pacific area.

I should make it clear that, even after the establishment of the proposed body, we could not feel that we would be sufficiently in touch with affairs in the ABDA area unless, as we have already suggested, we can be afforded some means of permanent liaison with General Wavell's headquarters.

Let me say finally how fully we realise the necessity for quick decisions and of avoiding any unnecessary restrictions on the powers and authorities of General Wavell and the Commanders of the other areas.

In view of the similarities of circumstances between this Dominion and the Commonwealth of [Australia](#), I should really be very much obliged if you would give me permission to forward your telegram and my reply for the personal and confidential information of Mr Curtin.

¹ See also

Defence of New Zealand and **and**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

125 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

125

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

22 January 1942

PEERA **No. 1.**

My colleagues and I have studied the proposals put forward in your telegram WINCH No. 1 of 14 January, ¹ which we welcome from the point of view of the closer association with the **United States forces which they will necessarily involve. We accept the proposals in their entirety. We assume that the technical disadvantages of operating under the command of an American Admiral a fleet that is predominantly British have received full consideration, and that this has been accepted because of the close American co-operation which it ensures. As the Anzac squadron will include New Zealand naval units, it will be essential for New Zealand to be represented by a suitable liaison officer on the staff of the American Admiral.**

We note that the proposals are purely naval, and we feel it desirable to point out that, in our opinion, the problem is not solely naval and that, as in the case of the ABDA area, some form of unified control—land, sea and air—in the Anzac area might well be established with American, British, Australian and New Zealand association.

We assume that the present proposals are an interim measure to cover immediate requirements while Allied forces in this theatre of war necessarily remain on the defensive. We feel that you are well aware that from the broadest aspect the present proposals leave untouched the

main problem to which we have previously drawn attention. These proposals, with those for the ABDA area, divide the theatre of operations into individual and to some extent artificial areas. Unified command over all naval forces engaged in the war against Japan, and the eventual formation of a fleet superior to the Japanese capable of wresting from our enemies the command of the Western Pacific, remain, in our opinion, essential to the defeat of Japan.

¹ No. 119.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

126 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

126

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

[Extract]

24 January 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

I have carefully studied your telegram of 20 January [**No. 124**]. Like you I will deal in this telegram only with the proposal for a Far Eastern Defence Council in **London**. I cannot but think that there may have been some misunderstanding as to the precise scope of the arrangement which was discussed by the President and myself, and I think it will be best if I set out in fuller detail the whole scheme as we arranged it.

The President proposed to me the appointment of a British General as Supreme Commander in the ABDA area. As part of this arrangement the orders to the Supreme Commander on major strategy and policy will finally emanate from the President, acting on behalf of the ABDA Governments. The President will be advised by the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington**. This committee consists of three United States Chiefs of Staff sitting with the British Joint Staff Mission, at the head of which I propose to place Field Marshal Dill. ¹ In London there will be a Far Eastern Council presided over by myself as Chairman and comprising one Ministerial representative each from **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Netherlands**, other Ministers and advisers being summoned to attend as necessary.

2. The arrangements for inter-working between the Combined Chiefs

of Staff Committee in **Washington** and the Far Eastern Council in **London** will be as follows:

Any proposals emanating either from the Supreme Commander or from any of the ABDA Governments will be forwarded simultaneously to the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington** and to **London** for consideration by the Far Eastern Council. I shall be responsible as Chairman of the Far Eastern Council for focussing and formulating the views of the Governments represented on the Council and for presenting them to the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington**. If there are differences these will be reported. The members of the British Joint Staff Mission sitting in **Washington**, who are of course throughout in the closest touch with the British Chiefs of Staff in **London**, would be responsible not merely for bringing the views of the Far Eastern Council before the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington**, but for making sure that those views are properly understood and for clearing up any difficulties.

3. In the event of disagreement between the United States Chiefs of Staff and the British Joint Staff Mission, which would imply disagreement between the United States Chiefs of Staff and the Council of the **Far East** in **London**, the matter would be referred back to **London** for further consideration by the Council.

4. As an essential part of the arrangement for the Far Eastern Council in **London** it is proposed that planning liaison officers of **Australia** and New Zealand and the **Netherlands** should be brought

¹ Fd Mshl Sir John Dill, GCB, CMG, DSO; Chief of the Imperial General Staff, May 1940 – Dec 1941; Head of the British Joint Staff Mission to **Washington**, Jan 1942 – death, 4 Nov 1944.

into consultation in **London** with the **Joint Planning Staff** of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee in order to ensure that the views of **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Netherlands** are given full weight in the

preparation of any Joint Staff report or appreciation relating to the ABDA area. For this purpose it is suggested that the three Governments concerned should each provide a service representative of equivalent rank to a Colonel or Lieutenant-Colonel to act as Planning Liaison Officer. These officers would be given accommodation in the **War Cabinet** offices and would be afforded all the facilities necessary for their work.

5. Such is the scheme in detail. It will be seen from it that the Far Eastern Council in **London**, so far from being an advisory body, will be the centre on which the views of the **United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand** and the **Netherlands** Governments are focussed and formulated, on the Staff as well as on the Ministerial plane, and effective decisions reached; and further, that no decision can be taken either in **Washington** or in **London** which does not take full account of the views of the **Australian, New Zealand** and the **Netherlands** Governments.

6. If the orders of the ABDA powers to the Supreme Commander were to be framed by a body in **Washington** representing all those powers, the representatives of the Governments concerned, other than of the **United States**, would be less favourably placed for expressing the views of their Governments, since under the arrangement proposed the **Australian** and **New Zealand** Governments will be represented in **London**, not merely on the Ministerial plane as full members of the Far Eastern Council having an equal voice in its decisions, but also on the joint planning level their representatives on the Council will be able to speak with the knowledge of the strategic and other considerations which have been taken into account in the formation of detailed plans.

7. The above is the plan to which the President was prepared to agree, and I feel that it is the one which offers the best opportunity to **New Zealand** to make her voice effectively heard in the Allied councils. It is not possible for the **United States** both to give the command in the **Pacific** to a **British** General and to entrust their interests to a representative sitting in **London** as one of the members of a Far Eastern

Council here. On the other hand, we cannot have two Far Eastern Councils, one sitting in [Washington](#) and the other in [London](#). The result would only lead to confusion and to machinery so cumbrous that it would fall to the ground of its own weight.

8. I hope, therefore, that on studying this fuller explanation of the scheme New Zealand will agree to take part in the Far Eastern Council in [London](#) in the manner suggested above. Pending your reply we will proceed on the assumption that the Far Eastern Council here will come into being as proposed.... ¹

¹ The text of a telegram sent by Mr Churchill to Mr Curtin on the same subject has been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

127 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

127

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

24 January 1942

**Your telegram of 18 January [No. 122]. We have telegraphed to
General Wavell that it would be desirable to include one or two New
Zealand officers on his staff and have requested him to get into touch
with you direct on this point.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

128 – BRITISH ADMIRALTY DELEGATION (WASHINGTON) TO THE ADMIRALTY² – [EXTRACT]

128

*British Admiralty Delegation (Washington) to the Admiralty*² *[Extract]*

25 January 1942

...³ The following revised agreement for the Anzac area is the result of further discussions in **Washington**:

‘The Combined Chiefs of Staff recommend the immediate establishment of the Anzac area and corresponding **Anzac Force.**

‘1. Boundaries. Beginning at longitude 141 degrees east at the Equator, eastwards along the Equator to longitude 170 degrees east, thence south-easterly to a point in latitude 20 degrees south, longitude 175 degrees west, thence due south; from point of beginning, south along meridian 141 degrees east to south coast of **New Guinea, thence eastward along said coast to meridian 143 degrees east, thence due south in sea areas only.**

‘2. **Anzac Force is to be under the strategic direction of the **United States**, exercised by the Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet⁴ through one or more United States Flag Officers, assisted by one or more Flag Officers named by **Australia** and/or New Zealand.**

‘3. All practicable use will be made of naval supply, communications and repair facilities in **Australia and New Zealand.**

‘4. Initial assignments of ships to **Anzac Force: British—one carrier; **United States**—one heavy or one new light cruiser and two destroyers; New Zealand—two light cruisers, one auxiliary cruiser; **Australia**—two**

heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, three auxiliary cruisers, two destroyers, two anti-submarine patrol vessels, six 600-ton anti-submarine vessels (remainder of Australian seagoing forces, namely two light cruisers, two destroyers, three sloops, to be assigned to **Asia** command). All other Australian and New Zealand naval units to remain at the disposal of their respective Governments for local defence.

‘5. Tasks to be assigned the **Anzac Force** in co-operation with air forces available in the area are, first, cover eastern and north-eastern approaches to **Australia** and New Zealand by destroying enemy forces; second, protect shipping and safeguarding convoys in the Anzac area by escorting, patrolling and/or covering operations; third, supporting defence of islands in the Anzac area, with emphasis on key points, and attack adjacent enemy islands’ key points; fourth, correlate operations with forces in the ABDA area and with the United States Pacific Fleet, as well as with local forces of **Australia** and New Zealand.

‘6. Naval forces assigned to Anzac and adjacent areas are authorised to extend operations into other areas as circumstances may require.

‘7. Effective date of the foregoing organisations, allocations, and appropriate control of operations, 1 February, or as soon thereafter as practicable. On receipt request remarks may reach British Admiralty Delegation, **Washington**, if possible by noon, Tuesday, 27 January, for meeting that afternoon at which it is hoped to reach agreements.’

² Repeated to the Australian Commonwealth and New Zealand Naval Boards.

³ This message was sent in three parts. Parts 1 and 2 are not reproduced.

⁴ Fleet Admiral E. J. King, USN; Commander-in-Chief US Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, 1942–45.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

129 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

129

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

26 January 1942

Following for your Prime Minister:

Thank you for your telegram of 24 January [**No. 126**] which I am afraid, however, still leaves us perplexed and, to be candid, unconvinced. An immediate reflection, if you will allow me to say so, is that your telegram seems to have been drafted primarily, if not solely, with reference to the ABDA area. In particular:

(**Provision is made for representations to the proposed Far East a) Council** emanating from 'the Supreme Commander or any of the ABDA Governments'. We assume, however (and would be glad of confirmation), that this is inadvertent, and that despite the fact that New Zealand is not one of the ABDA powers the **New Zealand Government** would be entitled to make their representations to the **Far East Council** on all matters concerning the **Pacific**, including the ABDA area, the Anzac area, and the general **Pacific** area.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

(**You refer in paragraph 7 to the appointment of a British General b) to command the Pacific**; the appointment is, of course, to the ABDA area (and it is incidentally worthy of note in this connection that the recent attack on **Rabaul**¹ is outside that area). We are much concerned with the ABDA area, with the affairs of which we wish to keep closely in touch (and should be able to do so by the proposal referred to in the Secretary of State's telegram [**No. 127**]), but we are

most intimately concerned, firstly, with affairs in the Anzac area, and secondly, with affairs in the remainder of the **Pacific**. In this connection I asked you in my telegram of 20 January [**No. 124**] to confirm our assumption that the functions of the proposed **Far East Council** would include affairs in these two areas as well as the co-ordination between them *inter se*, and also between each and both of them and the ABDA area.

On more fundamental aspects I must again express the unanimous opinion of my colleagues and myself that in view of the proposed assumption by the **United States** of the full responsibility for the naval defence of the Anzac and **Pacific** areas (as distinct from the ABDA area) it is completely essential that we should have direct contact with the Americans. Your proposals as explained do not meet this requirement. Indeed they provide no direct contact at all between New Zealand and the **United States of America**, and the indirect contact contemplated takes place through the following successive stages, namely:

- (The New Zealand Government notify their views to the New
a) Zealand representative on the **Far East Council**, who conveys these views to
 - (the Council itself for discussion.
b)
 - (The Chairman conveys the result of the discussion to
c)
 - (the Joint Staff Mission in **Washington** who, in turn, convey them
d) for discussion to
 - (the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee who, if agreed, finally
e) transmit the conclusion to
 - (the President or the **United States** authorities concerned.
f)

We cannot regard this as adequate for our purposes—it would surely be cumbersome and there could be no certainty that our representations on any particular subject would in this manner reach the American authorities either in time for appropriate action or in the form which we should wish.

I am bound to say that the proposals as presented are not attractive to us, and that if we were obliged to choose between a Council as

¹ On 22 January Japanese forces landed at **Rabaul**.

and a similar Council established in **Washington** where American representation could be assured, then, with all the disadvantages which that course would involve, we would be forced to prefer the second alternative.

Put shortly: We think it not only desirable but necessary that there should be one co-ordinating authority—land, sea and air—for the whole war against **Japan** on which we should wish to be represented. While we do not decline to co-operate in the proposal you have outlined, with such amendments as may be possible to meet our views, and will, if necessary, do our best to make it a success, we would not willingly accept any solution of this admittedly most difficult problem that does not afford us direct and continuous access to the power which, under the arrangements so far proposed, is solely responsible for the conduct of naval operations in that portion of the world which includes this Dominion.

It may well be that among the many possible solutions—all open to some, and possibly grave, objection—the best might perhaps be as follows:

- (Dominion membership of the United Kingdom War Cabinet.
a) Indeed as this is, in effect, already accorded to **Australia**, we must ask for a similar privilege for New Zealand.
- (A Committee of that **War Cabinet** to be charged with the special
b) supervision, in respect of the British Commonwealth, of the war against **Japan** and with co-operation with the body referred to in subparagraph (c) below; and
- (A **Far East Council**, on the lines suggested, to be established in
c) **Washington**, with representation on the governmental plane of the **United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, China and the Netherlands**.

I am really very sorry to worry you like this, but try as we may we

cannot see your proposal as a workable method of meeting the situation as we think it should, and hope it can, be met.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

130 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

130

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

27 January 1942

The Prime Minister desires me to transmit the following:

Your telegram of 26 January. I am sorry you still do not think that our proposal is a workable method of meeting the situation. In the circumstances I am putting your views and those of Curtin as to the formation of a **Pacific War Council in Washington to the President for his consideration.**

As regards the specific points raised at the beginning of your telegram, I confirmed that New Zealand would be perfectly entitled to put their views before the **Far East Council in London, not only on matters affecting the ABDA area but on all **Pacific** questions. You are right in thinking that our proposal was that the **Far East Council in London** should deal with **Pacific** areas outside the ABDA area as necessary.**

May I add how much I appreciate the tone of the official statement which you have just issued on this subject.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

131 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

131

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

27 January 1942

We have been thinking over the machinery for consultation between ourselves and other members of the British Commonwealth on matters of urgency connected with the war, in the light of the new position resulting from the **United States'** entry into the war and recent developments in the **Pacific**. We have also received requests from the Australian Government for some change in the existing system, more particularly expressing the desire that 'an accredited representative of the Commonwealth Government will have the right to be heard in the **War Cabinet's** formulation and direction of policy.'

2. We are now informing the Commonwealth Government that we are prepared to agree to this request, and Sir Earle Page, who is at present in **London** as the special representative of the Australian Cabinet, will attend meetings of the **War Cabinet** for the purposes indicated.

3. We feel that New Zealand should know this in case they felt disposed to avail themselves of the new arrangements on a similar footing to **Australia**. We recognise that each Dominion may have its own views about this, though I need not say they would be warmly welcomed.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Ministers of **Canada** and **South Africa**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

132 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

132

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

28 January 1942

WINCH No. 2.

Your PEFRA No. 1. ²

1. We are most grateful for your full and ready acceptance of the proposed Anzac area and we are glad to learn you agree. [See] **Washington** telegram of 25 January [**No. 128**] defining the boundaries of the Anzac area, the allocation of forces, and the tasks of those forces.
2. We fully agree that command of a predominantly British fleet by a **United States** officer raises difficulties, but against this must be set, as you point out, the closer co-operation from the United States Pacific Fleet which this arrangement will bring about. In our view the technical difficulties could be largely overcome by the United States Flag Officer being ashore, from where, in close co-operation with the **Australian Commonwealth Naval Board**, he would exercise command over the Anzac area, while the actual conducting of operations at sea would be in the hands of the Flag Officer commanding the **Royal Australian Navy**. In any case a New Zealand liaison officer on the staff of the United States Flag Officer will undoubtedly be desirable, and we assume you will arrange this direct with the United States Flag Officer on his arrival.
3. The proposal in your second paragraph that there should be unified control—land, sea and air—in the Anzac area, as is the case in the ABDA area, is receiving urgent and most careful consideration and I will

communicate again.

4. We are satisfied that the proposal for naval control over the Anzac area is the best that can be devised to meet the present situation, but agree that it may require modification later.

² No. 125.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

133 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

133

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

2 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

As stated in my telegram of 27 January [**No. 130**], I put your views and those of Curtin about the formation of a **Pacific War Council in Washington** to the President. I have now received the following most secret and personal answer from him. You will understand that this must on no account be quoted publicly, but I thought that you would like to see the actual text.

‘The Staff have been giving consideration to the matter of including the Australians, the Dutch and the New Zealanders in the Joint Staff conferences. While they have not given me a final answer, I think I can say that their general feeling, with which I concur, is that all political and Government matters concerning New Zealand, **Australia** and the **Netherlands East Indies** should continue to be handled in **London**, and that military matters be resolved here. However, to have all of these countries represented each by three men on the Joint Staff considering ABDA problems would provide for an altogether unwieldy body. We are all strongly of the opinion that the present working organisation is functioning very efficiently for the collaboration of British and **United States** affairs, which will constitute the major portion of the matters to be handled. We think it should remain as at present but with this important supplementary arrangement to meet the special complications of the ABDA area: that in cases in which the Dutch, the

Australians and the New Zealanders are concerned the Combined Staff will invite their participation in discussion of such matters as involve their national interest and collaboration. It is essential, however, that in those cases where immediate action is required the individual advice of the officers concerned be given without waiting for formal word from their respective Governments. We will undertake here to work out a close and intimate working relationship with the three military missions of **Australia, New Zealand and the **Netherlands**, and make sure that their advice is in no sense perfunctory but will be considered important and essential in determining the general policies of the war in the ABDA area. This seems to be our Joint Staff opinion here.'**

We have not yet considered the matter further here, and in the meantime I should be glad to know at your convenience whether the arrangement proposed by the President is satisfactory to you. I am making a similar inquiry of Curtin.

I am having repeated to you in the following telegrams the text of replies received from **Canada and South Africa about the question of Dominion representation on the **War Cabinet**.¹**

¹ **Not published. The Prime Ministers of both South Africa and **Canada** expressed satisfaction with the existing machinery for consultation between the Government of Great Britain and that of their own countries.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

134 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE HON. W. NASH,
C/O NEW ZEALAND SUPPLY MISSION (OTTAWA)²

134

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Hon. W. Nash, c/o New Zealand Supply Mission (Ottawa)²

5 February 1942

1. Churchill has informed us that President Roosevelt and his advisers are not in favour of the location of the **Far East Council** in **Washington**, and we understand that this is the view of the Netherlands Government also. It seems practically certain now that the **Far East Council**, with representatives of Great Britain, **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Netherlands**, will be located in **London**, while in **Washington** the military representatives of members of the **Far East Council** will be called into consultation on the Staff plane with the British and United States Staffs on such matters as involve their local interests. This will involve consideration of:

(representation in **London**—

- a) (i) on the **Far East Council**,
(ii) on the **War Cabinet**, and,
(iii) on the Staff plane; and also,

(Strengthening of Staff representation in **Washington** in order to
b) meet British and United States Staff representatives on as equal a footing as possible.

The Washington Staff proposals are not without difficulty in view of the requirement laid down, which is, of course, not unreasonable, that decisions must be immediate and therefore reference to Governments for formal consent will not be possible, while at the same time stress is laid on the fact that the views of the respective representatives on the **Far East Council** in **London** and in the Staff talks in **Washington** must not

differ.

2. With all the difficulties inherent in the proposals as now put forward, we feel that we can carry the matter no further and that we are bound to accept them. My immediately following telegram contains the text of a message sent to Churchill today.

3. I shall be very grateful for an urgent expression of your views generally and particularly on representation, both political and military, both in **London and **Washington**.**

² The delegation for the New Zealand Supply Mission arrived in **Washington on 24 May 1941 and offices were established at **Washington, New York** and **Ottawa**.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

135 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

135

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

6 February 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

I am very grateful to you for your message contained in the Secretary of State's telegrams of 2 February [**No. 133**] and **Nos. 85** and **86**,² and for your early intimation to me of President Roosevelt's views on the establishment of the Far Eastern Council.

I am sure you will agree that it would serve no useful purpose for me to say that we agree with the view now expressed by President Roosevelt (which we appreciate concurs with your own) when in fact we do not agree. We have considered this matter at great length and with the most earnest desire to reconcile our views on a proposal which deeply concerns us with those which we know you to hold. In this we have failed, and we retain the belief that a Far Eastern Council, wherever its seat, without the participation of the **United States** (and indeed of **China**) is inadequate for the purposes which it is designed to serve. We think, therefore, that a mistake is being made which in our opinion may prove serious.

At the same time, having expressed our views, we feel that we have taken the matter as far as we can. As you know, despite our doubts, we have never at any time declined your proposal for a Far Eastern Council established at **London** with representatives of Great Britain, **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Netherlands**, and, though we retain the view that it

is inadequate for its purpose, we will nevertheless now accept it and do everything that lies in our power to ensure that it operates to the fullest advantage within the limitations of its constitution. We are now addressing our minds to the question of suitable representation both on this Council and on the **War Cabinet**, in connection with which latter subject we have noted the views which you were kind enough to forward of Mr Mackenzie King and General Smuts.

There are, however, two matters to which I feel I must call your attention:

(1) It is noted that in your last communication, as in previous communications, the whole thought appears to be directed to the ABDA area, and I wonder if it is sufficiently appreciated by those responsible in the **United Kingdom** and in the **United States** (*a*) that no part of New Zealand territory is included in that area; (*b*) that, except through the proposed **Far East Council** and liaison officers on Wavell's staff, New Zealand will have no direct connection with that area; and (*c*) that while conditions in that area may well have a vital effect on this Dominion, nevertheless a direct attack on New Zealand or New Zealand outposts is unlikely to originate from or to pass through that area. Our main preoccupations therefore are in the Anzac area and the remainder of the **Pacific**, and to these portions of the globe it appears to us that your communication omits to refer at all.

(2) We wonder whether this is in any way connected with what we regard as the inaccurate and misleading title which is now given to the ABDA area. This portion of the **Pacific** area is now consistently referred to as the South-Western Pacific, and General Wavell is spoken of and signs himself as the Supreme Commander of the South-Western Pacific. The plain fact of the matter is that a large portion of the ABDA area is not in the South-Western Pacific and, if the whole of the ABDA area was so included, it certainly does not constitute the whole of the South-Western Pacific. It might be more accurately termed the Mid-Western Pacific. It seems to us that this error in geographical nomenclature may well have obscured the fact that New Zealand and a large part of the South-Western Pacific is not included in the ABDA area. We think that the use of the term South-Western Pacific as a description of the ABDA area should be re-examined, and we do this without any wish unduly to stress or exaggerate the importance of the matter. We do feel convinced,

however, that both in **London** and in **Washington**, as is evident in President Roosevelt's message, some measure of confusion exists, and may continue to exist, as to defence requirements for the countries in the respective areas and as to the strategical problems involved.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² The last two telegrams are not published. See p. 146, note 1.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

136 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON,¹ TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

136

*The New Zealand Minister, Washington,¹ to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

6 February 1942

Personal for Prime Minister from Nash.

Your telegram No. 2.²

My views on Dominion representation in the **Imperial War Cabinet** and the proposal for the formation of a **Far Eastern Council in London** are as follows:

(1) The successful prosecution of the war demands unification of the higher direction of command and resources, and any suggestion of sectarian interest should be firmly put aside....³

(2) The proposals for an **Imperial War Cabinet** and **Far Eastern Council** sitting in **London** are disadvantageous politically, strategically, and geographically.

(3) Politically, the proposal will lead to the formation of a **British Commonwealth** or sectarian point of view, which will then have to be reconciled from a considerable distance with another sectarian point of view in **Washington**.

(4) Strategically, because it encourages the conception, evidently still held in **London**, of the **British** advancing eastwards from the **Indian Ocean** while the **Americans** advance westwards from the **Hawaii** islands.

(5) Geographically, because **London** is too far from the **Pacific** to

enable a proper appreciation to be made.

(6) I consider the best solution for the higher direction of the war is for Churchill with the British War Cabinet to direct the war on the European, **Atlantic** and **Mediterranean** fronts, and for Roosevelt in consultation with the War Council in **Washington** to direct the war on the Asiatic, Australian, **Pacific**, and our ocean fronts. This direction would be exercised through War Councils in **London** and **Washington** working in the closest possible harmony.

(7) Representatives of **Australia** and New Zealand would sit on the Washington War Council, also on the Combined Staff which would advise the Council.

(8) It is desirable that command should be unified and should if possible be exercised by one person in **London** and one in the **Pacific**. The Pacific command should be an American Admiral.

(9) I strongly feel that we should continue to insist on this, or some very similar arrangement, not only for our own sakes but for the sake of the common cause. Clinging to pre-war policies and exaggerating present loyalties will not help towards our objective—the winning of the war—and neither policies nor loyalties will matter much if we lose.

(10) Sir John Dill has just advised me over the telephone that Churchill has announced the setting-up of the Far Eastern Council in **London**, and I presume we will not say much publicly at present; but it does not appear to me that we can effectively carry on a successful **Pacific** campaign other than through **Washington** as suggested.

¹ The appointment of Mr Nash as New Zealand Minister in **Washington** was announced on 29 Dec 1941. He took up his duties early in February.

² Not published. This telegram summarised for Mr Nash's information a number of the messages printed earlier in this

section dealing with the setting-up of the ABDA area and the formation of a Far Eastern Council.

³ Text omitted contained a brief comment on the Netherlands Government's telegram (not published) on the formation of a 'Pacific War Council'.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

137 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

137

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

7 February 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

Press and broadcast reports of the recent statement by you appear to indicate some doubt as to New Zealand's attitude with reference to representation on the **War Cabinet**. In order to remove any possible misunderstanding will you allow me to explain that we had regarded my message of 26 January [**No. 129**] as fully indicating our position, which is that as representation on the **War Cabinet** has been accorded to **Australia** we desire a similar privilege to be extended to New Zealand, and, as explained in my telegram of 6 February [**No. 135**], we are now considering suitable representation.

You may be interested to know also that in the secret session of Parliament held yesterday I outlined the point of view that we have expressed on this question and on that of the Far Eastern Council, and the House was unanimous in its approval of the line we have taken, including of course our acceptance on 6 February of your proposals, with all the doubts that we still feel as to their adequacy.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

138 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

138

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

8 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister from my Prime Minister:

Your telegram of 6 February [**No. 135**].

1. I am very glad to receive your assent to the proposed Far Eastern Council in **London**. I am sure you will get far better service here than in **Washington**, with whom we are in close touch.
2. There has been no overlooking of the Anzac area, but distances are so great that it is necessary to establish a separate organisation from that of the ABDA area. We are proposing to **Washington** the setting-up in eastern **Australia** of a Combined Staff under the American Naval Commander-in-Chief which will comprise representatives of New Zealand, **Australia**, the **United States** and Great Britain.
3. The whole affairs of the Anzac area will be dealt with from this combined command, and their relations with the ABDA area will, so far as they affect or overlap one another, be dealt with either directly between the two commands or, when necessary, by the **London** and **Washington** organisations. We have cabled to you, **Australia**, and the **United States** on this matter and do not anticipate any serious difficulties.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

139 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

139

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

8 February 1942

The following is the text of a memorandum handed to me yesterday by Sir John Dill:

‘Combined Chiefs of Staff. Representation of Ministers of the Dominions and Dutch.

‘Memorandum by Combined Chiefs of Staff.

‘1. The Combined Chiefs of Staff have considered the President's outline of proposals for representation of the Dutch and of the British Dominions. In their view these proposals would work out as follows:

- (A separation will be made between political and strategic a) questions, borderline cases being treated as strategic.**
- (All discussion on political questions will be conducted in London, b) where the principal representation of the Dominion Governments and the Dutch Government is centred.**
- (Strategic questions will be handled in Washington through the c) Combined Chiefs of Staff in accordance with procedure to be prescribed. This procedure will be laid down in the final agreed version of “war collaboration between the United Nations”.**
- (The Dominions and Dutch Staffs will be represented by Staff d) Missions in Washington, each primarily responsible to their own Chiefs of Staff. While there will be normal contacts between the Dominion Staff Missions and the United States Staffs, it will be the responsibility of the United Kingdom Joint Staff Mission to conduct preliminary discussions with the Dominion Staff Missions and to evolve, if possible, a co-ordinated British Commonwealth point of view. The United States Chiefs of Staff will be responsible in a similar**

way for preliminary discussions with the Dutch Staff Mission.

(Where questions affecting any Dominions or the Dutch are under
e) discussion by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the heads of the Staff
Missions concerned will be invited to attend.

(The interests of the Dominions and the Dutch are primarily
f) confined to particular theatres of war. The British and United States
Chiefs of Staff on the other hand have to consider the strategy of the
war as a whole, the interests of their two nations being world-wide.
The responsibility for making final recommendations to Governments
will therefore remain with the Chiefs of Staff.

‘2. The whole question of Dominion and Dutch representation is at
present under active discussion between His Majesty's Government in
the **United Kingdom** and His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions
and the Dutch Government. The representatives of the British Chiefs of
Staff are not yet in a position to give the views of **London** on the matter.

‘By direction of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.’

I have not seen the President's outline of the proposals referred to.
Sir John stated:

- (1) That the Combined Chiefs of Staff were taking over a complete
building in **Washington**.
- (2) That he would make a suitable room available in the building for
New Zealand attachés.
- (3) That we might now consider appointments of higher ranking
attachés to represent the Dominion.
- (4) That whilst he would see Casey or myself at any time, the
meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff would be confined to Staff
Officers of fighting units.

The proposals appear to be in line with the arrangements detailed in
your telegram [**No. 135**] and we are confined to representation which
can only be supported at meetings by attachés—and attachés of our
Staff will be allowed to take part in the discussions—on general
questions which may affect us, when invited to do so by the Combined
Chiefs of Staff.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

140 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

140

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

8 February 1942

ANZAC AREA.

1. The following telegram has been addressed to the Joint Staff Mission,
Washington, by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff:

‘(1) Following on a suggestion put forward by His Majesty’s
Government in New Zealand, the Chiefs of Staff have recommended, and
the Prime Minister has approved in principle, that unified control—land,
sea and air—should be established in the Anzac area.

‘(2) The arguments in favour of this arrangement may be
summarised as follows:

- (i) The problem in the Anzac area is not exclusively a naval one,
since there are the land and air forces in Australia, New Zealand, and
various adjacent islands to be considered.
- (ii) It seems desirable that the Supreme Commander of the Anzac
area should receive his instructions from the same authority as the
Commander of the ABDA area, and that the machinery for ensuring
that these instructions represent the views of the united nations
concerned should be the same in both cases.

‘(3) The British Chiefs of Staff consider that the new arrangement
should be on the following lines:

- (a) It would be necessary for the Anzac area as now agreed to be
extended to include the whole of Australia, less the portion allocated
to the ABDA area.

(Since the problem is predominantly a naval one, the Supreme
b) Commander of the Anzac area would be a United States Flag Officer,
who should establish his headquarters ashore, probably in **Australia**.
His headquarters staff would be on the ABDA model and consist of
American, British, Australian and New Zealand officers.

(There would be subordinate Commanders—land, sea and air—on
c) the analogy of the ABDA area.

(The Supreme Commander would receive his general strategic
d) instructions through the same channels as General Wavell.

‘(4) Please take up these proposals with the United States Chiefs of
Staff as a matter of urgency.

‘(5) Meanwhile, this telegram has been repeated to His Majesty's
Governments in the Commonwealth of **Australia** and New Zealand, who
have been asked to communicate their views to His Majesty's
Government in the **United Kingdom** as soon as possible. These will be
passed to you at once.

‘(6) Assuming that all are in agreement in principle, we request that
the Combined Chiefs of Staff should obtain the President's approval.
Thereafter the detailed arrangements will be the subject of consultation
between the Governments concerned.’

2. We should be glad to have the views of the Commonwealth and New
Zealand Governments on these proposals as soon as possible.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

141 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

141

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

9 February 1942

Your cable of 5 February [**No. 134**].

In the present perspective it is obvious that our views of the set-up necessary to efficiently carry on the war strategically, operationally and politically, particularly in the **Pacific**, will not prevail. Churchill and Roosevelt have decided, and our job in the meantime is to accept the decisions and make the machinery work. We should be well represented in **London**, but **Washington** is likely to become the place where the final **Pacific** action is determined.

We should increase our representation on the military, naval, or air side by appointing a competent senior officer capable of participating in discussions on strategy and planning operations with [group mutilated – a knowledge?] of the **Pacific Islands** and their relation to the defence of the Dominion. Mead ¹ and Parry are of the type required, but you could make the best selection.

¹ Maj-Gen O. H. Mead, CBE, DSO; Commander, Southern Military District (Brigadier), Oct 1940 – Feb 1942; GOC Pacific Section, **2 NZEF**, Feb – Jul 1942; lost at sea in aircraft accident, 25 Jul 1942, on a flight from **Fiji** to **Tonga**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

142 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

142

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

10 February 1942

Your telegram of 8 February [**No. 140**]. ANZAC AREA.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are fully in agreement with the proposal to establish unified control—land, sea and air—in the Anzac area, and generally with the suggested procedure set out in paragraph (3) for bringing this into force.

While they adhere to their views on the proposed procedure for general strategic instruction, they are prepared to accept it and to endeavour to make it effective.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

143 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

143

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

17 February 1942

At an interview with the President yesterday I stressed and he understood New Zealand's [group omitted – problems?], particularly the need for its defence and its value as a base if things went badly and **Fiji** was not held. He set out reasons for the War Council in **London** and the Staff Council at **Washington**. He stated that anything that required action would come to **Washington**, but that British and Dutch questions would first go to **London** and, after consideration there, would come to **Washington** with recommendations for action.

I stressed the need for anti-aircraft defences, with which he agreed. I shall continue to stress to the Chiefs of Staff for their attention our need for all equipment. He urged that our Staff officers should make immediate contact with the United States Chiefs of Staff, which they will do on Wednesday. He maintained he would send for me if questions affecting us required his consideration and also would see me when I wished to represent our case. I asked especially if I could contact personally the United States Chief of Staff, Marshall,² to make our case at any time and he answered, 'Yes'.

I hope now to make some contacts with Hopkins,³ Sumner Welles, the United States Chiefs of Staff and others, and I shall keep you advised.

² General of the Army the Hon. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff United States Army, 1939–45.

³ **Mr Harry L. Hopkins, adviser and assistant to President Roosevelt, 1941–45; died 29 Jan 1946.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

144 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

144

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

18 February 1942

Taking into account the fact that **Australia**, the **Netherlands East Indies** and New Zealand are the countries mainly and almost exclusively affected by the operations in the South Pacific, I recommend that you again approach Churchill and urge him to agree that Casey, the Dutch Minister to the **United States**, and myself be summoned to all of the meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, sitting exclusively in an advisory capacity representing our respective countries, not to take part in discussions but to ensure that our knowledge of **Australia**, the **Netherlands East Indies** and New Zealand is available at all times prior to decisions being made, and also to enable us to advise the Combined Chiefs of Staff of our Governments' views and to keep our Governments informed of all decisions. This procedure could also be followed on the **Munitions Assignment Board**, which has been set up with Harry Hopkins as the Chairman. If you approve this proposal, I will endeavour to secure an interview for Casey and myself with Roosevelt to mention the subject, but will not do anything until I hear from you. I have discussed this proposal in detail with Sir John Dill. See my immediately following telegram for alternative proposals. ¹

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

145 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

145

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

19 February 1942

War Cabinet have considered your suggestion, but in view of the fact that, after lengthy discussion and the frank expression of our reasons for preferring **Washington** to **London**, we nevertheless did accept the **Far East Council** in **London** and stated we would do everything in our power to ensure that it operated to the fullest possible advantage, it is felt that we must without further qualification give that arrangement a fair trial. I should be sorry at this stage, moreover, to create any impression at all that we were perhaps trying to by-pass the channels agreed upon, however cumbersome we believe those channels to be.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

146 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

146

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

24 February 1942

PEERA **No. 4.** PACIFIC WAR COUNCIL.

In order to make the best arrangements possible from the point of view of New Zealand to facilitate the work of the **Pacific War Council in London**, and to do our utmost, as we undertook, to make it effective, we intend to move Mr Nash from **Washington** to **London** as Resident Minister on the **War Cabinet** and on the **Pacific War Council**. We came to this conclusion because we felt that, if the War Council is to be situated in **London**, then **London** is a more important post from our point of view than **Washington**.

Mr Nash informs me ¹ that he has gathered the impression that there is a possibility of the **Pacific War Council** being removed to **Washington** at an early date. Having regard to your views and those of the President on the matter, and to the full agreement of **Australia** and New Zealand to subordinate their preference of locality to yours, this would seem to be improbable, but before actually arranging for Mr Nash's transfer I would be grateful if you would inform me whether there is anything in this suggestion. If not, I propose to move Mr Nash to **London** as soon as possible.

¹ In a telegram dated 23 February, not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

147 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

147

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

25 February 1942

WINCH **No. 5.**

I know nothing of any change of location to **Washington and I am
sure it will be a mistake. We shall welcome Mr Nash. ²**

² **In the event, the **Pacific War Council** was established in
Washington, where Mr Nash remained as New Zealand Minister.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

148 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³ TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

148

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*³ to the Prime Minister
of New Zealand

25 February 1942

It has now been decided that General Wavell's headquarters should be dissolved and that the command of the ABDA area should be transferred to the Dutch.⁴

General Wavell has been instructed accordingly by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at **Washington** and informed that he is to [group mutilated – leave?] sufficient personnel and material to enable the Dutch to exercise this command.

The above conclusion was endorsed by the **Pacific War Council** at its meeting yesterday. It was also agreed that a public announcement as to Wavell's departure should be postponed for the present.

³ The Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee had succeeded Viscount Cranborne as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs on 19 Feb 1942.

⁴ See p. 114, note 1.

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III**

EXTENSION OF ANZAC AREA

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

1 March 1942

After consultations which have taken place between members of the Advisory War Council, the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**¹ and the **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**,² together with the Chiefs of Staff of **Australia** and **New Zealand**,³ to whom were added **Generals Brett and Hurley**⁴ of the **United States Army**, general conclusions were reached relating to the extension of the **Anzac area** and machinery for its control.

2. A drafting committee comprised of the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, the **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**, the **Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies**, the **Minister for External Affairs**, and myself today completed the draft of a cable, which is set out in my immediately following telegram,⁵ and which we ask your **Government** to forward with us as a joint submission to the **Prime Minister of the United Kingdom** and the **President of the United States**, at a date and hour to be fixed by you if you approve of its terms.

3. I may add that those concerned in the formulation of the text regard the matter as one of overriding urgency.

¹ **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, PC, MC; member of the **New Zealand War Cabinet**, Jul 1940 - death, 27 May 1943.

² **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**; **Minister of Industries and Commerce**, 1935 - death, 8 Apr 1947.

³ **New Zealand** was represented by **Commodore W. E. Parry**, **Chief of the Naval Staff**, and **Air Commodore R. V. Goddard**, **Chief of the Air Staff**.

⁴ Maj-Gen Patrick J. Hurley; personal representative of United States Chief of Staff in **Far East**, Jan - Mar 1942; US Minister in NZ, 1942; special representative of President Roosevelt in the **USSR**, Nov - Dec 1942.

⁵ Neither the draft cable sent to New Zealand on 1 March or the **New Zealand Government's** reply of 3 March is published. The final version is contained in **No. 151**, dated 4 March.

150

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

4 March 1942

Reference **No. 75.** ¹

The Advisory War Council considered your reply at **Canberra** today immediately on its receipt. The **Hon. D. G. Sullivan** and the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, having remained in **Melbourne**, were unfortunately unable to be present. A copy was immediately furnished to them as requested.

2. We have accepted all the points you have raised and have amended the draft accordingly.

3. In view of the overriding urgency of the matter as mentioned in [**No. 149**], and with which Messrs Sullivan and Coates were in full agreement, we are despatching the cable only to the Prime Minister of the **United Kingdom** as suggested by you, and would ask you to give it your fullest support.

4. In regard to the Supreme Commander to be appointed by the Council, we have informed the Prime Minister, in view of General Brett's experience as Deputy Supreme Commander of the ABDA area, the knowledge he has gathered of Australian and New Zealand requirements, the contacts he established in Government and Service spheres, that for

our part we would welcome his appointment.

5. The cable as revised is being repeated to you and copies passed to your representatives here.

6. We have also decided to accept your suggestion that the approach to the President should be through Mr Churchill. We hope that you will exert your powerful influence accordingly.

7. We consider that the immediate adoption of the plan is essential to the security of our two countries, and we look forward to a period of the very closest co-operation.

¹ Not published. Contained New Zealand's comments on the Australian draft.

151

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ²

4 March 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

Regarding cable [**No. 140**] relative to the extension of the Anzac area and the machinery for its control, we have now had an opportunity of discussing this with a special delegation of representatives of the **New Zealand Government** and their Chiefs of Staff. The whole matter has been considered as one of urgency in the light of the rapid deterioration in the strategic situation. After an exchange of views with the **New Zealand Government**, the following conclusions have been unanimously reached by the Australian Advisory War Council:

(a) Present Military Position:

(1) Japanese successes place **Australia** and New Zealand in danger of attack. Darwin, **Port Moresby**, **New Caledonia** and **Fiji** are

immediately threatened. Other points of likely attack are the north-east and north-west coasts of **Australia**, the **New Hebrides** and **Tongatabu**. The Japanese have decisive air superiority and control in the seas in the areas in which they are operating, especially as there seems to be no present prospect of such a concentration as would enable the main Japanese fleet to be defeated.

- (2) The loss of **Australia** and New Zealand would mean the loss of the only bases for offensive action by the Allied nations against the Japanese from the Anzac area. The defensive aspect is of course vital if these bases are to be held.
- (3) The basis of our planning must be not only to ensure the security of **Australia** and New Zealand but to use them as areas from which offensive action will be launched.
- (4) The immediate problems which are of great urgency are to secure the lines of communication from the **United States** to **Australia** and New Zealand and to prevent the southward movement of the enemy.

(b) Definition of Anzac Area:

We are in agreement with the proposal of the Chiefs of Staff of the **United Kingdom** that the Anzac area should include the mainland of **Australia**, and we now recommend that it shall embrace:

- (the present Anzac area;
a)
- (the whole of **Australia** and its territories, New Zealand, and the
b) islands within the boundaries of the present Anzac area to the extent not included in (a);
- (an area to the west and north-west of **Australia**, including Timor,
c) **Ambon**, the whole of **New Guinea**, and such sea area within an agreed distance of the coast west of the area as may subsequently be determined;
- (the sea area to the south of **Australia**.
d)

This extension would involve a considerable increase in naval responsibility, and to meet this it would be necessary for additional naval forces to be provided to cover this additional commitment.

(c) Machinery for Higher Direction of Policy and Operations in Anzac Area:

The United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff stated that it is desirable ‘that the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area should receive his instructions from the same authority as the Commander of the ABDA area, and that the machinery for ensuring that these instructions represent the views of the united nations concerned should be the same in both cases’.

The original ABDA command has now been dispersed, but you will be aware from cable **No. 102¹ that the experiences of the Commonwealth Government did not indicate that the organisation, machinery and procedure were satisfactory for coping with the vital problems with which we are being brought face to face. Further confirmation of this view was obtained during the final days of the ABDA regime.**

Our views on the machinery required for the higher direction of the Anzac area are as follows:

(1) Governmental Machinery

A **United States - United Kingdom Anzac Council comprising accredited representatives of the following Governments:**

The United States of **America, **United Kingdom**, **Australia**, New Zealand.**

The Chairman to be the President of the **United States of America, or his deputy, and the Council to be located in **Washington**.**

The membership might be increased as determined by the Council in the light of events and experience. Thus Canada would be added if she were to send forces to the Anzac area. The Council would be responsible for the higher policy of the war in the Anzac area and would deal with questions of policy and the provision of forces and supplies.

The proposed Council does not replace the Pacific Council. The future demarkation, function and relationship of the two bodies can be determined by experience and the changing strategical position.

(2) Strategic Control

The general strategical control of the Anzac area would be vested in the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee at **Washington**, but to this Committee should be added for the purpose of Anzac strategy one Naval, one Army and one **Air Force** officer, from each of the Dominions, to be appointed by the Governments of **Australia** and New Zealand after consultation with the Supreme Commander. This representation closely approximates the arrangement suggested by the President for the participation of Australian and New Zealand service officers in discussions involving their national interest and collaboration under the ABDA scheme.

(3) Supreme Commander

The Council or the Governments concerned will appoint a Supreme Commander, preferably a **United States** officer, who would be subject to general strategic direction through the Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington** as specially constituted in (2). The functions of the Supreme Commander would be—

(to exercise general strategic direction over the land, sea and air
a) forces allocated to the area;

(to allocate within the area the forces and equipment that are
b) available, subject to the discretion of the Governments concerned to retain their own troops in their area should the circumstances in their opinion necessitate it.

The Supreme Commander should be guided by the principle of delegation of authority to his commanders. It should be no part of his duty to control the details of actual operations. The control of these should be left to the local commanders.

(4) Commanders of Naval, Military and Air Forces

Under the Supreme Commander and responsible to him there would be:

(a Naval commander of all the naval forces allocated to the area

a) as at present;

(an Army and Air commander for each of the following:

b) (1) Australian base territories and [New Caledonia](#).

(2) New Zealand, [Fiji](#) and all the islands for which New Zealand is responsible.

(d) *Directive to Supreme Commander:*

A directive in accordance with the general principles embodied in (1) to the Supreme Commander of the ABDA area would be issued to the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area.

General Observations:

(1) The establishment of a Council as suggested is considered essential from the Governmental aspect to provide for an effective voice by the Australian and New Zealand Governments in the higher policy of the war in the Anzac area, in view of their responsibilities to the people and Parliaments of these Dominions for local defence and the fact that the whole of their forces are being placed under the operational control of the Supreme Commander.

(2) The Council will provide a direct and expeditious means for prosecuting a vigorous war policy in the Anzac area and will give that centralised supervision which is so essential to the conduct of a war by allies. Its location at [Washington](#) will have a number of advantages, including greater proximity to the theatre of war.

(3) Adoption of the foregoing proposals would have the following advantages within the Anzac area:

(The area would be a workable area and one that would accord
a) with strategical and administrative requirements both for defensive and offensive warfare against the enemy.

(Within the area there would be unified control of land, sea and air
b) forces to ensure:

(i) the most effective distribution of the forces available according to prevailing conditions;

(ii) the employment of all forces and equipment available according

to a strategical plan that will be based upon the single aim of defeating the enemy and will not be dependent upon regard for national boundaries;

(iii) the most effective machinery for allocating available forces.

(c) The machinery for co-ordination of the Allied effort within the area would be the minimum necessary for effective co-ordination and a wide measure of responsibility would be accorded to local commanders.

(4) In regard to the Supreme Commander to be appointed by the Council, the Government would welcome the immediate appointment of General Brett, United States Army, in view of his experience as Deputy Supreme Commander, ABDA area, the knowledge he has gathered of Australian and New Zealand requirements, and the Government and Service contacts he has made.

(5) The Advisory War Council representing all political parties in **Australia** regard the whole matter as one of overriding urgency.

(6) You will doubtless hear from the Prime Minister of New Zealand within a matter of hours. Both of us agree that it will be better for you to consider the proposal and we request you to recommend its adoption by the President.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand on 5 March.

¹ Not published.

152

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ¹

6 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

Ministerial representatives of the **New Zealand Government** with the

Chiefs of the New Zealand Naval and Air Staffs are at present in consultation with the Australian Government War Council and Chiefs of Staff on problems of mutual defence. As one result agreement has been reached on certain aspects of unified control which are set out in Curtin's telegram of 4 March, and with which the **New Zealand Government** are in agreement.

With reference to the proposed **Anzac Council in Washington**, we feel that the obvious advantages of having the Australian and New Zealand Governments and General Staffs directly represented on a Council which would deal with questions of policy and the provision of forces and supplies for the Anzac area, and on which the **United States** as well as the **United Kingdom** would be represented, would outweigh whatever difficulties may arise from the setting-up of yet another authority in addition to the **Pacific War Council in London**.

The New Zealand Government note and support the proposal by the Australian Government that General Brett should be appointed Supreme Commander of the Anzac area. They regard the appointment of a Supreme Commander of that area, with power to exercise that unified command which the Japanese are apparently exploiting so successfully, as a matter of the very utmost importance and urgency calling for action without delay.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

153

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

7 March 1942

Your telegram of 6 March. Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

I have forwarded to the President the Anzac plan. Our Chiefs of Staff

Committee here are examining it now.

I have so informed Mr Curtin. Will telegraph further as soon as possible.

154

*The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

7 March 1942

My telegram of 4 March [No. 151].

The following is our draft of the proposed directive to the Supreme Commander. The Governments concerned are the Governments of the **United States of America**, the **United Kingdom**, **Australia** and **New Zealand**, and any other Government hereafter included. For the sake of convenience the above Governments are referred to in this directive as the **ANZAB Governments**:

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

1. *The Area.* The Anzac area should embrace:

(1) The present Anzac area.

(2) The whole of **Australia** and its territories, **New Zealand**, and the islands within the boundaries of the present Anzac area to the extent not included in (1).

(3) An area to the west and north-west of **Australia** including **Timor**, **Ambon**, the whole of **New Guinea**, and the sea area within an agreed distance of the coast of the west of **Australia**, or as may subsequently be determined.

(4) The sea area to the south of **Australia**.

2. *Forces.* You have been designated as the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area and all operationally trained armed forces afloat, ashore, and in the air of the **ANZAB Governments** which are or could be stationed in that area.

3. No Government will materially reduce its armed forces stationed in your area, nor any commitment made by it for reinforcing its forces in your area, except after giving to the other Governments and to you timely information pertaining thereto.

4. *Strategic Concept and Policy.* The basic strategic concept for the conduct of the war in the Anzac area lies in an immediate change on the part of the **United Nations to a positive offensive strategy, and plans must be formulated to provide for the security of **Australia**, New Zealand and the advanced territories, and to ensure freedom of action for offensive operations on the part of the **United Nations** against **Japan**. The piecemeal employment of forces should be minimised. Your operations should be so conducted as to further preparations for the offensive.**

5. The general strategic policy should be related from the outset to further major offensive operations and, with this in view, should be directed to the security of **Australia and New Zealand, not only to maintain their integrity but also to form bases for offensive action on the part of the **United Nations** to defeat **Japan**. The immediate problems that confront you are:**

- (1) to secure the lines of communication from the **United States** to **Australia** and New Zealand by holding **New Caledonia** and **Fiji**;**
- (2) to prevent the further southward movement of the enemy into **Australia**, either from **New Britain** via **New Guinea**, or from Timor through Darwin or down the west coast;**
- (3) to maintain essential communications within the area.**

When these have been secured it will be possible to plan offensive operations in the light of the situation then prevailing, including that in the western **Pacific. In the event of failure to hold **New Caledonia** and **Fiji**, it will be a primary necessity to ensure the integrity of the **North Island** of New Zealand.**

6. *The Duties, Responsibilities and Authorities of Supreme Commander.* You will co-ordinate in the Anzac area the strategic

operations of all armed forces of the ANZAB Governments, assign them strategic missions and objectives, and where desirable arrange for the formation of task forces for the execution of specific operations, and appoint any officers irrespective of seniority or nationality to command such task forces.

7. You will allocate within the area the forces and equipment that are available or which may become available.

8. You are authorised to require from the commanders of the armed forces under your command such reports as you deem necessary in discharging your responsibilities as Supreme Commander.

9. You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

10. Your channel of communication with the ANZAB Governments upon any matter relating to your mission is through the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in [Washington](#).

11. The commanders of all sea, land and air forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with the provisions of this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

12. In the unlikely event that any of your immediate subordinates after making due representation to you still consider that obedience to your orders would jeopardise the national interests of his country to any extent unjustified by the general situation in the Anzac area, he has the right, subject to your being immediately notified of such intention, to appeal direct to his own Government before carrying out the orders. Such appeals will be made by the most expeditious method, and copies of appeals will be communicated simultaneously to you.

13. You are not authorised to transfer from the territories of any of the ANZAB Governments land forces of that Government without the

consent of the local commander or his Government.

14. Your authority and control with respect to the various operations of the Anzac area and to the forces assigned thereto will normally be exercised through the local commander. Interferences are to be avoided in the administration processes of the armed forces of any of the ANZAB Governments, including freedom of communication between them and their respective Governments. Alterations or revisions in the basic tactical organisation of any forces will not be made except in case of urgent necessity. Each national component of a task force will normally operate under its own commander and should normally be retained as a national component in the task force. You will give effect to the principle of delegation of authority to local commanders, and in accordance with this principle it is no part of your duty to control the details of actual operations.

15. *Assumption of Command and Staff.* Your staff will include officers of the forces of the ANZAB Governments. You are empowered to communicate immediately with the commanders of those forces with a view to obtaining staff officers essential to your earliest possible assumption of command.

16. You will report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, [Washington](#), when you are in a position effectively to carry out the essential function of the Supreme Command, so that your assumption of command may be promulgated to all concerned.

17. *Superior Authority.* As Supreme Commander of the Anzac area you will always be responsible to the [ANZAB Council](#) through the Combined Chiefs of Staff in [Washington](#) as specially constituted for the purpose of the Anzac area.

18. On all important matters outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area, the Combined Chiefs of Staff in [Washington](#) as specially constituted for the purpose of the Anzac area will be the agency through which recommendations and

communications may be submitted to the **ANZAB Council** for decision.

Among the chief matters on which decisions will be required are:

- (a) provision of reinforcements;
- (b) major changes in policy;
- (c) departure from the Supreme Commander's directive.

19. This directive is to be read with the agreement between the ANZAB Governments concerning the machinery for the higher direction of the war in the Anzac area. ¹

¹ For the areas and directives finally adopted see *Division of Strategic Responsibility between the United Kingdom and the United States*.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

149 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

149

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

1 March 1942

After consultations which have taken place between members of the Advisory War Council, the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**¹ and the **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**,² together with the Chiefs of Staff of **Australia** and **New Zealand**,³ to whom were added **Generals Brett and Hurley**⁴ of the **United States Army**, general conclusions were reached relating to the extension of the **Anzac area and machinery for its control**.

2. A drafting committee comprised of the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, the **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**, the **Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies**, the **Minister for External Affairs**, and myself today completed the draft of a cable, which is set out in my immediately following telegram,⁵ and which we ask your Government to forward with us as a joint submission to the **Prime Minister of the United Kingdom** and the **President of the United States**, at a date and hour to be fixed by you if you approve of its terms.

3. I may add that those concerned in the formulation of the text regard the matter as one of overriding urgency.

¹ **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, PC, MC; member of the **New Zealand War Cabinet**, Jul 1940 - death, 27 May 1943.

² **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**; **Minister of Industries and Commerce**, 1935 - death, 8 Apr 1947.

³ New Zealand was represented by Commodore W. E. Parry, Chief of the Naval Staff, and Air Commodore R. V. Goddard, Chief of the Air Staff.

⁴ Maj-Gen Patrick J. Hurley; personal representative of United States Chief of Staff in **Far East**, Jan - Mar 1942; US Minister in NZ, 1942; special representative of President Roosevelt in the **USSR**, Nov - Dec 1942.

⁵ Neither the draft cable sent to New Zealand on 1 March or the **New Zealand Government's** reply of 3 March is published. The final version is contained in **No. 151**, dated 4 March.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

150 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

150

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

4 March 1942

Reference No. 75. ¹

The Advisory War Council considered your reply at **Canberra** today immediately on its receipt. The **Hon. D. G. Sullivan** and the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, having remained in **Melbourne**, were unfortunately unable to be present. A copy was immediately furnished to them as requested.

2. We have accepted all the points you have raised and have amended the draft accordingly.

3. In view of the overriding urgency of the matter as mentioned in [**No. 149**], and with which Messrs Sullivan and Coates were in full agreement, we are despatching the cable only to the Prime Minister of the **United Kingdom** as suggested by you, and would ask you to give it your fullest support.

4. In regard to the Supreme Commander to be appointed by the Council, we have informed the Prime Minister, in view of General Brett's experience as Deputy Supreme Commander of the ABDA area, the knowledge he has gathered of Australian and New Zealand requirements, the contacts he established in Government and Service spheres, that for our part we would welcome his appointment.

5. The cable as revised is being repeated to you and copies passed to your representatives here.

6. We have also decided to accept your suggestion that the approach to the President should be through Mr Churchill. We hope that you will exert your powerful influence accordingly.

7. We consider that the immediate adoption of the plan is essential to the security of our two countries, and we look forward to a period of the very closest co-operation.

¹ Not published. Contained New Zealand's comments on the Australian draft.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

151 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

151

*The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*²

4 March 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

Regarding cable [No. 140] relative to the extension of the Anzac area and the machinery for its control, we have now had an opportunity of discussing this with a special delegation of representatives of the **New Zealand Government and their Chiefs of Staff. The whole matter has been considered as one of urgency in the light of the rapid deterioration in the strategic situation. After an exchange of views with the **New Zealand Government**, the following conclusions have been unanimously reached by the Australian Advisory War Council:**

(a) Present Military Position:

- (1) Japanese successes place **Australia** and New Zealand in danger of attack. Darwin, **Port Moresby**, **New Caledonia** and **Fiji** are immediately threatened. Other points of likely attack are the north-east and north-west coasts of **Australia**, the **New Hebrides** and **Tongatabu**. The Japanese have decisive air superiority and control in the seas in the areas in which they are operating, especially as there seems to be no present prospect of such a concentration as would enable the main Japanese fleet to be defeated.**
- (2) The loss of **Australia** and New Zealand would mean the loss of the only bases for offensive action by the Allied nations against the Japanese from the Anzac area. The defensive aspect is of course vital if these bases are to be held.**
- (3) The basis of our planning must be not only to ensure the security of **Australia** and New Zealand but to use them as areas from which**

offensive action will be launched.

(4) The immediate problems which are of great urgency are to secure the lines of communication from the **United States** to **Australia** and **New Zealand** and to prevent the southward movement of the enemy.

(b) Definition of Anzac Area:

We are in agreement with the proposal of the Chiefs of Staff of the **United Kingdom** that the Anzac area should include the mainland of **Australia**, and we now recommend that it shall embrace:

(the present Anzac area;

a)

(the whole of **Australia** and its territories, **New Zealand**, and the
b) islands within the boundaries of the present Anzac area to the extent not included in (a);

(an area to the west and north-west of **Australia**, including **Timor**,
c) **Ambon**, the whole of **New Guinea**, and such sea area within an agreed distance of the coast west of the area as may subsequently be determined;

(the sea area to the south of **Australia**.

d)

This extension would involve a considerable increase in naval responsibility, and to meet this it would be necessary for additional naval forces to be provided to cover this additional commitment.

(c) Machinery for Higher Direction of Policy and Operations in Anzac Area:

The **United Kingdom** Chiefs of Staff stated that it is desirable 'that the **Supreme Commander** of the Anzac area should receive his instructions from the same authority as the **Commander** of the **ABDA** area, and that the machinery for ensuring that these instructions represent the views of the united nations concerned should be the same in both cases'.

The original **ABDA** command has now been dispersed, but you will be aware from cable **No. 102**¹ that the experiences of the **Commonwealth Government** did not indicate that the organisation, machinery and

procedure were satisfactory for coping with the vital problems with which we are being brought face to face. Further confirmation of this view was obtained during the final days of the ABDA regime.

Our views on the machinery required for the higher direction of the Anzac area are as follows:

(1) Governmental Machinery

A United States - United Kingdom Anzac Council comprising accredited representatives of the following Governments:

The United States of **America, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand.**

The Chairman to be the President of the **United States of America**, or his deputy, and the Council to be located in **Washington.**

The membership might be increased as determined by the Council in the light of events and experience. Thus Canada would be added if she were to send forces to the Anzac area. The Council would be responsible for the higher policy of the war in the Anzac area and would deal with questions of policy and the provision of forces and supplies.

The proposed Council does not replace the Pacific Council. The future demarkation, function and relationship of the two bodies can be determined by experience and the changing strategical position.

(2) Strategical Control

The general strategical control of the Anzac area would be vested in the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee at **Washington**, but to this Committee should be added for the purpose of Anzac strategy one Naval, one Army and one **Air Force** officer, from each of the Dominions, to be appointed by the Governments of **Australia** and New Zealand after consultation with the Supreme Commander. This representation closely approximates the arrangement suggested by the President for the participation of Australian and New Zealand service officers in discussions involving their national interest and collaboration under the

ABDA scheme.

(3) Supreme Commander

The Council or the Governments concerned will appoint a Supreme Commander, preferably a **United States officer, who would be subject to general strategic direction through the Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington** as specially constituted in (2). The functions of the Supreme Commander would be—**

(a) to exercise general strategic direction over the land, sea and air forces allocated to the area;

(b) to allocate within the area the forces and equipment that are available, subject to the discretion of the Governments concerned to retain their own troops in their area should the circumstances in their opinion necessitate it.

The Supreme Commander should be guided by the principle of delegation of authority to his commanders. It should be no part of his duty to control the details of actual operations. The control of these should be left to the local commanders.

(4) Commanders of Naval, Military and Air Forces

Under the Supreme Commander and responsible to him there would be:

(a) a Naval commander of all the naval forces allocated to the area as at present;

(b) an Army and Air commander for each of the following:

(1) Australian base territories and **New Caledonia.**

(2) **New Zealand, Fiji and all the islands for which **New Zealand** is responsible.**

(d) *Directive to Supreme Commander:*

A directive in accordance with the general principles embodied in (1) to the Supreme Commander of the ABDA area would be issued to the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area.

General Observations:

(1) The establishment of a Council as suggested is considered essential from the Governmental aspect to provide for an effective voice by the Australian and New Zealand Governments in the higher policy of the war in the Anzac area, in view of their responsibilities to the people and Parliaments of these Dominions for local defence and the fact that the whole of their forces are being placed under the operational control of the Supreme Commander.

(2) The Council will provide a direct and expeditious means for prosecuting a vigorous war policy in the Anzac area and will give that centralised supervision which is so essential to the conduct of a war by allies. Its location at **Washington will have a number of advantages, including greater proximity to the theatre of war.**

(3) Adoption of the foregoing proposals would have the following advantages within the Anzac area:

(a) The area would be a workable area and one that would accord with strategical and administrative requirements both for defensive and offensive warfare against the enemy.

(b) Within the area there would be unified control of land, sea and air forces to ensure:

(i) the most effective distribution of the forces available according to prevailing conditions;

(ii) the employment of all forces and equipment available according to a strategical plan that will be based upon the single aim of defeating the enemy and will not be dependent upon regard for national boundaries;

(iii) the most effective machinery for allocating available forces.

(c) The machinery for co-ordination of the Allied effort within the area would be the minimum necessary for effective co-ordination and a wide measure of responsibility would be accorded to local commanders.

(4) In regard to the Supreme Commander to be appointed by the Council, the Government would welcome the immediate appointment of General Brett, United States Army, in view of his experience as Deputy

Supreme Commander, ABDA area, the knowledge he has gathered of Australian and New Zealand requirements, and the Government and Service contacts he has made.

(5) The Advisory War Council representing all political parties in [Australia](#) regard the whole matter as one of overriding urgency.

(6) You will doubtless hear from the Prime Minister of New Zealand within a matter of hours. Both of us agree that it will be better for you to consider the proposal and we request you to recommend its adoption by the President.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand on 5 March.

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

152 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

152

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

6 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

Ministerial representatives of the **New Zealand Government with the Chiefs of the New Zealand Naval and Air Staffs are at present in consultation with the Australian Government War Council and Chiefs of Staff on problems of mutual defence. As one result agreement has been reached on certain aspects of unified control which are set out in Curtin's telegram of 4 March, and with which the **New Zealand Government** are in agreement.**

With reference to the proposed **Anzac Council in **Washington**, we feel that the obvious advantages of having the Australian and New Zealand Governments and General Staffs directly represented on a Council which would deal with questions of policy and the provision of forces and supplies for the Anzac area, and on which the **United States** as well as the **United Kingdom** would be represented, would outweigh whatever difficulties may arise from the setting-up of yet another authority in addition to the **Pacific War Council** in **London**.**

The New Zealand Government note and support the proposal by the Australian Government that General Brett should be appointed Supreme Commander of the Anzac area. They regard the appointment of a Supreme Commander of that area, with power to exercise that unified command which the Japanese are apparently exploiting so successfully,

as a matter of the very utmost importance and urgency calling for action without delay.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

153 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

153

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 March 1942

**Your telegram of 6 March. Following from Prime Minister for Prime
Minister:**

**I have forwarded to the President the Anzac plan. Our Chiefs of Staff
Committee here are examining it now.**

**I have so informed Mr Curtin. Will telegraph further as soon as
possible.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

154 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

154

*The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

7 March 1942

My telegram of 4 March [**No. 151**].

The following is our draft of the proposed directive to the Supreme Commander. The Governments concerned are the Governments of the **United States of America**, the **United Kingdom**, **Australia** and **New Zealand**, and any other Government hereafter included. For the sake of convenience the above Governments are referred to in this directive as the **ANZAB Governments**:

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

1. *The Area.* The Anzac area should embrace:

(1) The present Anzac area.

(2) The whole of **Australia** and its territories, **New Zealand**, and the islands within the boundaries of the present Anzac area to the extent not included in (1).

(3) An area to the west and north-west of **Australia** including **Timor**, **Ambon**, the whole of **New Guinea**, and the sea area within an agreed distance of the coast of the west of **Australia**, or as may subsequently be determined.

(4) The sea area to the south of **Australia**.

2. *Forces.* You have been designated as the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area and all operationally trained armed forces afloat, ashore, and in the air of the ANZAB Governments which are or could be

stationed in that area.

3. No Government will materially reduce its armed forces stationed in your area, nor any commitment made by it for reinforcing its forces in your area, except after giving to the other Governments and to you timely information pertaining thereto.

4. *Strategic Concept and Policy.* The basic strategic concept for the conduct of the war in the Anzac area lies in an immediate change on the part of the **United Nations to a positive offensive strategy, and plans must be formulated to provide for the security of **Australia**, New Zealand and the advanced territories, and to ensure freedom of action for offensive operations on the part of the **United Nations** against **Japan**. The piecemeal employment of forces should be minimised. Your operations should be so conducted as to further preparations for the offensive.**

5. The general strategic policy should be related from the outset to further major offensive operations and, with this in view, should be directed to the security of **Australia and New Zealand, not only to maintain their integrity but also to form bases for offensive action on the part of the **United Nations** to defeat **Japan**. The immediate problems that confront you are:**

- (1) to secure the lines of communication from the **United States** to **Australia** and New Zealand by holding **New Caledonia** and **Fiji**;**
- (2) to prevent the further southward movement of the enemy into **Australia**, either from **New Britain** via **New Guinea**, or from Timor through Darwin or down the west coast;**
- (3) to maintain essential communications within the area.**

When these have been secured it will be possible to plan offensive operations in the light of the situation then prevailing, including that in the western **Pacific. In the event of failure to hold **New Caledonia** and **Fiji**, it will be a primary necessity to ensure the integrity of the **North Island** of New Zealand.**

6. *The Duties, Responsibilities and Authorities of Supreme*

Commander. You will co-ordinate in the Anzac area the strategic operations of all armed forces of the ANZAB Governments, assign them strategic missions and objectives, and where desirable arrange for the formation of task forces for the execution of specific operations, and appoint any officers irrespective of seniority or nationality to command such task forces.

7. You will allocate within the area the forces and equipment that are available or which may become available.

8. You are authorised to require from the commanders of the armed forces under your command such reports as you deem necessary in discharging your responsibilities as Supreme Commander.

9. You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

10. Your channel of communication with the ANZAB Governments upon any matter relating to your mission is through the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington**.

11. The commanders of all sea, land and air forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with the provisions of this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

12. In the unlikely event that any of your immediate subordinates after making due representation to you still consider that obedience to your orders would jeopardise the national interests of his country to any extent unjustified by the general situation in the Anzac area, he has the right, subject to your being immediately notified of such intention, to appeal direct to his own Government before carrying out the orders. Such appeals will be made by the most expeditious method, and copies of appeals will be communicated simultaneously to you.

13. You are not authorised to transfer from the territories of any of

the ANZAB Governments land forces of that Government without the consent of the local commander or his Government.

14. Your authority and control with respect to the various operations of the Anzac area and to the forces assigned thereto will normally be exercised through the local commander. Interferences are to be avoided in the administration processes of the armed forces of any of the ANZAB Governments, including freedom of communication between them and their respective Governments. Alterations or revisions in the basic tactical organisation of any forces will not be made except in case of urgent necessity. Each national component of a task force will normally operate under its own commander and should normally be retained as a national component in the task force. You will give effect to the principle of delegation of authority to local commanders, and in accordance with this principle it is no part of your duty to control the details of actual operations.

15. *Assumption of Command and Staff.* Your staff will include officers of the forces of the ANZAB Governments. You are empowered to communicate immediately with the commanders of those forces with a view to obtaining staff officers essential to your earliest possible assumption of command.

16. You will report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, **Washington**, when you are in a position effectively to carry out the essential function of the Supreme Command, so that your assumption of command may be promulgated to all concerned.

17. *Superior Authority.* As Supreme Commander of the Anzac area you will always be responsible to the **ANZAB Council** through the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington** as specially constituted for the purpose of the Anzac area.

18. On all important matters outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Commander of the Anzac area, the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington** as specially constituted for the purpose of the Anzac area

will be the agency through which recommendations and communications may be submitted to the **ANZAB Council** for decision. Among the chief matters on which decisions will be required are:

- (a) provision of reinforcements;
- (b) major changes in policy;
- (c) departure from the Supreme Commander's directive.

19. This directive is to be read with the agreement between the ANZAB Governments concerning the machinery for the higher direction of the war in the Anzac area. ¹

¹ For the areas and directives finally adopted see *Division of Strategic Responsibility between the United Kingdom and the United States*.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

DIVISION OF STRATEGIC RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

155 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

155

The High Commissioner for New Zealand (London) to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

10 March 1942

1. The dissolution of ABDA [group mutilated–command?] and the Japanese capture of the Malay barrier necessitate re-examination of strategic boundaries in the **Far East**.

2. We are now presented with two main theatres:

(The Indian Ocean theatre, including **Burma**, naturally falling
a) under the British sphere of influence and receiving reinforcements
and supplies of equipment from the west.

(The Pacific Ocean theatre, including **Australia** and New Zealand,
b) naturally lying within the **United States** sphere and drawing forces
and supplies of equipment from the **United States**.

3. Under the agreement on Staff [group mutilated–representation?] with the United States Chiefs of Staff and after consultation with Planning Liaison Officers in **London**, the following dividing line between the above spheres of strategic responsibility is proposed. From Singapore south to north coast of **Sumatra**, thence round the east coast of **Sumatra** (leaving the **Sunda Straits** to eastwards of the dividing line) to a point on the coast of **Sumatra**, longitude 104 degrees east. Thence south to latitude 8 degrees south, thence to Onslow in **Australia**, thence south along the coast of **Australia** to longitude 117 degrees, thence due south.

4. This division will in no way change any subdivision within the main theatre that the Governments concerned may decide to adopt, nor is it intended that forces assigned to one area shall rigidly be excluded from

operating in the other.

5. As the [Pacific War Council](#) is invited to approve of the adoption of the line dividing the two main theatres as set out in paragraph 3 above, I would appreciate your comments by Tuesday, 5 p.m.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

156 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND (LONDON)¹

156

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the High Commissioner for
New Zealand (London) ¹*

10 March 1942

Your telegram [**No. 155**], boundary between the **Pacific** and **Indian Ocean** areas. We have no objection in principle to the line proposed. The boundary suggested in the north-west and west of **Australia**, however, will differ from that suggested in the proposed definition of the Anzac area. This, however, is a matter upon which the Australian Government will no doubt comment more particularly.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

157 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND (LONDON) TO THE
PRIME MINISTER²

157

*The High Commissioner for New Zealand (London) to the Prime
Minister* ²

11 March 1942

A Pacific War Council meeting this evening was called to discuss the matter dealt with in my telegram [No. 155] and the Australian modifications thereon, but in the meantime a message had been received from the United States of America containing suggestions which affect considerably the matter referred to above. These suggestions will be considered at a meeting on Thursday afternoon. Members of the Council were specifically requested by the Prime Minister not to refer to the suggestions from the United States of America until after Thursday's meeting.

² Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, Washington.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

158 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER³

158

*The High Commissioner for New Zealand (London) to the Prime
Minister* ³

12 March 1942

The Pacific War Council met this afternoon. The United States message referred to in my telegram is in substance:

To a line west of **Singapore** operations in the whole **Pacific** will be the responsibility of the **United States of America**. The activities of the Services will be decided in **Washington** by the United States Chiefs of Staff. An Advisory Council with representatives of **Australia**, New Zealand, the **Netherlands East Indies**, **China**, and perhaps **Canada**, is to be established in **Washington** under the presidency of an American. The existing London Pacific War Council might be moved to **America**, at any rate in so far as operations are concerned, leaving the Council in **London** to deal with political questions. The Supreme Command in the area to be American, but local control of **Australia**, New Zealand, **China**, and Dutch East Indies is to be exercised by a national of each of these countries. An arrangement such as outlined above would relieve the British, since **America** is accepting definite responsibility, except that **Britain** would supplement American efforts with material where possible. The United Kingdom is to control the area from west of **Singapore** to the West Mediterranean, with such assistance as **Australia** and New Zealand can afford, **America** assisting with munitions and tonnage where possible. The Atlantic area is to be under the joint control of the **United Kingdom** and the **United States of America**. The grand strategy of all three areas would, however, continue as at present.

The American proposals were welcomed by the British Chiefs of Staff as containing elements of simplicity. The Prime Minister of the **Netherlands**¹ preferred not to move the whole control to **Washington**, preferring to have a body here to discuss the situation, since **America** has had no experience of war. Earle Page thought consideration of the proposals should be deferred and agreed with the Prime Minister of the **Netherlands**. I said that as I had observed Churchill's request not to communicate the **United States** suggestions to you on Tuesday, I had no knowledge of your mind, but expressed the personal opinion that the **United States** was geographically well situated for control of the **Pacific** area, yet the proposal that control be entirely in the hands of American people might be questioned, and we should have more confidence if representatives of our countries and men of the British Services were associated wherever operations were being considered, as the experience and tradition of our Services would surely be worth something to their American colleagues. The Prime Minister of the **Netherlands** and Attlee agreed. The First Sea Lord² agreed that the **United States** should be given operational control.

Churchill favours the American proposals in general provided that the Empire has power to call attention and express an opinion on any movement. He will cable his reply to the President of the **United States** and let us have the text of such reply shortly. He will probably cable you direct. I should be grateful for your observations at a very early date.
Meeting Tuesday.

³ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

¹ Dr P. S. Gerbrandy, Prime Minister of the **Netherlands**, 1940–45; Minister for the Co-ordination of Warfare of the Kingdom of the **Netherlands**, 1942–45.

² Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, GCB, GCVO, OM; First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, 1939–43; died 21 Oct 1943.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

159 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND (LONDON)¹

159

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the High Commissioner for
New Zealand (London) ¹*

17 March 1942

Your telegram of 12 March. We have not so far received the message from Mr Churchill to which you refer, and we do not feel ourselves in a position properly to discuss the plan until we are in possession of the detailed proposals which we assume we will receive in due course. We can say at once, however, that we warmly welcome and generally endorse the suggestions, which appear to us to mark an important step forward in the direction of unity of command and efficient association of the **United Nations in the **Pacific**. We do think, however, that Great Britain should be represented on the proposed Council.**

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

160 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

160

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

17 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

I had not realised till I saw Mr Jordan's cable to you that he had led you to expect a telegram from me in addition to the summary which was sent you of the President's proposals for dividing the commands. I was not in a position to send you definite advice till our Staffs had considered the proposals and I had myself clarified some points with the President. I was expecting to receive your impressions and have only now learned that you were expecting to hear further from me. However, no time has been lost, because it was necessary to examine these proposals very carefully. I have now telegraphed to the President on the main issue as in my immediately following telegram.

2. I wish here and now, however, to make the following plain to you. The fact that an American Commander will be in charge of all the operations in the **Pacific area will not be regarded by His Majesty's Government as in any way absolving them from their determination and duty to come to your aid to the best of their ability, and if you are actually invaded in force, which has by no means come to pass and may never come to pass, we shall do our utmost to divert British troops and British ships rounding the Cape or already in the **Indian Ocean** to your succour, albeit at the expense of **India** and the **Middle East**.²**

² See also

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

161 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

161

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

17 March 1942

**My immediately preceding telegram. Following for Prime Minister
from Prime Minister:**

**Following is the text of the telegram which I have sent to President
Roosevelt:**

**‘I have been earnestly considering yours of 10 March.² Although I
sent a paraphrase of the operative parts of your proposals to **Australia**
and New Zealand I have not yet heard from them. It may be that
Australia is relying on the discussions you will have with Dr **Evatt**,³ who
should now be with you.**

**‘2. I have also had the proposals examined by our Chiefs of Staff. In
principle we see great merits in the simplification resulting from the
American control of the **Pacific** sphere and the British control of the
Indian sphere, and indeed there is no other way. There are, however,
certain issues, some fundamental, which I must place before you.**

‘3. Nothing must prevent the **United States and British Navies from
working to a common strategy from Alaska to **Capetown**. The immense
distances and the practical facts require them to act in widely separated
theatres, but they must operate with a single purpose, an exact timing,
and upon closely co-ordinated plans.**

‘4. We are building up and shall presently have a respectable force

which will be based in the Central Indian Ocean. This force already consists of five battleships, two of our latest aircraft carriers, four modern cruisers and several older ones, and thirteen destroyers, all under the command of Admiral Somerville, ⁴ who has done well in a great deal of fighting in the **Mediterranean**. The remnants of the Dutch Navy are re-forming with our assistance and wish to work under our command. In one month the modern aircraft carrier *Illustrious*, ⁵ in two months the *Valiant*, ⁶ and in six months, we hope, the *Queen Elizabeth* ⁷ will reinforce our Eastern Fleet. On completion of refits of *Nelson*, *Rodney*, and *King George V*, ⁸ and should the situation ⁸ permit, we should consider sending either *Nelson* or *Rodney*, or possibly both, to join the Eastern Fleet.

‘5. The **British Eastern Fleet**, composed as it is to a great extent of old ships with short-range guns, could only deal with a certain number of the **Japanese Fleet**. Similarly, a general fleet engagement between the whole **Japanese Fleet** and the American Pacific Fleet would be a close-run thing.

‘6. Therefore, it seems to us that all our naval forces must be directed from a single standpoint and their problems viewed as a whole. This can only be done by the machinery of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee acting directly under you and me in constant contact and agreement. All other arrangements for separate commands in the **Pacific** and Indian spheres must be effectively subordinated to this Supreme Command. I feel sure I am right in reading your proposals in this sense.

‘7. On this basis we welcome your proposal that an American should be appointed Commander-in-Chief of all Allies and of all three Services in the **Pacific** area, with local commanders in **Australia**, New Zealand, etc.

‘8. We also agree that the American Chiefs of Staff under your direction should decide day-to-day operational questions affecting the action of this American Commander-in-Chief in the **Pacific** area.

‘9. We suggest, however, that Staff officers from [Australia](#), [New Zealand](#), the [Dutch](#) and the [Chinese](#) should be available in [Washington](#) to serve the American Staffs on operational matters as may be necessary. These officers might also be the [group omitted–technical?] advisers of the members of the Pacific Council in [Washington](#) to which I refer in paragraph 11 below. We have such an arrangement successfully working in [London](#) now.

‘10. So much for the executive conduct of the [Pacific](#) war. I now come to the advisory bodies which will have to be consulted on larger issues. Owing to geography they must be duplicated and have the same composition on each side of the Atlantic Ocean. There will in fact be two Pacific Councils. The one in [Washington](#), lying as it will in close touch with the American executive machinery in the [Pacific](#) area, will naturally have more practical and more effective influence upon events than its reproduction in [London](#). It is not possible to draw a line between strategic and political matters as these are interwoven at the top.

‘11. As we see it, our Pacific Council in [London](#) would discuss the whole state of the war against [Japan](#) and we would send our opinions from time to time to the similar body in the [United States](#). The executive conduct of the [Pacific](#) war against [Japan](#) would remain the integral responsibility of the [United States](#), acting through the American Chiefs of Staff and the American Commander-in-Chief, subject always to the co-ordination of naval effort, as stated in paragraph 3, and to the decisions on grand strategy, which are the function of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the heads of Governments. Similarly, the executive conduct of operations in the Indian theatre would remain the integral responsibility of the British War Cabinet acting through the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet and the British Chiefs of Staff, but the Pacific Council in [Washington](#) would send us their opinion when they thought fit.

‘12. It follows from the above that the [United Kingdom](#) should have a representative on the Pacific Council in [Washington](#) and that you

should have a representative on the Pacific Council in **London**. Equally we would keep your representative informed of the course of affairs in the **Indian Ocean**, which also forms a large part of the sphere of the London Pacific Council. The Dutch, for instance, are full of ideas for counter-attacks on the Japanese-captured places which we will do our best to further before the summer is far advanced. We have agreed on a line dividing the **Pacific** and Indian spheres, but naturally this line would be elastic, dependent on the movements of the enemy or the tasks we might appoint for our forces. We must not have anything so rigid as to hamper planning or manoeuvre.

‘13. The First Sea Lord is anxious that I should put the following point to you:

“As the naval responsibility for dealing with seaborne raids on the north-west and west coasts of **Australia** will be British, we assume that under your proposals, in which there are only two areas in the East, the boundary between them will generally follow the line of the Dutch Islands, modified as necessary to give room for your submarine patrols to the south of these islands.”

Perhaps this could be taken care of in the final drawing of the line.

‘14. To sum up, I feel that your proposals, as I have ventured to elaborate and interpret them, will achieve the double purpose, namely (*a*) integrity of executive and operational action, and (*b*) opportunity of reasonable consultation for those whose fortunes are involved.’

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² See **No. 164** of 23 March for summary of telegrams exchanged between Mr Churchill and President Roosevelt.

³ **Rt. Hon. Dr H. V. Evatt**, PC; Australian representative in United Kingdom War Cabinet, 1942–43, and on **Pacific War Council**.

⁴ **Admiral of the Fleet Sir James Somerville, GCB, GBE, DSO; C-in-C Eastern Fleet, 1942–44; Head of British Admiralty Delegation, [Washington](#), 1944–45.**

⁵ **HMS *Illustrious*, Fleet aircraft carrier, 23,000 tons, 31 knots.**

⁶ **HMS *Valiant*, 31,520 tons, eight 15-inch guns, 24 knots.**

⁷ **HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, 32,700 tons, eight 15-inch guns, 24 knots.**

⁸ **HMS *King George V*, 35,000 tons, ten 14-inch guns, 27 knots.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

162 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

162

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

19 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

Your telegrams of 17 March [**Nos. 160** and **161**]. We have noted with great interest your communications with President Roosevelt on the establishment of unified control for the conduct of the war in the

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

Pacific, in the **Indian Ocean**, and in the **Atlantic**. We are entirely in accord with the proposals and also with the appointment of General MacArthur¹ as Supreme Commander of the **Pacific** area, of which we have learnt (though we have not been informed) from broadcast and press sources.

2. There are a number of matters of detail on which we are not as yet clear and on which it might be desirable or necessary to comment in due course. To enter into such matters at the present moment, however, would seem to us to be inappropriate, and at the moment it seems adequate to say that we are prepared to accept the scheme as outlined in general principle by yourself and President Roosevelt and, for our part, to do our utmost to ensure its efficient operation.

3. We trust, however, that the close collaboration between **Australia** and

New Zealand which has recently been agreed upon between the Australian and New Zealand Governments will not be weakened, and that if the Supreme Commander should leave the Anzac area an effective co-ordinating staff will be retained.

4. Believe me also, we warmly appreciate and greatly value the assurance contained in the second paragraph of your telegram [No. 160].

¹ General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief United States Forces in the **Philippines, 1941–42; Supreme Commander Allied Forces, **South-West Pacific Area**, 1942–45; C-in-C **Far East** and Supreme Commander for Allied Powers in **Japan**, 1945–51; Commander-in-Chief **United Nations Forces in Korea**, 1950–51.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

163 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

163

*The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*²

20 March 1942

1. Your cablegram of 17 March [**No. 161**]. We have been considering the President's proposals in the light of your cablegram and several cablegrams from Sir Earle Page and a communication received by me from the President stating that he is in general agreement with our proposals regarding the organisation and command of the Australian area, except as to some details concerning relationship to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and as to boundaries. In view of the various observations which have been expressed on the composition of the higher machinery, its functions, location, and the procedure to be followed, we consider it necessary to summarise our understanding of the position as follows, together with any necessary comments:

(1) *Division of World War Theatre*. This is to be divided into the following three areas:

(The Atlantic, under joint British and American responsibility.
a)

(The Indian, Middle Eastern, and **Mediterranean** areas under
b) British responsibility.

(The Pacific, including **China**, under **United States** operational
c) responsibility.

The question of the relationship between operational responsibility in the **Pacific** area to the inter-governmental body is referred to later.

As already stated, the President in his message to me considers some

[group mutilated–detailed?] adjustments are necessary in boundaries. The significance of the First Sea Lord's point in paragraph 13 of the Dominions Office cablegram [**No. 161**], relative to the boundary between the Indian and **Pacific** areas as it affects the northwest and western coasts of **Australia**, is not clear in view of advice from Page that the **Pacific War Council** agreed to our suggestion that the proposed line of division should not run from latitude 5 degrees south to Onslow as proposed, but on reaching longitude 110 degrees east should run due south along that meridian.

Subject to the foregoing, we agree in principle with the President's proposals for the division of the world theatre into the three areas mentioned.

The Australian Chiefs of Staff consider that on tactical and strategical grounds **China** should be within the middle area rather than the **Pacific**, because the only lines of communication with **China** that are or are likely to be open are through the middle area, and the bases for aircraft operating in **China** must be sited within the Indian Command. Also, attacks against the Japanese in or from **China** must form part of combined operations on the part of the forces located in the middle area.

(2) *Pacific War Council, London.* It is noted that you suggest that the President should have a representative on the Pacific Council in **London**, and we fully agree with this proposal.

The functions of the Pacific Council in **London** are described in cablegram [**No. 161**] as discussion of the whole state of the war against **Japan** and the communication of its opinions from time to time to the similar body in the **United States**. This appears satisfactory subject to the later observations on the Pacific Council in **Washington**.

(3) *Pacific War Council, Washington.* The summary of the President's telegram refers to the setting-up in **Washington** of an advisory body on operational matters consisting of members from

Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands East Indies and China under the chairmanship of an American. We have from the first made it clear that it is imperative that the Commonwealth Government should have a voice in the higher direction of the war in the **Pacific** theatre, particularly as the whole of our forces are being placed under the operational control of the Supreme Commander.

On 21 January we asked that a **Pacific War Council** be established in **Washington** comprising representatives of the Governments of the **United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, China, the Netherlands** and New Zealand, and proposed that this body should be a Council of action for the higher direction of the war in the **Pacific**.

In our proposals of 4 March ¹ we stated that the Council should be responsible for the higher policy of the war in the Anzac area and should deal with questions of policy and the provision of forces and supplies.

It is observed in paragraph 10 of the Dominions Office cablegram [**No. 161**] that reference is made to 'the advisory bodies that will have to be consulted on larger issues'. We would not be content with an advisory body on operational matters in **Washington**.

(4) *Machinery for Strategical and Operational Control.* The Chiefs of Staff Committee is the technical advisory body to the **Pacific War Council** in **London**, and liaison exists between it and the Australian Service advisers in **London**.

We are in agreement with the President's proposal that the **United States** should assume operational responsibility for the **Pacific** area. As suggested in our proposals of 4 March, we desired to establish in **Washington** a Staff, comprising a naval, an army and an air force officer, who would act as the technical advisers to the Australian Government representative on the **Pacific War Council** and who, for the purpose of Anzac strategy, should be associated with the American Chiefs of Staff as the joint body of advice to the **Pacific War Council** on the larger issues.

Agreement has already been reached on the appointment of the Supreme Commander in the Anzac area. The directive suggested by us is complementary to a higher machinery and the appointment of the Supreme Commander. The Australian Chiefs of Staff consider that the Supreme Commander should be located in **Australia** because he must be in close touch with the bulk of the forces under his orders, especially with those in the forward area, in order to judge the capacity and effectiveness of these forces who are undertaking both offensive and defensive operations.

Instead of the local command in **Australia** and in New Zealand being under an Australian and a New Zealander respectively, as proposed by the President, we prefer that our proposal of 4 March should be adopted and an army and an air commander appointed for each of the following:

(**Australia**, its territories, and **New Caledonia**.

a)

(**New Zealand**, **Fiji**, and all the islands for which New Zealand is
b) responsible.

General Brett of the United States Army has already been appointed to command the Allied Air Forces in **Australia**.

In regard to the grand strategy relating to operations in the three areas, it is understood that advice on this would be the responsibility of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington** and in **London**.

(5) It is understood that the joint committees on shipping and raw materials and on munitions will continue to function on their present basis.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

¹ See *Extension of Anzac Area*, No. 151.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

164 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

164

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

23 March 1942

The following, which is of the highest degree of secrecy, is from
Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

The following digest of telegrams recently exchanged between the
President and myself is for your personal information:

(a) *Prime Minister to President, 5 March:*

‘1. British affairs have deteriorated gravely since 7 December. All
can be retrieved in 1943 or 1944. Meanwhile there are hard forfeits to
pay. The [group mutilated– **Levant**]-Caspian front depends entirely on
Russia, who will be formidably attacked in the spring. The danger to
Malta grows. Rommel is receiving large reinforcements.

‘2. I hope by May your naval superiority in the **Pacific** will be
restored and will preoccupy the enemy. By the end of March we should
be solidly established, though by no means entirely secure, in **Ceylon**.
[Group mutilated–We should have?] a fleet there which will prevent
overseas invasion of **India** unless the greater part of the Japanese fleet
comes across from your side. This, I hope, the action and growing
strength of the United States Navy will prevent.

‘3. With the *Tirpitz* and *Scheer*¹ at Trondheim our Northern Force
has not only to watch the northern passages, but also to guard the
Russian convoys. (*Note:* [Group mutilated–The *Prinz*] *Eugen*² got there

with her stern blown off but the *Hipper*³ has now arrived.)

‘4. We hope your bombers based in North-East India may operate in force against enemy bases in **Siam** and Indo- **China**.

¹ *Admiral Scheer*, German pocket-battleship, 14,000 tons, six 11-inch guns, 24 knots; raider in **Atlantic**, 1940–41; sunk by **RAF** April 1945.

² *Prinz Eugen*, cruiser, 15,600 tons, eight 8-inch guns, 30 knots. With *Bismarck* in **Atlantic**; surrendered at Copenhagen, 7 May 1945.

³ *Admiral Hipper*, cruiser, 15,600 tons, eight 8-inch guns, 30 knots; bombed and sunk at **Kiel**, 10 Apr 1944.

‘5. We are very thin on the **Levant**–Caspian front. It would greatly help if you could offer **Australia** and New Zealand one division each as the alternative to their recalling their own divisions now in the **Middle East**.¹

‘6. Everything turns upon shipping, particularly troop-carrying tonnage. Our total man-lift is 280,000 men, which we cannot increase. I am told your man-lift is 90,000 and that even by the summer of 1943 it will be increased only by another 90,000. Could you not double or treble this?

‘7. We send 40/50,000 men a month to the **Middle East**, but owing to the needs of maintenance, etc., we cannot include more than three divisions in the March, April and May convoys.

‘8. **Japan** is becoming ever more widely spread. Nothing can be done on a large scale except by long preparation of the technical and tactical apparatus. If you could prepare commando forces on a large scale on the Californian shore all Japanese-held islands will become hostages to fortune.

‘9. If plans were prepared now for [group mutilated–the preparation?] of ships, landing craft, aircraft, expeditionary divisions, etc., for a serious attack on the Japanese in 1943, this would be the solid policy to follow.’

(b) *President to Prime Minister, 8 March:*

‘1. The United States have assumed a heavy responsibility in the **Pacific** for the defence of **Australia**, New Zealand, and sea approaches. Success in holding this region depends upon adequate shipping.

‘2. A large part of the United States Pacific Fleet is now operating in the Anzac region. Provided that bases are kept secure in the west of **Australia**, submarines will continue to operate against Japanese supply lines and naval forces.

‘3. **Japan** is extending herself but the energy of her attack is still very powerful. She must be halted before she attains a dominating position. Concerted and vigorous action by the **United States, Australia** and New Zealand is necessary in the **Pacific**. [Two groups mutilated–Landing craft and?] transports not urgently needed for training will be required for troop movements. The loan to the British of transports seriously reduces the chance of offensive action in other regions.

‘4. We agree on the importance of the **India** and **Middle East** areas. In addition to our **41st Division** leaving on 18 March, we are prepared to despatch one more to **Australia** and one to New Zealand, provided the Australian and New Zealand divisions remain in the **Middle East** to economise shipping.

¹ See also *Defence of New Zealand, No. 208*.

‘5. The United States can supply shipping to move two divisions from the **United Kingdom** to the **Middle East** and **India** on the understanding that during this period:

(**United States** troops to the **British Isles** will be only those taken
a) [group mutilated–in these?] ships. The ships must be returned to us
on completion of the movement of two British divisions.

(Direct movements to **Iceland** cannot be made.
b)

(Cargo ships required in transportation of Lend-Lease material to
c) **China** and the **Middle East** must be withdrawn during April and May.

(In 1942 the American contribution to the air offensive against
d) **Germany** be curtailed and the contribution to land operations in
Europe reduced.

‘6. After the arrival of the **41st Division**, the line from **Samoa** to New Zealand is not considered in danger of serious attack.

‘7. [Group mutilated–At the utmost?] the shipping now available under the **United States** flag will lift a total of some 130,000 men with increases during 1942–35,000; by June 1943–40,000; December 1943–100,000; by [June] 1944–95,000; total carrying capacity by June 1944–400,000.

‘8. This may be a critical period, but remember always it is not as bad as some you have so well survived before.’

(c) *President to Prime Minister, 10 March:*

‘Following are my purely personal views on organisation:

‘1. The whole operational responsibility for the **Pacific** area will rest on the **United States**. Decisions for this area would be made in **Washington** by the United States Chiefs of Staff and the Advisory Council including **Australia**, New Zealand, the **Netherlands East Indies** and **China**. The Pacific Council might well be moved to **Washington**. The Supreme [group mutilated–Command] in this area will be American, with local operating command in **Australia** under an Australian; in New Zealand under a New Zealander; in **China** under the Generalissimo; in the Dutch East Indies under a Dutchman, in due course.

‘2. The middle area from **Singapore** to **Libya** and the **Mediterranean** would be a direct British responsibility and all operating matters would

be decided by you, always with the understanding that as much assistance as possible would be given to **India** or [group mutilated—the Near East] by **Australia** and New Zealand, while we continue to help with all possible munitions and vessels.

‘3. The third area would be the North and South Atlantic, and definite plans for establishing a front in **Europe** would be the joint responsibility of the British and **United States**. I am interested in this new front this summer, certainly for air and for raiders. It is easier from the shipping point of view and will compel the Germans to divert large forces from the Russian front.

‘4. It is intended, of course, to continue all possible aid to **Russia**.

‘5. The second area, including **India**, would not be occupied by American troops or planes, but we would want the use of **India** as an air highway for planes going to **China**.

‘6. Grand strategy would remain the subject of study and decisions by the Combined Staffs both here and in **London**.’

(d) My reply to the President on 17 March has already been repeated to you in telegram [**No. 161**].

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

165 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

165

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

24 March 1942

The following is from the Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:

With further reference to your telegrams [Nos. 160 and 161]. We have now had an opportunity of perusing Mr Curtin's message of 20 March [No. 163] and we feel it desirable to make the following additional comments:

1. There are, as I pointed out in my telegram of 19 March [No. 162], a number of aspects in connection with the Pacific proposal on which we are not yet clear. For example:

- (The exact functions of the two proposed Councils, and
a) particularly the powers of the Washington Council.
- (The precise authority of the Supreme Commander and his
b) relations with the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee and with the Governments concerned.
- (The bearing of the present Pacific proposals on the suggestions
c) regarding the Anzac area recently made by the Australian and New Zealand Governments. In this connection it seems proper to point out that we had no prior opportunity of perusing the directive proposed by the Australian Government for the Commander of the Anzac area,² and that if this area is to be retained and the proposed directive to be used for the purpose then contemplated, or if it is to be used as an indication of the instructions to be given to the Supreme Commander of the Pacific area, there are certain matters which we should wish to raise. As one particular example to which we attach great importance, the reference to the North Island of New Zealand in

paragraph 5 of the proposed directive should in our opinion be to the whole of New Zealand. It would, we are convinced, be impossible to hold the **North Island** if the **South Island** is lost.

2. Though the questions generally outlined above are in our opinion of great importance, we are nevertheless so impressed with the urgency of arriving at a decision and the necessity of implementing at the earliest possible moment the supreme command of the **Pacific** area, which is one of the main objects of your negotiations with President Roosevelt, that we consider it would be most inadvisable and exceedingly dangerous to waste further time in discussing the finer points of the proposal, however important these may be. For our part, therefore, we are prepared to accept and to do our best to operate any arrangements finally decided upon on the general lines now proposed, and we urge the utmost expedition in bringing the arrangements into force. We assume, of course, that **Australia** and New Zealand would in any circumstances be consulted in respect of any steps to be taken which might affect those Dominions.

3. We should be glad to be advised as soon as possible of the progress that is being made, in connection with which at the moment we are without information.

Will you kindly supply a copy of this message to Mr Jordan.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

² See *Extension of Anzac Area*, No. 154.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

166 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

166

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

24 March 1942

I do not know whether you have seen the text of the proposals on the division of strategical responsibility of the **United Kingdom** and the **United States**, which reads as follows: ¹

‘1. In order to fix responsibility as between the **United Kingdom** and the **United States** in the prosecution of the war as a whole it is proposed:

(In theatres in which the **United Kingdom** and the **United States** a) may operate either jointly or separately, the Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction over grand strategy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including allocation of war materials.

¹ This telegram expands the message from Mr Jordan of 12 March, **No. 158**.

(In any theatre for which either the **United Kingdom** or the **United** b) **States** is hereinafter assigned separate strategic responsibility, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Governments concerned shall exercise jurisdiction over all matters of minor strategy and all operations.

(Each Government will be responsible (within any theatre over c) which it exercises separate strategic direction) for arranging the necessary co-ordination and co-operation with other united powers whose territory or operational forces may be involved therein, and will, by agreement with such other Governments, set up the necessary control over machinery.

(The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise direct supervision over d) both grand and minor strategy in a theatre of joint responsibility, and

are charged with arranging the necessary co-operation and co-ordination in such areas with other united powers whose territorial or operational forces would be involved therein.

(Theatres of strategic direction are established as follows:

- e) (1) *The Pacific Theatre* This will include the Pacific Ocean and all land areas therein or contiguous thereto, including the American continent, **China**, **Australia**, New Zealand and **Japan**, but excluding **Sumatra** and the Malay Peninsula. It will be a theatre of **United States** responsibility. This responsibility includes the provision of essential assistance for the security of **Australia** and New Zealand.
- (2) *The Indian Ocean and Middle East Theatre* This will include the **Indian Ocean** and all land areas contiguous thereto west of **Singapore** (inclusive) and the Middle and Near East. It will be an area of British responsibility. **United States** assistance will be limited principally to the furnishing of material aid from surplus production. The United States will have access to bases in **India** and routes to **China** within this theatre.
- (3) *The European and Atlantic Theatre* This will include the Atlantic Ocean and land areas contiguous thereto. It embraces the theatre (Western Europe) in which the major effort against **Germany** must be made. This is a theatre of joint British and American responsibility. Agreements already made between British and American authorities regarding the allocation of responsibility for specific operations (such as the seizure of the Canary Islands and the Cape Verde Islands) within this theatre will remain in effect.

‘2. Area commands as required will be created within the general theatres outlined above. Within the **Pacific** and **Indian Ocean** theatres the delimitation of such areas will be the responsibility of American and British Chiefs of Staff respectively. In the Atlantic Ocean theatre, such areas may be established by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.’

To these proposals Churchill replied as per text of parts 1 and 2 of your cable No. 110, 19 March, ¹ except that the following additional paragraphs, which may not be entirely relative, were in the text of the copy of a cable to the President which I have seen:

‘Turning back again to highest war direction, the present arrangement centres upon the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in

Washington. The three British representatives in **Washington** act in accordance with the instructions of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee in **London**. Do you wish that American representatives, say Admiral Stark and General Chaney, ² should sit in on Japanese matters from time to time with our three Chiefs of Staff here?

‘I have now heard from New Zealand that they welcome your kind offer to send an American division at the dates mentioned into New Zealand. ³ They have at no time asked for the withdrawal of their division from the **Middle East** and they do not ask now. At the same time they do not wish to engage themselves never to ask for such return. If, for instance, they were heavily invaded, their men abroad would feel deep distress about their homes and families and desire to go home and defend them. However, I do not think that they are going to be heavily invaded and [group mutilated–anyhow?] the matter would be governed by shipping. As it is, let us take it as settled that you send a **United States** division to New Zealand and the New Zealand Division remains in the **Middle East**, at any rate for many months to come. You will probably know from Dr Evatt as soon as I from Mr Curtin what the Australian position is. It would certainly be most unfortunate if the last Australian division left the **Middle East** on the eve of a German offensive against the Caucasus.

‘On supremacy and general outlook in the **Pacific** we are both agreed on the paramount importance of regaining the initiative against **Japan** and making all captured places their hostages to fortune as they were formerly ours. We assume that any large-scale methods of achieving this would be capable of being discussed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington** and would not be settled out of hand by the American Chiefs of Staff and their American Commanders-in-Chief. We should naturally consult similarly on large-scale methods in our area.

¹ Not published. Nos. 160 and 161 of 17 March were repeated to **Washington** on 19 March.

² Maj-Gen James E. Chaney, **US Army**; commanded US Forces in the **British Isles**, 1942; Commanding General, First Air Force, 1942–43.

³ See *Defence of New Zealand*, No. 210.

‘There are a few points of detail. In your telegram of 10 March you say, “ **India** would not be occupied by American troops or planes”, but in your earlier message to me, **No. 113**, ¹ in which you set out American air dispositions overseas for 1942, you allocated 60 heavy bombers and 80 pursuit aircraft for **China**, **India** and the **Burma** area. We hope that this proposal holds good.

‘Furthermore, in detail, we would rather have American light bombers and fighters, which you [group omitted–thought?] of sending to England by July, sent to the **Middle East**, where American aircraft of these types are already operating. We are very short of these fighters in the **Middle East** and cannot increase what we are sending from here. By sending American fighters direct you would save double lift and thus shipping. We have had to bleed the **Middle East** so much in order to help **India**, **Ceylon** and **Burma** that I am very anxious about our air position in that area.’

They do not in any way affect the main proposals, but the information may be of value to you personally.

I am still not certain that MacArthur has been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the area which includes New Zealand.

The text of paragraph 7 of Churchill's telegram to the President reads: ‘On this basis we welcome your proposal that an American should be appointed Commander-in-Chief of all Allies and of all three Services in the **Pacific** area, with the agreement of Commanders in **Australia**, **New Zealand**, etc.’ ²

MacArthur does not appear to have been appointed Commander-in-Chief in the **Pacific** area, and the South Pacific to which the President referred has not yet been defined so far as I can ascertain. I am making immediate inquiries and will cable you again.

¹ Not available.

² In No. 161 this passage reads: ‘... with local commanders in **Australia, New Zealand, etc.**’

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

167 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

167

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

24 March 1942

Admiral King advised me yesterday that the area of MacArthur's command had not yet been settled. King was of the opinion that the best result in the **Pacific** area would be obtained by dividing it into four separate commands under a Commander-in-Chief. Three of these commands he thought would be naval, covering roughly the South Pacific—including New Zealand and the Islands, operating from **Auckland** and **Tongatabu**; the mid- **Pacific**, operating from **Honolulu**; and the North Pacific. The fourth command would be **Australia** and the South-West Pacific, up to the **Philippines**, under the same Commander-in-Chief. This Commander-in-Chief would operate after consultation with the United States Chiefs of Staff with advisers from the other countries affected— **Australia**, New Zealand, Dutch, etc. These views, entirely unofficial, were King's own, and I presumed that he would clarify them after he had seen the President, with whom he had an appointment within an hour or so of my leaving him.

Subsequently, I saw Evatt for a short time and discussed the agreement reached between yourself and the Commonwealth Government for an **Anzac Council**.

I am seeing the President at 12.30 p.m. today and will discuss the position with him, but will endeavour mainly to stress our urgent need of men and equipment, particularly aircraft. I personally think that we would be best served by a **Pacific War Council** operating in **Washington**, with liaison mainly from a naval point of view with the British War

Cabinet.

If you have any special instructions in connection with my visit to the President please cable immediately....¹

¹ A personal reference has been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

168 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

168

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

24 March 1942

The President this afternoon told me that he favoured a **Pacific War Council** in **Washington** and had suggested to Churchill that instead of a second Pacific Council in **London** a **United Nations Council** should sit there. Asked when he thought a decision would be reached on the Council, he said as soon as Churchill replies, probably in the next few days. His views with regard to commands are in accord with my cable of today [**No. 167**].

MacArthur—South-West Pacific area: **Australia** northwards to the **Philippines**; and three naval zones: South Pacific area—including New Zealand to approximately the Equator. Mid- **Pacific** area— **Honolulu** to Equator and westwards and eastwards. Northern Pacific area—Alaska, **Aleutian Islands**, etc. He said that the Combined Chiefs of Staff were considering the rough boundaries—areas and zones. He agreed as to representation on the Council but was vague with regard to its powers. Unless some other question arises I should say that an announcement relative to the Council and commands will be made this week.

It would probably be sufficient for us if we had one representative with the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee, and **Australia** one also. It would be imperative for our representative, if one is in accord with your wishes and is agreed, to keep closely in touch with events and regularly discuss all questions and, outside the actual operational decisions, act on the instructions of the Minister, who will keep in constant contact with the Government.

The President emphasised the need for a naval base in the South Pacific and, if his views coincide with King's, the main base will be at **Auckland** and a subsidiary at **Tongatabu**.

I stressed all the arguments given in the latest appreciation.¹ The President agrees and will examine your last appreciation, which he promised to read personally. I will make the same case with Hopkins, Marshall, Dill and others at the earliest possible moment. Other than to exert continuous pressure for men and equipment, the imperative need is to settle the question of the Council and determine our representation with the Combined Chiefs of Staff. I will do what I can and will let you know.

Hopkins, with whom I have spent an hour since writing the above, says it is probable that a meeting of the **Pacific War Council** will be called. He anticipates a little difficulty in the make-up of the Pacific Chiefs of Staff Committee, on which he thinks the American members will want the deciding voice.

I told him they could generally have it and that the contribution of **Australia**, New Zealand, **United Kingdom** or other members would, in the main, be accepted in accord with its logic and wisdom.

¹ See *Defence of New Zealand*, No. 209.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

169 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF AUSTRALIA

169

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of
Australia*

24 March 1942

In view of the new proposals for unified American command of the whole Pacific area and of the appointment of General MacArthur (of which we have as yet no official intimation) it seems to us essential to complete the recent conversations between representatives of the Australian and New Zealand Governments in the light of the new situation, and also, of course, to make contact with General MacArthur.

I know how preoccupied you must be with urgent questions of defence, but I do hope that you and your service advisers can find it possible to meet a Minister and service representatives from New Zealand with a view to a rapid clarification of the situation as it exists at present. If this is acceptable to you I would propose that a Minister, accompanied by the Chief of the Naval Staff, the Chief of the General Staff, and the Chief of the Air Staff, should leave for Australia by the flying boat due to depart next Friday.

I should be grateful for a reply tomorrow.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

170 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

170

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

25 March 1942

Your cablegram of 24 March.

- 1. I appreciate your desire for further discussions in view of subsequent developments and the appointment of General MacArthur as Supreme Commander.**
- 2. We are awaiting advice from London regarding the President's recent proposals and our observations on them which were repeated to you. ¹ I feel that discussions between Australian and New Zealand representatives should be held when this information is available. Until it is received and we have both had an opportunity of studying it, I think that there would be no advantage in resuming the recent conversations.**
- 3. There are also many urgent and important matters of command and organisation affecting Australian forces still to be worked out, and these are engaging the close attention of ourselves and our service advisers. Our service advisers consider that further discussion between Australian and New Zealand service representatives cannot be carried on profitably until the area of General MacArthur's command is defined and proposals have been made by the Supreme Commander for the organisation of the area.**
- 4. In view of these considerations I feel that it would be better if the visit of the New Zealand representatives were postponed for a short period. I understand and share your anxiety to have these important**

matters promptly adjusted, and I shall be happy to agree to further discussions between Australian and New Zealand representatives at the earliest opportune moment.

¹ No. 163.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

171 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

171

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of Australia

26 March 1942

Your telegram of 25 March. We agree and will postpone the visit of the delegation accordingly. We assume that the arrangements recently agreed upon between **Australia** and New Zealand remain the basis of the policy of our two Governments. We gather from the New Zealand Minister at **Washington** that a suggestion is being made to separate the Australian and New Zealand areas. We are definitely opposed to this, and the following extract from a telegram addressed to Nash today indicates our views:

‘Our reflections are that while we must, of course, attach the utmost weight to American views, and especially to those of President Roosevelt and Admiral King, we are most definitely against the carving-up of the **Pacific** into any unnecessary areas and, in particular, we are opposed to any degree of separation from **Australia**. **Australia** and New Zealand are inevitably one strategical whole, in which already a substantial degree of co-operation, both military and economic, has been achieved which should not be jeopardised. The proposal that New Zealand and the Islands should be regarded as an entirely separate area seems to us to be impracticable and dangerous. Numerous practical difficulties, for example, as to the division of naval forces, the co-operation of the air forces, etc., would we fear arise. If the Anzac area recently agreed upon between the Australian and New Zealand Governments could be retained under an Anzac Commander subordinate to the Supreme Commander of the whole **Pacific** area, we would have no objection; indeed, I think we

would prefer this course. If an Anzac area is not to be created, then we consider it essential that there should be no separation between **Australia** and New Zealand, which should continue to be regarded as integral parts of one area for purposes of offence and defence. This could no doubt be effectively achieved if the Supreme Commander of the **Pacific** were located in **Australia**. If, however, he were not so located or ceased to be so for any lengthy period, then we think that a separate commander (located in **Australia** or New Zealand) of the whole Anzac area as proposed, including both **Australia** and New Zealand, becomes essential.

‘There are very many loose strings about the proposed arrangements so far as we have been informed of them, and at the appropriate time it is intended to send a delegation to **Australia**, consisting of a Minister and the Chiefs of Staff, with a view to a clarification with the Australians of the position in the Anzac area.

‘We are, as you will have gathered from our telegrams repeated to you, prepared to waive all questions of detail if only we can get a combined **Pacific** command operating without any further delay, but we do regard it as absolutely essential that **Australia** and New Zealand should be treated as one for all purposes in this connection.’¹

If your concur, you might consider requesting Evatt to co-operate with Nash in this connection.

¹ The above extract from this telegram to Mr Nash was also sent to Mr Churchill on 26 March.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

172 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

172

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

26 March 1942

I am very much obliged to you for your telegrams [Nos. 166 and 167] with reference to the establishment and organisation of the Pacific area, and [No. 215] ¹ containing the text of President Roosevelt's reply, which has been received by my colleagues and myself with the greatest satisfaction and appreciation. Much of the information contained in your [No. 166] is new to us and valuable. Like you, we are still uncertain concerning MacArthur's appointment—whether to the whole of the Pacific area, or to the Anzac area, or to Australia and northwards alone, or indeed whether he has been appointed at all—we have had no official intimation. What we do want to make plain to you, however, is our own wishes in this connection, which are very definitely that we wish to be included within the area of his command. Your telegram [No. 167] was not received in time to allow us to comment in connection with your visit to the President. Our reflections on this telegram and on your [No. 168], which has just been received, are that while we must, of course, attach the utmost weight to American views, and especially to those of President Roosevelt and Admiral King, we are most definitely against the carving-up of the Pacific into any unnecessary areas and, in particular, we are opposed to any degree of separation from Australia. Australia and New Zealand are inevitably one strategical whole, in which already a substantial degree of co-operation, both military and economic, has been achieved which should not be jeopardised. The proposal that New Zealand and the Islands should be regarded as an entirely separate area

seems to us to be impracticable and dangerous. Numerous practical difficulties, for example, as to the division of naval forces, the co-operation of the air forces, etc., would we fear arise. If the Anzac area recently agreed upon between the Australian and New Zealand Governments could be retained under an Anzac Commander subordinate to the Supreme Commander of the whole Pacific area, we would have no objection; indeed, I think we would prefer this course. If an Anzac area is not to be created, then we consider it essential that there should be no separation between Australia and New Zealand, which should continue to be regarded as integral parts of one area for purposes of offence and defence. This could no doubt be effectively achieved if the Supreme Commander of the Pacific were located in Australia. If, however, he were not so located or ceased to be so for any lengthy period, then we think that a separate commander (located in Australia or New Zealand) of the whole Anzac area as proposed, including both Australia and New Zealand, becomes essential.

There are very many loose strings about the proposed arrangements so far as we have been informed of them, and at the appropriate time it is intended to send a delegation to Australia, consisting of a Minister and the Chiefs of Staff, with a view to a clarification with the Australians of the position in the Anzac area.

We are, as you will have gathered from our telegrams repeated to you, prepared to waive all questions of detail if only we can get a combined Pacific command operating without any further delay, but we do regard it as absolutely essential that Australia and New Zealand should be treated as one for all purposes in this connection.

These views have been conveyed to Curtin and the suggestion made that, if the Australian Government agree, they might request Evatt to co-operate with you in this connection.

¹ See

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

173 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

173

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

27 March 1942

From your telegram of 26 March, I note:

- (1) your definite wish to be included within the area of MacArthur's command;
- (2) that you are opposed to any degree of separation from **Australia**;
- (3) that you would prefer that the area agreed upon between the Australian and New Zealand Governments should be retained under an Anzac Commander subject to the Supreme Commander of the whole **Pacific** area;
- (4) that if the Supreme Commander for the **Pacific** cannot be located in **Australia** then a separate Commander of the Anzac area agreed between New Zealand and **Australia**, located in **Australia** or New Zealand, becomes essential;
- (5) that if **Australia** agree with your proposals they should request Evatt to co-operate with me in submitting your wishes to the President and the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

I will make immediate preliminary inquiries with regard to the necessary representations, but would be glad if you would consider the following facts and cable me your instructions:

(Whilst I have no official advice, I have heard from an
a) unimpeachable source that the Combined Chiefs of Staff have agreed on the boundaries of MacArthur's command and that New Zealand is not included.

(I have reason to believe from my conversation with the President,
b) although again it is not official, that he will approve the boundaries as recommended by the Chiefs of Staff.

(That it has been agreed that the United States Chiefs of Staff
c) shall take care of strategic responsibility for the Pacific Ocean area,

including all lands east of **Singapore**.

(That I am advised confidentially, but not officially (the matter **d**) must not be referred to until official advice has been received), that Admiral King and General Marshall have already completed plans for garrison, air force, equipment, etc., to be placed on certain islands. ¹

(That in some cases the forces and equipment mentioned in (**d**) **e**) have already left and that dates have been determined when others will leave.

(That Admiral King's plans have been for **Auckland** to be a main **f**) base, if not the main base, of the South Pacific.

(That Admiral King has completed his detailed plans for naval **g**) defence and attack, the plans are under action, and that they provide for **Auckland** to be the base to which his ships after carrying out their tasks shall return for refit and relief of crews.

I agree with you entirely as to the imperative urgency for the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief for the whole **Pacific** area, and that fully effective action cannot be undertaken until all operations in the **Pacific** area are under one commander, but I do not at present consider it in any way likely that MacArthur will be that commander, or that for the time being the Commander-in-Chief will be located in **Australia**.

As I understand him, King proposes to carry out his plans in co-operation with MacArthur, in **Australia** and north-west and north, and Nimitz, who will be in charge of **Pearl Harbour** and north of Equator operations. To insist now that the naval plans for New Zealand and the Islands and contemplated naval operations should be placed under the control of MacArthur would, I think, extend the delays and differences which we have been trying to clear up. Evatt is at present in **New York** but will probably return today, and immediately on receipt of your reply I will endeavour to see him and will take whatever steps you decide in connection with the matter. The proposals in your cable [**No. 172**] may considerably affect the position and, in view of the understanding with regard to ultimate co-ordinated naval action from Alaska to **Capetown**, it might be most wise at present to let the proposals upon which agreement between the Combined Chiefs of Staff has been reached be carried out. If the proposals for the **Pacific** War Council could be put into

effect and we could [group mutilated–also?] establish representation with the United States Chiefs of Staff that would ensure our voice being heard, we could probably reach agreement as to your definite desires to be linked up with [Australia](#) more quickly than by insisting on a change of proposals which have been agreed upon by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

Please make your reply immediate priority.

¹ See

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

174 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON1

174

*The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington*¹

28 March 1942

Your telegram of 27 March.

We retain the views set out in my telegram [[No. 172](#)], which are concurred in by our Chiefs of Staff and were concurred in by the Australian Government when our delegation was there early this month. We have not yet heard the Australian Government's latest views or what comments they are making to Evatt.

If, as you say, the whole arrangement is now decided upon by the Americans, then once we have expressed our views, as outlined in telegram [[No. 172](#)], we think you are right in feeling that there is little to be gained by carrying the matter further, and we might well allow the situation to develop in the hope that the close contact with [Australia](#) which we desire may be achieved in due course. Will you please therefore record our opinions and then act as you suggest.

¹ Repeated to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

175 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

175

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

29 March 1942

The following telegram has been sent to Dr Evatt:

‘Your cablegram PM 5 of 25 March. ² New Zealand have repeated to us their comments to Nash on the proposal of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee for the division of the **Pacific** theatre into a South-West Pacific area under General MacArthur and a Southern Pacific area directly under **Washington**. Our Chiefs of Staff have considered this proposal in the light of the **New Zealand Government's** observations and have submitted the following report:

“The Chiefs of Staff are strongly opposed to the proposed subdivision of the **Pacific** area. We agree with the comments of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and would urge the following additional considerations against the proposal.

“It is essential to **Australia** that New Zealand, **Fiji** and **New Caledonia** should be in the same area as **Australia**, because they are all interdependent and, from every point of view, must be considered together. **Australia's** line of communications with the **United States** is through New Zealand, **Fiji** and **New Caledonia**, and the most effective and economic use of the forces available to defend the whole area depends upon there being unity of command so that the speedy reinforcement of any points threatened can be effected as necessary.”

‘2. For the reasons set out in the above report we are opposed to the proposed division of the Pacific theatre, involving the separation of Australia from New Zealand, Fiji and New Caledonia. It is desired that you co-operate with Nash on this question.

‘3. The Chiefs of Staff have also furnished the following additional observations, which are communicated for your information and for discussion with the Combined Chiefs of Staff or Admiral King as appropriate:

“While adhering to the proposals already made by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for the creation of an Anzac area rather than what is now proposed from Washington, we would prefer that all the naval forces in the Pacific should be put directly under the command of the United States Chiefs of Staff with a view to ensuring the greatest concentration of naval forces at the right place and time. This of course would involve Admiral Glassford's ¹ force (comprising United States units from the ABDA area now based on Fremantle) being placed under the command of Admiral Leary ².”

² Not available.

¹ Vice-Admiral W. A. Glassford, USN; Commander US Naval Forces, South-West Pacific, 1941–42.

² Vice-Admiral H. F. Leary, USN; Commander Anzac Naval Force, 1942.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

176 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND
MINISTER, WASHINGTON

176

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister,
Washington*

31 March 1942

War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff have considered Curtin's telegram to Evatt repeated to you in my immediately preceding message.

3

You will note in the message repeated below that we have informed Curtin that you will confer with Evatt on this matter, and that if you consider the whole question should be reopened on the lines suggested in my telegram [**No. 172**] and Curtin's telegram under reference, you should refer the matter back to us for further instructions.

To the Prime Minister, Canberra:

'I am grateful for your telegram [**No. 175**] which has been considered by **War Cabinet** and the Chiefs of Staff. We definitely retain our viewpoint that **Australia** and New Zealand should remain under one command, and we fully endorse the considerations put forward by the Australian Chiefs of Staff, but it is felt that the matter cannot be argued indefinitely and that an agreed settlement is preferable to a continuation of the present uncertainties. As you will observe from our telegram to Nash [**No. 174**], repeated to you on 28 March, we have instructed him to record our views but not to insist on a reopening of the question if the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the United States Government have arrived at a definite decision and a plan of action on the basis of the proposed subdivision.

‘We are asking Mr Nash to confer with Evatt, and if as a result of their discussions it is considered that the whole question should be reopened on the lines suggested in your telegram, he should refer the matter back to us for further instructions.

‘Irrespective of whatever course is decided upon in Washington, it is our wish that the closest links should be maintained between Australia and New Zealand on matters of common defence policy and future offensive action, and that the machinery for the closest liaison should be made the subject of immediate consideration.’

³ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

177 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

177

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

2 April 1942

Subsequent to my discussion with General Marshall this morning, Brigadier-General Smith, ¹ the secretary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called and submitted the directives it is proposed to issue, if approved, to the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific and to the Naval Commander of the South Pacific. On the evidence it is likely that MacArthur's command will extend to the boundaries which I have previously conveyed to you and that the South Pacific, including **New Caledonia**, **Fiji** and New Zealand, will be placed under an Admiral, with Admiral Nimitz as Commander-in-Chief of the South, Centre, and North Pacific areas. I pointed out that the effective defence of New Zealand as a land area would require a directive to the New Zealand Chief of the General Staff as approved by the **New Zealand Government**, and whilst such command would require to fit in with general naval strategy for the South Pacific, its work on land would probably require specific definition.

General Smith advised me that Evatt has [group omitted–agreed?] to the directive submitted, and that he would suggest that an amendment to ensure complete understanding as to control of the land defence of New Zealand would be provided, after which it would be submitted to Sir John Dill for consideration by the British Joint Staff Mission and subsequent consideration by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, prior to submission to yourself and other Governments concerned for consideration and confirmation if approved.

¹ Lt-Gen W. Bedell Smith, **US Army**; US Secretary, Combined Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary, US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1941–42; Chief of Staff, **Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe**, 1943–45.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

178 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

178

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

3 April 1942

The following is the text of the directives to the Commander-in-Chief of the **Pacific** area and the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific area which has been delivered to me by General Marshall, United States Chief of Staff, today.

The directives have been approved by the President, and I would be pleased if you would immediately consider [them] and advise me at once of your decision.

Directive to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area

‘By agreement amongst the Governments of **Australia**, **New Zealand**, the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands** and the **United States**.

‘(1) The Pacific Ocean area, comprising the North, Central, and South Pacific areas, has been constituted, as defined in Annex 1.

‘(2) You are designated as Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean area, and of all armed forces which the Governments concerned have assigned or may assign to this area.

‘(3) You will appoint a Commander of the South Pacific area, who, acting under your authority and general direction, will exercise command of the combined armed forces which may at any time be assigned to that area. You will exercise direct command of the combined armed forces in the North and Central Pacific areas.

‘(4) In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the Governments concerned, your operations will be designated to the accomplishment of the following:

- (Hold island positions between the **United States** and South-West a) Pacific area necessary for the security of the line of communications between those regions; and for supporting naval, air, and amphibious operations against Japanese forces.**
- (Support the operations of forces in the South-West Pacific area. b)**
- (Contain Japanese forces within the **Pacific** theatre. c)**
- (Support the defence of the continent of **North America**. d)**
- (Protect the essential sea and air communications. e)**
- (Prepare for the execution of major amphibious offensives against f) positions held by **Japan**, the initial offensive to be launched from the South Pacific area and the South-West Pacific area.**

‘(5) You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under you. You are authorised to direct and co-ordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

‘(6) You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

‘(7) When task forces of your command operate outside the Pacific Ocean area, co-ordination with forces assigned to the area in which operating will be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.

‘(8) Commanders of all armed forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

‘(9) Your Staff will include officers assigned by the Governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to the national commanders of the various forces in your area.

‘(10) The Governments concerned will exercise the direction of operations in the Pacific Ocean area as follows:

(The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction a) over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war materials.

(The Joint United States Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction b) over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. The Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet will act as the executive agency for the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you will be issued by or through him.

(The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff will be responsible for the land c) defence of New Zealand, subject to such strategic decisions affecting this responsibility as may be made by you for the conduct of naval operations in the Pacific Ocean area. ¹

¹ Paragraph 10 (c) was later amended. See p. 265, note 2.

ANNEX 1

Dividing Line arranging Indian Theatre and Pacific Theatre

‘From Cape Kamiguin, Lui-chow Peninsula, around coast of Tonkin [Tong-king] Gulf, Indo- China, Thailand and Malaya to Singapore: from Singapore south to the north coast of Sumatra, thence round the east coast of Sumatra (leaving the Sunda Strait to eastward of line) to a point on the coast of Sumatra at longitude 104 degrees east, thence south to latitude 08 degrees south, thence south-easterly toward Australia, and on reaching longitude 110 degrees east, due south along that meridian. The Pacific theatre extends eastward of this dividing line to the continents of North and South America.

Definition of South-West Pacific Area

‘The westerly boundary of the South-West Pacific area is the westerly boundary of the **Pacific theatre, the area including necessary naval and air operational areas off the west coast of **Australia**. The north and east boundaries of the South-West Pacific area run as follows: from Cape Kamiguin (Lui-chow Peninsula) south to latitude 20 degrees north; thence east to longitude 130 degrees east; thence south to Equator; thence east to longitude 165 degrees east; south to latitude 10 degrees south; south-westerly to latitude 17 degrees south, longitude 160 degrees east; thence south.**

Definition of South-East Pacific Area

‘From Mexican–Guatemala western boundary, south-westerly to latitude 11 degrees north, longitude 110 degrees west; thence south.

Definition of Pacific Ocean Area

‘The Pacific Ocean area includes all the **Pacific theatre not included in the South-West and South-East Pacific areas, and is subdivided into the: North Pacific area, north of latitude 42 degrees north; Central Pacific area, between the Equator and latitude 42 degrees north; South Pacific area, south of the Equator.**

Directive to the Supreme Commander in the South-West Pacific Area

‘By agreement amongst the Governments of **Australia, **New Zealand**, the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands** and the **United States**.**

‘(1) The South-West Pacific area has been constituted as defined in Annex 1. Definitions of other areas of the **Pacific theatre are as shown therein.**

‘(2) You are designated as Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific area, and of all armed forces which the Governments concerned

have assigned, or may assign, to this area.

‘(3) As Supreme Commander you are not eligible to command directly any national force.

‘(4) In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the Governments concerned, your operations will be designed to accomplish the following:

- (a) Hold the key military regions of **Australia** as bases for future offensive action against **Japan**, and in order to check the Japanese conquest of the South-West Pacific area.
- (b) Check the enemy advance toward **Australia** and its essential lines of communication by the destruction of enemy combatant troop and supply ships, aircraft, and bases in Eastern Malaysia and the **New Guinea–Bismarck–Solomon Islands** region.
- (c) Exert economic pressure on the enemy by destroying vessels transporting raw materials from the recently conquered territories to **Japan**.
- (d) Maintain our position in the Philippine Islands.
- (e) Protect land, sea and air communications within the South-West Pacific area and its close approaches.
- (f) Route shipping in the South-West Pacific area.
- (g) Support the operations of friendly forces in the Pacific Ocean area and in the Indian theatre.
- (h) Prepare to take the offensive.

‘(5) You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under your command, but you are authorised to direct and co-ordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

‘(6) You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

‘(7) When task forces of your command operate outside the South-West Pacific area, co-ordination with forces assigned to the areas in

which operating will be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.

‘(8) Commanders of all armed forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, ¹ all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

‘(9) Your Staff will include officers assigned by the respective Governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to the national commanders of the various forces in your area.

‘(10) The Governments concerned will exercise direction of operations in the South-West Pacific area as follows:

**(The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction
a) over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war materials.**

**(The Joint United States Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction
b) over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. The Chief of Staff of the United States Army will act as the executive agency for the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you will be issued by or through him.’**

¹ This directive became effective at midnight, Greenwich civil time, 7–8 May 1942.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

3 APRIL 1942

3 April 1942

The following is the text of the directives to the Commander-in-Chief of the **Pacific** area and the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific area which has been delivered to me by General Marshall, United States Chief of Staff, today.

The directives have been approved by the President, and I would be pleased if you would immediately consider [them] and advise me at once of your decision.

Directive to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area

'By agreement amongst the Governments of **Australia**, **New Zealand**, the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands** and the **United States**.

'(1) The Pacific Ocean area, comprising the North, Central, and South Pacific areas, has been constituted, as defined in Annex 1.

'(2) You are designated as Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean area, and of all armed forces which the Governments concerned have assigned or may assign to this area.

'(3) You will appoint a Commander of the South Pacific area, who, acting under your authority and general direction, will exercise command of the combined armed forces which may at any time be assigned to that area. You will exercise direct command of the combined armed forces in the North and Central Pacific areas.

'(4) In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the Governments concerned, your operations will be designated to the accomplishment of the following:

- (**Hold island positions between the United States and South-West**
- a) Pacific area necessary for the security of the line of communications between those regions; and for supporting naval, air, and amphibious operations against Japanese forces.**
- (**Support the operations of forces in the South-West Pacific area.**
- b)**
- (**Contain Japanese forces within the Pacific theatre.**
- c)**
- (**Support the defence of the continent of North America.**
- d)**
- (**Protect the essential sea and air communications.**
- e)**
- (**Prepare for the execution of major amphibious offensives against**
- f) positions held by Japan, the initial offensive to be launched from the South Pacific area and the South-West Pacific area.**

‘(5) You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under you. You are authorised to direct and co-ordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

‘(6) You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

‘(7) When task forces of your command operate outside the Pacific Ocean area, co-ordination with forces assigned to the area in which operating will be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.

‘(8) Commanders of all armed forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

‘(9) Your Staff will include officers assigned by the Governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to the national commanders of the various forces in your area.

‘(10) The Governments concerned will exercise the direction of operations in the Pacific Ocean area as follows:

- (The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction**
 - a) over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war materials.**
- (The Joint United States Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction**
 - b) over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. The Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet will act as the executive agency for the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you will be issued by or through him.**
- (The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff will be responsible for the land**
 - c) defence of New Zealand, subject to such strategic decisions affecting this responsibility as may be made by you for the conduct of naval operations in the Pacific Ocean area. ¹**

¹ Paragraph 10 (c) was later amended. See [p. 265, note 2](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

ANNEX 1

ANNEX 1

Dividing Line arranging Indian Theatre and Pacific Theatre

‘From Cape Kamiguin, Lui-chow Peninsula, around coast of Tonkin [Tong-king] Gulf, Indo- China, Thailand and Malaya to Singapore: from Singapore south to the north coast of Sumatra, thence round the east coast of Sumatra (leaving the Sunda Strait to eastward of line) to a point on the coast of Sumatra at longitude 104 degrees east, thence south to latitude 08 degrees south, thence south-easterly toward Australia, and on reaching longitude 110 degrees east, due south along that meridian. The Pacific theatre extends eastward of this dividing line to the continents of North and South America.

Definition of South-West Pacific Area

‘The westerly boundary of the South-West Pacific area is the westerly boundary of the Pacific theatre, the area including necessary naval and air operational areas off the west coast of Australia. The north and east boundaries of the South-West Pacific area run as follows: from Cape Kamiguin (Lui-chow Peninsula) south to latitude 20 degrees north; thence east to longitude 130 degrees east; thence south to Equator; thence east to longitude 165 degrees east; south to latitude 10 degrees south; south-westerly to latitude 17 degrees south, longitude 160 degrees east; thence south.

Definition of South-East Pacific Area

‘From Mexican–Guatemala western boundary, south-westerly to latitude 11 degrees north, longitude 110 degrees west; thence south.

Definition of Pacific Ocean Area

‘The Pacific Ocean area includes all the Pacific theatre not included in the South-West and South-East Pacific areas, and is subdivided into the: North Pacific area, north of latitude 42 degrees north; Central Pacific area, between the Equator and latitude 42 degrees north; South Pacific area, south of the Equator.

Directive to the Supreme Commander in the South-West Pacific Area

‘By agreement amongst the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United States.

‘(1) The South-West Pacific area has been constituted as defined in Annex 1. Definitions of other areas of the Pacific theatre are as shown therein.

‘(2) You are designated as Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific area, and of all armed forces which the Governments concerned have assigned, or may assign, to this area.

‘(3) As Supreme Commander you are not eligible to command directly any national force.

‘(4) In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the Governments concerned, your operations will be designed to accomplish the following:

- (a) Hold the key military regions of Australia as bases for future offensive action against Japan, and in order to check the Japanese conquest of the South-West Pacific area.**
- (b) Check the enemy advance toward Australia and its essential lines of communication by the destruction of enemy combatant troop and supply ships, aircraft, and bases in Eastern Malaysia and the New Guinea–Bismarck–Solomon Islands region.**
- (c) Exert economic pressure on the enemy by destroying vessels transporting raw materials from the recently conquered territories to Japan.**

(Maintain our position in the Philippine Islands.

d)

(Protect land, sea and air communications within the South-West Pacific area and its close approaches.

(Route shipping in the South-West Pacific area.

f)

(Support the operations of friendly forces in the Pacific Ocean area and in the Indian theatre.

(Prepare to take the offensive.

h)

‘(5) You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under your command, but you are authorised to direct and co-ordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.

‘(6) You are authorised to control the issue of all communiqués concerning the forces under your command.

‘(7) When task forces of your command operate outside the South-West Pacific area, co-ordination with forces assigned to the areas in which operating will be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.

‘(8) Commanders of all armed forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, ¹ all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.

‘(9) Your Staff will include officers assigned by the respective Governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to the national commanders of the various forces in your area.

‘(10) The Governments concerned will exercise direction of operations in the South-West Pacific area as follows:

(The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction a) over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are

necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war materials.

(**The Joint United States Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction**
b) **over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. The Chief of Staff of the United States Army will act as the executive agency for the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you will be issued by or through him.'**

¹ **This directive became effective at midnight, Greenwich civil time, 7-8 May 1942.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

179 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON¹

179

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister,
Washington*¹

5 April 1942

Your telegram of 3 April.

We have carefully considered the proposed areas and directives for the **Pacific** theatre. We note with regret that these proposals consolidate the division, to which we have always been and still are firmly opposed, between **Australia** and New Zealand, which in our opinion form one strategic whole. This division, as we have from time to time pointed out, must create a number of difficult and important problems which we will, however, hope to solve as best we may by direct liaison with the responsible authorities in **Australia**.

With regard to paragraph (10) (c) of the directive to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean area, there are, as you know, substantial New Zealand forces in **Fiji**, and it is not clear to us whether the control of these forces is to continue in the future, as in the past, to lie directly with the New Zealand authorities.

The authority of the Commander-in-Chief and the Commander of the South Pacific area over the New Zealand Forces might well be construed as entitling them to move New Zealand troops from this Dominion to other portions of the area. That they should have such an authority is not contested, but we feel strongly that it should be understood, either by reference in the directive or otherwise, that any such power to move troops from the Dominion should be subject to prior consultation and

agreement with the **New Zealand Government**.

Subject to the above considerations which we would wish you to record with the Americans, we are prepared to accept the proposals. They are not what we would wish and we are by no means convinced that they are the best that can be made, but, as you know, we attach the utmost importance to an early decision and to obtain this at once we are prepared to waive our views.

Please advise the American authorities accordingly and keep me informed of the progress that is made.

¹ Repeated to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Prime Minister of **Australia.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

180 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

180

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

12 April 1942

Your telegram of 5 April.

I have notified Admiral King of your continued opinion that **Australia** and New Zealand form one strategic whole, and that, whilst you will maintain direct liaison with **Australia**, you will, so long as the directive operates, do everything possible to attain maximum efficiency. He advises that his understanding is that General Mead remains in command of the defences in **Fiji** under the New Zealand Chief of Staff. He is in agreement with your proposal that the **New Zealand Government** will be consulted and their agreement obtained before New Zealand troops are moved from the Dominion or from one island to another. The last-mentioned proposal should, I think, either be included in the directive or an undertaking be [group omitted–given?] by the President. I am writing to Admiral King and on receipt of his reply will advise you.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

181 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

181

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

15 April 1942

Following my telegram to you of 12 April, I wrote to Admiral King and raised the questions to which you required answers, and gave him copies of your telegram [**No. 179**] and my telegram [**No. 180**]. He has now replied as follows:

‘Dear Mr Nash,

Message number [179] of 5 April, addressed to you by the Government of New Zealand, raises certain points in connection with our proposed directive to the Commander of the Pacific Ocean area on which your Government desires additional information. The following is the position of the United States Chiefs of Staff:

1. With regard to the control of New Zealand forces in **Fiji**: although under the terms of our directive the forces in **Fiji** come under the operational control of the Commander of the South Pacific area, they remain directly under the New Zealand General Officer now commanding them. None of these forces will be moved from **Fiji** without informing and obtaining the concurrence of the **New Zealand Government**.
2. With regard to the possible movement of New Zealand troops out of New Zealand territory, the following by the United States Chiefs of Staff to the President is self-explanatory: “The proposals of the United States Chiefs of Staff (for operations in the Pacific Ocean areas) made to the President of the **United States** as Commander-in-Chief are subject to review by him from the standpoint of higher political considerations and to reference by him to the **Pacific War Council** in **Washington** when necessary. The interests of nations whose forces or

whose land possessions might be involved in these military operations are further safeguarded by the power each nation retains to refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable." This communication is explanatory of and should be read in conjunction with the directive to which it thus becomes a part. The United States Chiefs of Staff would be glad to receive in due course the formal acceptance of the Government of New Zealand.

'I wish at this time to express to you and to the **New Zealand Government** the appreciation of the United States Chiefs of Staff for the frank and direct way in which this subject has been handled. The co-operative attitude of New Zealand is emphasised in this instance by the fact that your Government does not agree with our strategical division of the **Pacific** theatre. The United States Chiefs of Staff will do everything in their power to prevent the occurrence of difficulties which your Government anticipate as the result of this division. I should also like you to know personally that your co-operation has been of the greatest assistance to us.

Very sincerely,
(*Signed*) E. J. KING,
Admiral, United States Navy, Commander-in-Chief
United States Fleet, and Chief of Naval Operations.'

In accordance with your views I have sent the following reply:

'Acting on the instructions of my Prime Minister contained in his cable to me numbered [179], 5 April, and accepting the answers set out in your letter of yesterday (14 April) I now advise you of the agreement of the **New Zealand Government** with the proposed directives, and at the same time extend their assurance to you and the United States Government that all the resources of New Zealand and its peoples will be used in the fullest co-operation with you and your commanders to assist in carrying the present struggle to a successful conclusion.

Yours sincerely

,
(Signed) W. NASH.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

182 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

182

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

22 April 1942

We are now in a somewhat embarrassing position with reference to the arrangements made for the control of the **Pacific** area, as to which we have said nothing whatever except that we have been informed of and have agreed to the organisation that has been established. It has already been announced in **Australia** that MacArthur is in command there, and it has already been publicly stated there that MacArthur's command does not extend to New Zealand. This has led to much comment and guessing in the New Zealand press. We are most reluctant to make any public statement which might not be in conformity with the wishes of the **United States** authorities, and we can well understand that they may not wish the Naval arrangements for the **Pacific** or the delimitations of the areas to be made public at any stage. Indeed we have noted a press report of a statement by Stimson that this is a military secret, but obviously some public clarification of the situation here will be necessary at an early date.

Would you be good enough to inquire whether it is intended to make an announcement in **Washington** as to the inclusion of New Zealand in the South Pacific area under the command of Admiral Ghormley ¹ and, if not, ascertain whether there would be any objection to our making an announcement to the effect that New Zealand is in an area under American Naval command, that it is not included in the area under the command of MacArthur but that the arrangements made, which are not available for publication but which were made with the knowledge and consent of the **New Zealand Government**, provide for the closest

collaboration and co-operation with him and with other American forces in the Pacific.

¹ Vice-Admiral R. L. Ghormley, USN; Commander South Pacific Force and South Pacific Area, Jun-Oct 1942. He assumed command on 19 June.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

183 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

183

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

23 April 1942

My telegram of 22 April.

Lengthy and accurate press reports from **Washington** have now been received of the organisation of the whole **Pacific** area, including the fact that New Zealand is placed under American Naval command separate and distinct from the South-West Pacific under General MacArthur.

In view of the clamour for information here and the imminent arrival of Australian papers which will contain this information, I have today, with the agreement of General Hurley, issued the following statement:

‘The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. P. Fraser, announced today that, under an arrangement made by the Governments of the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands**, **Australia** and New Zealand, the Dominion of New Zealand and the island areas, including **Fiji**, for the defence of which New Zealand is responsible, have been allotted to an area known as the “**South Pacific Area**” which will be placed under American Naval command.

‘This area will be separate and distinct from the “South-West Pacific” area which has been placed under the command of General MacArthur. It was our desire that **Australia** and New Zealand should remain closely linked in the one area under General MacArthur and we made representations accordingly, but strategical considerations as determined in **Washington** must prevail and we have accordingly

concluded in the above organisation. Arrangements are, however, in train for the closest co-operation to continue between the Australian and New Zealand Governments, and between General MacArthur and those in command in New Zealand and in the **South Pacific Area**, while the whole area of the **Pacific** will be co-ordinated by the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the **Pacific War Council** in **Washington**. Military liaison has already been effected by the appointment to **Australia** of a high-ranking officer (Brigadier Goss), ¹ who has already taken up his duties with General MacArthur's staff.'

¹ **Brig L. G. Goss**, CB, Legion of Merit (US); commanded **8 Bde Gp**, **Fiji**, Jan–Mar 1942; liaison officer, HQ Supreme Command, **South-West Pacific Area**, Mar–May 1942; comd **15 Bde**, 3 NZ Div, Nov 1942–Jul 1943; **8 Bde**, Dec 1943–Sep 1944; Deputy Chief of General Staff, Sep 1944–Jul 1946.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

DEFENCE OF NEW ZEALAND

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184 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ – [EXTRACT]

184

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

[Extract]

15 June 1940

Following for Prime Minister from my Prime Minister:

1. **There is one aspect of your most secret telegram Circular Z.106 of 14 June² to the High Commissioner for the **United Kingdom** in New Zealand to which His Majesty's Government in New Zealand wish especially to refer. In this telegram a departure is made from the understanding, reinforced by repeated and most explicit assurances, that a strong British fleet would be available to, and would, proceed to **Singapore** should the circumstances so require, even if this involved the abandonment of British interests in the **Mediterranean**.³ His Majesty's Government in New Zealand do not in any way demur to this decision (which they have always regarded as a possibility) if, as they assume, it is necessary in order to safeguard the position in the central and critical theatre of war, and they are quite prepared to accept the risks which they recognise are inevitable if the most effective use is to be made of Commonwealth naval forces. At the same time His Majesty's Government in New Zealand must observe that the undertaking to despatch an adequate fleet to **Singapore**, if required, formed the basis of the whole of this Dominion's defence preparations. They assume that this undertaking will again be made operative as soon as**

¹ Viscount Caldecote.

² Not published. This telegram contained for the Prime Minister's information a provisional review of the situation in the event of the collapse of French resistance. The review was framed on the basis that **Britain** would continue to fight, with or without **United States** assistance. Paragraph 8, dealing with the **Pacific**, read:

‘In the unlikely event of **Japan**, in spite of the restraining influence of the **United States of America**, taking the opportunity to alter the *status quo* in the **Far East**, we should be faced with a naval situation in which, without the assistance of **France**, we should not have sufficient forces to meet the combined German and Italian navies in European waters and the Japanese fleet in the **Far East**. In the circumstances envisaged, it is most improbable that we could send adequate reinforcements to the **Far East**. We should therefore have to rely on the **United States of America** to safeguard our interests there.’

³ See **Appendix II**.

circumstances may allow, and they would most earnestly request that the whole situation should be reviewed if the position in the **Far East** should become threatening.... ¹

¹ Text omitted contained a proposal by the **New Zealand Government** ‘to send to **Washington** a Minister of the Crown on special mission’. This proposal led eventually to the establishment of a **New Zealand Legation in Washington** and of a **United States Legation in Wellington**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

185 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS – [EXTRACT]

185

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

[Extract]

3 August 1940

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are grateful for your most immediate and most secret telegram of 30 July² in connection with which they have the following observations to make:

(1) The rapid deterioration in the past few weeks in the Far Eastern situation has reinforced the view, which they have held for some considerable time, that relations between the British Commonwealth and **Japan are most unstable. They look on the position as it is now developing as one of great gravity, and they cannot disguise from themselves the fact that the contingency of hostilities with **Japan** in the near future is one that must be taken seriously into consideration if it is not to be accepted as a probability.**

(2) In these circumstances they have felt it their duty to consider with much care the course that should be taken with the New Zealand troops now in training in the Dominion, including those for the **Third Echelon, and particularly the question of the departure and the destination of the **Third Echelon** with its accompanying reinforcements and ancillary troops.**

In considering this matter they have tried to weigh carefully every pertinent consideration, and they think it might be of advantage were they to inform His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom of the**

lines upon which their discussion of the matter has developed.

On the one hand they have had to recognise and attach due weight to the fact that the situation in the **Far East** is very serious, and that it appears to be getting worse; that if the **Third Echelon** should leave this Dominion there is in general terms no force available in this country at the present moment, the training of which is in any way comparable with that of the **Third Echelon**, in itself only partially

² See Vol. I, *Third Echelon*, No. 223. In this telegram the Dominions Secretary notified the **New Zealand Government** that there was now ample shipping accommodation available for the **Third Echelon**.

trained; that some time must elapse before, with existing resources in this Dominion, any other force will be trained even to that standard; that, owing to the length of the coastline of New Zealand and the numerous harbours and open beaches which offer ready facilities for a landing, the absence of trained troops in adequate numbers would be a particular disadvantage here in case of attack, and that the **Third Echelon** on departure would naturally take with it a proportion of the available supplies of arms and equipment, already far from adequate. In view of the effect on the British Commonwealth's position of a possible successful attack on New Zealand, it might well be, in the existing circumstances, that the best contribution this Dominion could make to the common effort would be fully to ensure its own defence.... ¹

All these circumstances they have looked at with the greatest of care and in the light of the fullest possible information that they have been able to gather here.

On the other hand there are very weighty considerations against deferring the despatch of the troops as arranged.

They fully accept the fact that a large view must be taken, that in the last resort this Dominion must stand or fall according to the

decision in the main theatres of war, and that as a corollary it would be wise to have all possible forces at decisive points rather than to disperse them in reserves all over the world.

Again they see that if the despatch of the **Third Echelon** to the **Middle East** is deferred, the **First Echelon** would be left unsupported and the concentration of the New Zealand Division would be retarded.

They have given the fullest weight to the recent appreciations of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff as to the vital necessity of maintaining the British positions in the **Middle East**, having regard to the lines of communication which would otherwise be open to the enemy eastward and southward, and to the necessity of safeguarding vital oil supplies; and finally, they have attached the utmost importance to the fact that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, after full consideration on the widest strategical scale, have come to the conclusion that the best contribution this Dominion could make to the common cause in the present circumstances would be by the despatch of the **Third Echelon** to the **Middle East** and have asked them to take this course.

Having very carefully weighed all the above considerations and every other known factor that might conceivably have a bearing upon the matters in question, the **New Zealand Government** have come to the conclusion that the troops should depart as proposed, and all necessary preparations have accordingly been made. They feel, however,

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 171–2, for text omitted.

that in view of the threatening situation *vis-à-vis* **Japan**, they should retain from the reinforcements that would otherwise be despatched with the **Third Echelon** the necessary force (3050 all told) for despatch to **Fiji** as soon after the concurrence of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** is received as this can be arranged.... ¹

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 172–3, for text omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

186 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

186

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

16 October 1940

Circular telegram.

1. As you will be aware, we have recently been devoting special attention to questions connected with the production and distribution of warlike stores in relation to the needs of Dominion land forces. As regards the requirements which form part of our programme of purchases in the **United States**, certain proposals were communicated to your High Commissioner here on 29 August, following some special study of this aspect of the matter by the North American Supply Committee of Cabinet. We are grateful for the observations on these proposals received through your High Commissioner, and have reason to hope that the procedure agreed upon will secure the results desired.

2. Constant contact is maintained with Dominion Liaison Officers in **London** and **New York** on questions affecting special items of equipment, but we should like you to know in general terms what progress is being made in regard to supplies from the common war effort, and in particular when your own demands are likely to be met. The anxiety of Dominion Governments that their troops serving abroad should be fully provided with modern equipment, and that their demands for army equipment shall be met as soon as possible, is fully appreciated and shared by the United Kingdom Government. As you no doubt realise, however, the loss of equipment for ten divisions and corps and general headquarters troops, together with a large quantity of the reserves of the

BEF in France, completely upset the original programme. Since then every effort has been made to expedite production in this country and to secure equipment from every available source throughout the world.

3. Priority of allotment must be determined from time to time in accordance with operational needs, and although the production situation has improved and is improving, production of all standard weapons has not come forward equally quickly, and interference by enemy air action may conceivably tend further to unbalance production. In these circumstances production in Canada and the United States assumes added importance to us. It is clear that in many of the major items of equipment supply will be considerably below requirements for some time to come.

4. While these deficiencies are being overtaken the requirements of the Dominion forces stationed within the Dominions, other than for coast defence, must be assigned a low degree of operational priority, and the United Kingdom Government trust that the Dominion Governments agree with the soundness of that decision, even though their deficiencies in this respect are great. The great importance of Dominion schools of instruction and training establishments being in possession of some modern equipment is realised and a reorganisation is now being carried out as to the extent to which a limited issue from the United Kingdom can be made to meet this need. Dominion Defence Departments will be communicated with direct as soon as the examination has been completed.

5. The War Office, with the assistance of the Dominion representatives, are now completing an exhaustive review of outstanding orders from the Dominions for equipment, and it is hoped that by the end of this month the tabulation of these outstanding demands will be completed and handed to Dominion representatives. Thereafter the War Office propose to render a monthly report to each Dominion representative showing the total stores demanded, the quantity issued to date, and (as far as possible) the probable date of release of the remainder. In the meantime they are making interim issues of such 'non-controlled' stores as are

immediately available and are taking special steps to secure the rapid release of essential models, i.e., equipments required as specimens to guide your own manufacture. It is hoped that this procedure will enable Dominion representatives to be kept advised of the position as regards supplies for the Dominion on any date and will expedite delivery of such equipment as is available. The Dominions will realise, however, that no improvement in procedure will make possible any considerable release of 'controlled' stores, i.e., major weapons [? group mutilated] etc., in the near future, and that the bulk of their requirements of 'controlled' stores cannot be supplied until after June 1941, unless there is a development in the strategic situation which renders more probable the employment in an operational role of forces serving within the Dominions themselves.

6. Steps are being taken to see that stores allotted to Dominions from production or releases in **North America are shipped direct from North American ports rather than that the allocation of release should be deferred until after shipment to the **United Kingdom** has been made. The Ministry of Supply have placed large orders in **North America** which should ultimately facilitate such direct release.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

187 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

187

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

19 October 1940

Your Circular telegram of 16 October.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand much appreciate the information which you have been good enough to forward with reference to the production and distribution of warlike stores in relation to the needs of Dominion land forces, and warmly welcome the steps that are being taken and the prospect of regular reports concerning the supply situation from time to time.

They attach particular importance to the early receipt of modern equipment suitable and adequate for schools of instruction and training establishments, and would be grateful for an intimation in due course of the scale and character of equipment for this purpose that is contemplated, and of the date or dates upon which it might be expected to arrive in this Dominion.

They gather also from paragraph 4 of your telegram that requirements for the coast defence of this Dominion would be regarded as of high priority and they warmly welcome this interpretation. They feel it essential, however, to express their considered views concerning that portion of paragraph 4 which indicates that New Zealand requirements other than for coast defence must be assigned a low degree of operational priority while the deficiencies in British equipment generally (the cause of which is fully understood and appreciated in New

Zealand) are being overtaken. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully appreciate the primary necessity of supplying the needs of His Majesty's forces in the **United Kingdom** and in the **Middle East**, but it seems to them, and they hope that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** will on reflection agree, that recent developments in the **Far East** have radically altered the whole situation in that area and that a serious attack on New Zealand, which would some months ago have been generally accepted as a highly improbable contingency, must now be looked upon as sufficiently within the bounds of possibility to warrant the preparation of plans and the provision of troops and material to meet such a threat. Recent events in this area have therefore caused His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to revise the scale of attack against which preparation must now be made, and their appreciation of the possibilities is adequately indicated by the steps that they are taking to bring the New Zealand Territorial Force up to war strength and to train the whole of it. These plans provide for a home defence **Territorial Force** aggregating 45,000 all ranks, and it is of course obvious that the training of these troops will lose a great part of its value unless the necessary equipment and material for their use in war is provided in adequate quantities and at the appropriate time.

As another indication of the serious view they take of the position, they have, with the concurrence of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, already arranged to despatch a Brigade Group to **Fiji** ¹ and the movement of these troops is now taking place. The provision of this force has of course made further inroads upon the equipment available in New Zealand.

It is the view of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, therefore, that in the light of recent events it is really not possible for them to concur in the view expressed by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** that deficiencies in the requirements of the New Zealand Forces stationed within this Dominion (a full list of which has recently been despatched by air mail to the New Zealand Army Liaison Officer ² in **London**) can properly be assigned a low degree of operational priority,

and in the circumstances they would beg His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to reconsider this matter and to request their service authorities, in co-operation with the New Zealand Army Liaison Officer, to peruse the above-mentioned list of deficiencies with a view to ascertaining to what extent and how soon it may be found possible, either from the **United Kingdom** or elsewhere, to meet those deficiencies.

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 239.

² Brig R. S. Park, CB, CBE; NZ Military Liaison Officer, **London**, 1939–46.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

188 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

188

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

30 October 1940

Your telegram of 19 October. We are grateful for this expression of the views of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand and full account will be given them. We entirely recognise the great efforts which New Zealand is making for its own local defence and for the security of Fiji. Full consideration will be given to the list of deficiencies mentioned in the last paragraph of your telegram as soon as it is received from the New Zealand Army Liaison Officer here; but His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will recognise that the supply position, though it is improving daily, continues to cause anxiety, and that we must therefore continue to make the active theatres of war our first consideration.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

189 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

189

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

28 November 1940

Following from my Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

From time to time His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have been in communication with His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom in an endeavour to obtain early delivery of aeroplanes suitable for the coastal defence of New Zealand, and though at one time it appeared that a certain number of Hudsons could be spared for that purpose, it has not up to the present been possible to make any progress. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand fully realise the paramount importance of ensuring that adequate numbers of aircraft should be constantly available for the defence of the **United Kingdom** and for the **Middle East**, but their desire to obtain some deliveries in New Zealand has been materially increased, firstly, by the recommendation of the Singapore Conference, ¹ and secondly, by repeated approaches to these shores of raiders which, if long-range aircraft were available here, might it is felt have been disposed of.**

Yesterday a New Zealand ship, the *Rangitane*, ² with a valuable cargo and precious lives, was attacked and presumably sunk some 400 miles from the New Zealand coast. The only aircraft available for reconnaissance at such a distance are the two flying boats, and as it happened one of these boats was on the slip and the other on passage from **Sydney. As a result it was not until eight hours after the warning was received that the first boat was despatched (and she could in any**

case have done nothing more than report) and what chances there were of destroying the raider were accordingly lost before the search commenced. We should be most grateful if you would personally look into this matter and, if it is at all possible, arrange for us to receive at any rate a limited number of Hudsons or other suitable aircraft in order to remedy our helplessness in such circumstances.

¹ This conference, held in October 1940, was attended by service representatives from the **United Kingdom, Australia** and New Zealand.

² MV *Rangitane*, 16,712 tons, New Zealand Shipping Company. Sunk by the German raiders *Orion* and *Komet* on 27 Nov 1940, about 300 miles eastward of East Cape.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

190 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

190

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs¹ to the Governor-
General of New Zealand*

2 December 1940

Your telegram of 28 November. Please give the following private and personal message to your Prime Minister from Mr Churchill:

Am most grateful to you for the indulgence which you have shown us in our extreme need about Hudsons. I can assure you that I have throughout given my personal attention to this question, and it was with great regret that I felt obliged to ask you to defer to the claims of the North-Western Approaches. I will watch the situation constantly with every desire to meet your needs as soon as possible.

¹ Viscount Cranborne.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

191 — THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

191

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

4 December 1940

Following from my Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

I feel I must tell you at once that my colleagues and I have been most keenly disappointed by your message to me of 2 December. We all of us realise the **United Kingdom's** great need of aircraft—indeed it will be within your memory that one of our first actions on the outbreak of the war was to place at the disposal of the British Government the Wellingtons ² then on order for New Zealand which, if only a few had been delivered here, would have relieved us of our present very grave anxieties. We have constantly borne in mind the necessity of taking a large view and of balancing our needs with those elsewhere in the common cause, but we wonder if it is fully realised in the **United Kingdom** how helpless this Dominion is against attacks from seaward. As you know, the whole of our defence measures were built on the assurance that in time of potential trouble in these waters adequate naval forces would be available. They are not. We make no complaint of this and we have very much welcomed your assurances that, if the worse came to the worst, naval assistance would be forthcoming. But at present local naval forces are far from adequate to protect New Zealand shores and shipping against attack, and it is a plain fact that at present the New Zealand Air Force possesses not one single aircraft suitable either for reconnaissance or for attack against a raider at any substantial distance from the shores of New Zealand. We believe that we are the only Dominion in this situation, and we are reminded every day

of the fact that we would not have been in this situation had we not, voluntarily and unasked, decided to release the Wellingtons for what, in the then existing circumstances, we readily agreed were more urgent requirements elsewhere but which altered conditions seem to us to demand here. The public are becoming restive at the repeated evidence that raiders can visit our shores with impunity, and we anticipate the greatest difficulty in explaining to Parliament at the secret session which will be held next Thursday night why we have allowed ourselves to be placed in this helpless position. I hesitate again to appeal to you after reading your message, but after most earnest consultation with all my colleagues I feel bound to do so and to call to your attention the fact that even a few suitable aircraft—say half a dozen—which would of course be available for reinforcements elsewhere as far as **Singapore**, should the occasion arise to implement the recommendations of the Singapore Conference, would also, and primarily, enable us to take some effective steps in a situation which we feel will inevitably be repeated from time to time, and thus perhaps enable us to relieve the disheartening effect upon our people of our present obvious helplessness in this matter, which has potentially a most mischievous effect upon the whole of the Dominion's war effort.

Speaking in the name of all His Majesty's Ministers in this Dominion, I do most earnestly request you to have this matter again inquired into and, if it is at all possible to do so, to enable us to acquire at least a limited number of those machines which we feel to be absolutely essential in the present circumstances, and indeed vital to us should the situation worsen, as it may.

I do apologise for troubling you again in this matter—it is only our most urgent conviction of our needs that warrants my doing so.

² In 1937 the **New Zealand Government** placed an order with the British Government for thirty **Wellington** bomber aircraft. The first six of these aircraft were due for delivery to the **New Zealand Government** about August 1939, and a small New Zealand Air Force unit was training at Marham, Norfolk, for the

flight to New Zealand when war broke out in September. This unit was the nucleus of No. 75 (NZ) Squadron, the first Commonwealth squadron to be formed in Bomber Command.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

192 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

192

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*

14 December 1940

**Message from Mr Churchill for the most secret and personal
information of Mr Fraser:**

**I have been thinking constantly about your inquiries, but I deferred
answering till the results of the Libyan battle ¹ were made known.**

¹ **The first British offensive in the [Western Desert](#)
commenced on 9 December.**

**Those may well be far-reaching if full use is made of the success. We
ran sharp risks at home in sending so many tanks and guns as well as
troops all round the Cape to the [Middle East](#) when we were under heavy
threat of invasion here. But now there is a reward. We are gathering in
the [Middle East](#) a very large army, representing the whole Empire, in
order, with all the Allies we can gather, to meet what I apprehend will be
a German onslaught. This army, and the superior sea power which
supports it, obviously sustain your position in eastern waters. If the
Italians should be broken, [Japan](#) will become very cautious. Thus, all
hangs together, and I hope that you will have good confidence in us. It
has been a great comfort to feel that the New Zealand brigade group
under the Great Assassin, ¹ as General Wilson calls him, were well
forward in all this brilliant operation. At the moment I do not know
whether they have yet been engaged.**

2. We will certainly send you some Hudsons for action against raiders, but I know that you would not wish to take more from the north-western approaches to Great Britain than is absolutely necessary in these next few months.

3. When I spoke of our aircraft production being ahead of [Germany](#), it was true, but since then their bombing has somewhat damped down our factories and, as we have had to lay off bombing their factories to bomb invasion ports, etc., their current figures are now slightly ahead of ours. This is only a passing phase, because our main expansion here and overseas is now on the threshold. We shall soon be better in the air.

4. The greatest anxiety is tonnage. When I mentioned the years 1943 and 1944, I was speaking of the slow processes of shipbuilding and agriculture which require to be always running in steady grooves. Of course this does not mean that I think that the war will go on as long as that. I can truly say that, having lived through a very rough time, as you will remember, I feel that we are more sure of the future than we have ever been since the war began. Every good wish.

¹ [General Freyberg](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

193 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS – [EXTRACT]

193

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*

[Extract]

4 September 1941

... ² The New Zealand Home Defence Forces are being reorganised and brought up to the standard of overseas troops with a view to providing one force from which reinforcements for overseas can be obtained and, at the same time, a more adequately trained and organised body for the defence of the Dominion. In view of the heavy manpower commitments which are proving, and will increasingly prove, a very heavy strain on the resources of the Dominion, and the complete inadequacy of the present fighting and training equipment in the country, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand lay particular emphasis on the defence equipment required. It is desired to stress also that, unlike the other Dominions, New Zealand is unable to manufacture essential arms for its own use and is therefore almost entirely dependent on overseas sources for these defence needs. Moreover, New Zealand's immediate training programme requires modern equipment in order that the troops proceeding overseas will be trained with the same type of fighting equipment as will be made available to them on arrival overseas.

For these reasons, and most particularly because of the great existing scarcity of fighting equipment in the country, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand press strongly for the earliest priority in the following items of equipment already on order:

Rifles and bayonets	38,000
Anti-tank rifles	582
Bren guns	2,500
Two-pounder or six-pounder anti-tank guns, latter preferred	48
Bofors guns	64
3·7-inch anti-aircraft guns	16
Light tanks—for preference United States pattern M3—12½ ton	170
6-inch guns for fixed defences	10
With agreed scale of ammunition for artillery weapons.	

The above figures are inclusive of all equipment already approved for release. ¹

² See Vol. II, No. 78, for text omitted.

¹ A number of telegrams dealing with the provision of fixed defences for New Zealand ports have not been reproduced. See also

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

194 – THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF (WELLINGTON)² TO GENERAL FREYBERG, GOC 2ND NZEF (EGYPT) – [EXTRACT]

194

*The Chief of the General Staff (Wellington)² to General Freyberg,
GOC 2nd NZEF (Egypt)*

[Extract]

2 January 1942

The complete mobilisation of the New Zealand Forces has been ordered for 10 January, providing twenty-three battalions and eighteen being formed, nine mounted rifle regiments, four field regiments, and miscellaneous and ancillary troops. Medium guns and howitzers are being utilised to cover various anchorages, leaving only one troop of 6-inch howitzers for the field forces. Field artillery includes thirty-six 25-pounders and fifty 18-pounders. The total strength will be approximately 50,000 by 10 January, rising to 62,000 about one month later, and 68,000 ultimately, all exclusive of the **Home Guard. We had already advanced the annual training date for part of the force from January to 15 December, on which date approximately 30,000 troops of all categories, including New Zealand Expeditionary Force reinforcements, were in camp....¹**

² Lt-Gen Sir Edward Puttick, KCB, DSO and bar, MC (Gk), Legion of Merit (US); Chief of the General Staff and GOC NZ Military Forces, Aug 1941 – Dec 1945.

¹ See Vol. II, No. 53, for complete text.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

195 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

195

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

30 January 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have reviewed the resources available to meet a Japanese attack comprising one division accompanied by possibly two aircraft-carrier groups and other naval units. This scale of attack is considered not unlikely under the present circumstances. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are strongly of the opinion that no reasonable security against carrier-borne air attack can be obtained unless the limited air striking forces available are provided with fighter protection. In addition, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand consider that some fighter protection in the form of interceptor aircraft is essential for the protection of at least the two main ports of **Auckland** and **Wellington**. Without fighter escort the effect of our bombing attacks on carriers will be greatly reduced. Without some protection for the two vital ports, the Government may have to face serious repercussions in the morale of the public which may lead to an appreciable diminution in the total war effort. It is earnestly requested that most sympathetic consideration should be given to the allocation of two squadrons of long-range fighters of 12 initial equipment and 6 immediate reserve aircraft for bomber escort duties, and two squadrons of single-engined fighters of 18 initial equipment and 9 immediate reserve for interception duties. In this connection His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are making provision for a network of radio direction-finding air warning stations and propose to develop an **Air**

Observer Corps. While it is not desired to press for these units at the expense of aircraft allocated to the ABDA area, it is felt that there are good reasons at the present juncture for the allocation even on a temporary basis of such fighter squadrons to the Dominion, which may well become a necessary base for the defence and reinforcement of the South-West Pacific (properly so called), just as **Australia** will become a base for the ABDA area. In addition, steps are now being taken, at the request of the United States Government, to develop two aerodromes in the Dominion, with runways suitable for heavy American bombers, for use as an alternative reinforcing route or as a reinforcement base, and fighter protection for these aerodromes would appear to be essential. I do urge your personal interest in this matter. ¹

¹ See also *Command in the Pacific: ABDA and Anzac Areas*, No. 117.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

196 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

196

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

3 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

I have given the fullest consideration to your requests for supplies of war material, and in particular to those set out in your message to me of 30 January, with the earnest wish to meet your needs to the maximum extent. Our further proposals have been conveyed to you in the Secretary of State's telegram of today No. 87. ² I can assure you that they result from a careful review of the requirements of the various theatres of war in which the requirements of the **United Kingdom** have been placed last in order of priority, and I hope that you will find that they meet your most pressing needs. You recognise as I know that the task of allocation is one of extreme difficulty at the moment with a rapidly changing situation in several parts of the world. I should like to bring to your notice two considerations:

(There is a large flow of reinforcements of all kinds into the ABDA
a) area. In addition to what we are sending to you, an important consignment is being provided for the defence of **Australia**. This will contribute directly or indirectly, according as the situation develops, to the defence of New Zealand.

(We are already heading dangerously near the point where the
b) spreading of our resources must lead to a general weakness. There is a point beyond which we cannot interfere with the flow to the **Middle East**, whence so many Army and Air units with their equipment have already been withdrawn for the **Pacific**.

As stated in the Secretary of State's telegram, we shall be undertaking a further review at the end of March, and I can indeed assure you that we are watching the situation in all its bearings from day to day.

² Not published. Contained details of the principal items of equipment – chiefly fighter aircraft, artillery, rifles and tanks – which the United Kingdom Government proposed to provide up till the end of March 1942.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

197 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

197

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

4 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

Referring to my telegram dated 30 January [**No. 195**] in which we requested your urgent consideration towards the allocation of four fighter squadrons to New Zealand, I wish to inform you that an intimation was received from the **Air Ministry** the following day that it was hoped to allot thirty-six fighters to New Zealand. This allocation was not, of course, in response to my telegram of 30 January but refers to the request which I addressed to you in my telegram No. 260 of 27 December when you were at **Washington**.¹ In that telegram I represented the need for thirty-six fighters for the purpose of training fighter pilots for reinforcing the **Far East** and, incidentally, to provide fighter support in the event of invasion of this country. This was a modest request based on the assumption that the maximum number of fighters which could be sent to the South-West Pacific and the **Far East** should go to areas of operation which, unfortunately, are no longer in British and American possession. The situation has now changed a great deal.

While my colleagues and I greatly appreciate the expressed intention to allocate a number of fighters, we feel we must represent that the number mentioned, namely 18, cannot be regarded as in any way adequate for the scale of attack against which we must now urgently prepare.

In Air Ministry signal NZLO 301 dated 29 January, ² it is stated that the **Air Ministry** have offered 142 fighters to be divided between **Australia** and New Zealand, out of which **Australia** is to receive 124 and New Zealand 18, the further intention being that the **United States** should be requested to supply an equal number. My colleagues and I feel very strongly that the disparity in numbers between those allotted to **Australia** and those to New Zealand is quite unsatisfactory and does not take sufficient account of the relative needs of the two Dominions, especially in view of the fact that substantial American fighter reinforcements are already located in **Australia**. It appears that the allocations may have been made solely on the basis of the demands made by the respective Dominion Governments but at different times, and that these allocations may not have received consideration on the strategic merits of the position. In this connection I would remind you of the fact that if **Fiji** or **New Caledonia** fall into enemy hands, not only will this Dominion be seriously threatened with invasion, but also there would appear to be no alternative but to use aerodromes in New Zealand as the final link in the chain for American bomber reinforcements flying across the **Pacific** to **Australia** for the ABDA area. In the circumstances, it is in my opinion essential to provide substantial fighter defences in New Zealand.

We still require the thirty-six fighter aircraft asked for in December, primarily for the purpose of training fighter pilots. But in addition thereto we require at least four fighter squadrons as soon as possible, complete with personnel and all ancillary equipment, together with a Group Headquarters staff and the requisite anti-aircraft defences to enable the whole formation to operate satisfactorily, particularly in the **North Island**.

When my original request for thirty-six fighters is satisfied, the Royal New Zealand Air Force should be in some position to meet the requirements for maintaining the pilot strength in these four fighter squadrons. At present, as you are aware, we have neither the aircraft nor the training facilities to provide any fighter defence whatever, except by

employing training aircraft which have neither the equipment nor the performance adequate to deal with modern enemy aircraft.

As I have said already, my Government and I are appreciative of the recognition so far given to my request for training fighters but we feel we must press, with all urgency, the need for a substantial contribution in the form of a complete fighter force to be allocated in this Dominion. Such a force would be available to provide reinforcements elsewhere when the situation warrants it, but we fear there is a grave risk in attempting, at the present time, to send all available forces close in to the battle zone without retaining in the base areas, of which New Zealand is now a principal part, a sufficient strength to secure those base areas if operations in the active zone should continue to go against us.

You will appreciate that this request for a fully organised and supported fighter force represents only a part of our requirements for defence. I have been hoping to hear that the whole question of the defence of New Zealand has received consideration by the Joint Allied Staffs and that a plan has been formulated to provide reinforcements of all kinds which, although finally destined for the ABDA area when circumstances warrant it, would be based initially in New Zealand. I will not do more now than indicate to you that the capacity of this country for defence, despite every endeavour here, cannot be proportioned to the menace. It must depend upon the ability of Great Britain and the **United States jointly to provide both equipment and units of all kinds. Of these I would mention specifically anti-aircraft guns, armoured fighting vehicles, earthmoving and concreting machinery for the construction of aerodromes, telephone cable for all defence purposes, weapons to arm not only the Army and the **Home Guard** but also the men of the **Air Force** upon whom the defence of aerodromes must largely depend. If it is your wish, I will formulate fully the requirements of the three Services as we now see them, but my colleagues and I would prefer to be informed first as to whether any plans are being formulated by the Joint Staffs for the defence of New Zealand and, if so, what these plans are in general**

terms.

¹ Not published. Listed naval and air requirements for the defence of New Zealand and [Fiji](#).

² Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

198 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

198

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

14 February 1942

**Your telegram of 4 February. Following for Prime Minister from
Prime Minister:**

**We are in full sympathy and agreement with the sense of your
telegram [No. 197]. The proposal to provide you with thirty-six fighters,
either half from British sources and half from American, or failing an
American allotment, all from British sources, was made before receipt of
your telegram of 30 January [No. 195]. Anxious as we are to help, the
provision of four complete fighter squadrons presents a difficult problem.
Shipping limitations alone would prevent us despatching complete units
from this country at present. The only means of providing for the fighter
defence of New Zealand without long delay would be for a request to be
made to the **United States of America** to despatch two complete pursuit
squadrons to New Zealand. These squadrons have an initial equipment of
twenty-four aircraft each. If the Americans are unable to meet this
request in addition to their other commitments, we would agree that two
such squadrons should be diverted to you from the **United States of
America** fighter force destined for Northern Ireland in existing **United
States** plans. ¹**

**2. This arrangement would have the advantage not only of saving
shipping and time but also that it would not be at the expense of the
forces now en route and earmarked for the ABDA area, North**

¹ After discussions with General Marshall, Mr Nash advised on 9 April that these squadrons would not be available to New Zealand.

Australia, and the lines of communication to these areas. You will, I am sure, be in agreement that these areas should have first priority.

3. If you concur in the above proposal, I would suggest that the **New Zealand Government** should forward an immediate request, which we will transmit to **Washington**, supported in the manner you have suggested.

4. With regard to your request for long-range fighters, we are, I regret, not in a position to offer you more than the total of eighteen Beaufighters and cannot convert these in time for despatch earlier than April.

5. Reference anti-aircraft equipment, will you let us know the numbers of guns, both heavy and light, you now require in addition to those we have already promised.

6. The Pacific War Council has instructed the Joint Staffs here, which include a New Zealand representative, ¹ to review the immediate situation in the **Pacific** in the light of a telegraphic memorandum which General Wavell has referred to us. ² Mr Jordan has of course been given a copy of this telegram—when we have cleared the air on the immediate situation we can look further ahead.

7. Please send the list of requirements for all your three Services, as you suggest in the last paragraph of your telegram. We will do our best to help in consultation with the Americans.

¹ Brigadier R. S. Park.

² Not published. In this message to the Chiefs of Staff in **London**

and in Washington General Wavell warned that the unexpectedly rapid advance of the enemy in **Singapore and the approach of an enemy convoy towards southern **Sumatra** might necessitate serious changes in Allied plans for the defence and reinforcement of the **Netherlands East Indies**.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

199 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³

199

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

17 February 1942

Following for the Prime Minister:

Thank you so much for your telegram of 14 February. We quite appreciate the force of your remarks as to the difficulty of supplying us with fighter squadrons from the **United Kingdom, and we fully realise that these and, indeed, many of our other needs must no doubt in many cases be supplied from American sources. We fully concur, therefore, in your suggestion that a request should be made to the Americans for the immediate allocation and despatch of the squadrons to which you refer. A separate communication⁴ will be addressed to you to this effect, but we must retain the opinion that the four squadrons asked for are the minimum that is required.**

2. In view of the serious situation in the **Pacific accentuated by the fall of **Singapore**,¹ we feel compelled to lay the following considerations before you and before the **Far East Council** for consideration and transmission to President Roosevelt:**

**(The Dominion of New Zealand, together with the Commonwealth
a) of **Australia**, have been regarded from several distinct points of view in regard to defence:**

- (i) As British Dominions to be defended because they are British.**
- (ii) As producers of primary products—notably food and wool, both of which are important to British security.**
- (iii) As sources of fighting forces.**

(iv) As intrinsically desirable to the enemy for colonisation and for commodities. In the situation that has now developed, however, it is our view that the following are the two aspects of fundamental and paramount importance: As intermediate stages in the route for reinforcements from **America**. As main bases from which operations could be developed against the enemy.

(b) The deterioration in the **Pacific** situation has been so rapid and disastrous that the problem now as we see it is completely different in many important respects from what it was only a few short weeks ago. It seems clear to us, as the result of an unbroken series of retreats and territorial losses of the highest strategical importance and significance, that neither the greatest personal gallantry nor the most strenuous attempt now to reinforce the central ABDA area can be relied upon to retain that area for us.

(c) Our inability to develop adequate naval and air power to prevent further conquest by the Japanese in the **Netherlands East Indies** has made it evident that we can scarcely hope to develop a secure base within that area. Since secure bases are the first essential for the successful launching of future offensive operations, it is of the utmost importance to decide now where these base areas should be located and, in this connection, to re-examine decisions which have already been arrived at.

(d) While of course not relaxing in the slightest degree any effort that appears to offer a promise of success in halting or at least delaying the Japanese advance in the ABDA area, we must, therefore, now and at once, consider the position that will arise should these territories fall into Japanese hands, noting of course that they would serve a double purpose to the Japanese as a strong line of defence and, at the same time, a jumping-off place for further aggression.

(e) We do not know how much further west, south, or east **Japan** is capable of going during the present phase of conquest. But it is certain that **Japan's** capacity for conquest is not unlimited. Nevertheless, **Japan** may intend to do any of the following in the near future:

- (i) Secure Burma.
- (ii) Proceed through **Burma** to **India**.
- (iii) Invade Australia.
- (iv) Invade New Zealand.

The relative magnitude of each of these undertakings in relation to the advantages to be gained must be the deciding factor in **Japan's**

choice. We think there are strong reasons for supposing that the conquest of **India** by military force is not practically realisable in the near future. The invasion of **Australia** appears more immediately advantageous to the Japanese.

(f) It is of course possible that, having attained control of the principal ABDA territories, the Japanese might be content to rest there, and from that defensive line to defy us to oust them from the positions that they have taken which, they might feel, provide them with everything that they need for the New Order in the **Far East**. We cannot believe that they would be satisfied with this, having regard to the potential menace that would always exist of our organising from bases further south the means which, they must know, will ultimately be at our disposal to attack them, and we assume, therefore, that having got so far they would consider it essential to their own preservation to go further and deprive us of the means of attacking them if and when we are able to do so.

(g) In either case it seems inevitable that the struggle in the **Pacific** will be one of considerable and, indeed, indefinite duration, and we must set ourselves now to meet a long war and to retain at the very worst the minimum requirements that will enable us in time to recover the ground that we have already lost and, in due course, turn to the offensive against **Japan** itself.

(h) These minimum requirements—and we suggest they are the very minimum—are those that are necessary to maintain:

- (i) the line of reinforcement by air and by sea from the **United States**; and
- (ii) adequate and suitable areas for the provision of naval, air and land bases.

(i) Strategic base areas from which to fight our way back athwart the China Sea need to be established in **Australia** and New Zealand. The relative isolation of New Zealand, with its accompanying freedom from attack by land-based aircraft, provides, we feel, the ideal locality for a final and potentially most secure base for reserves—land, sea and air—and should accordingly be prepared and equipped for that purpose forthwith.

(j) Confining our attention in this paragraph to the areas for which this Government is directly responsible, it seems abundantly clear to us that the retention of **Fiji** as well as of New Zealand is, in the literal sense of the term, vital to our prospects of recovering the position in the **Pacific**. **Fiji** as an essential link on the line of air communication and as a potential naval base is of the utmost value to us and, correspondingly, is obviously a point at which the Japanese may aim.

If Fiji falls then New Zealand becomes even more essential. If they both fall, the prospect of adequately conducting from the **United States** effective operations in the Mid- and South-West Pacific areas seems to us to become exceedingly thin.

(As we see it, **Australia** will now become a base for operations
k) against the central ABDA area, and it seems to follow that New Zealand must become a base also, and, especially having regard to the vulnerability of Australian bases, it may well become the main base.

(In our view then, the defence requirements of New Zealand and
l) **Fiji** are no longer related solely or primarily to New Zealand's capacity for export, nor to the fact that they are British territory; they must be based upon:

(i) the necessity for maintaining the channel of communication to the **United States**, and

(ii) the necessity for preserving their integrity as bases for future action. We feel it essential therefore to press on the highest grounds of strategy for the provision of the necessary equipment both for New Zealand and for **Fiji**.

3. We have already told you generally of our shortages of equipment but, in accordance with your request, I am forwarding in my immediately following telegram a full statement of the equipment which we require at the moment and which we do beg of you to expedite, either from **United Kingdom** or **United States** sources, to the utmost degree that is practicable.

4. We feel, however, that it is not possible to formulate fully the defence requirements of New Zealand until it is known what role is to be assigned to the Dominion in relation to **Pacific** strategy. We are definitely of the opinion that it is essential for the successful prosecution of the war in the **Pacific** that New Zealand must become a main base area and must be equipped and defended as such.

5. Believe me we are fully appreciative of what you and our American friends have already been able to provide for the defence of New Zealand and **Fiji**. Believe me, also, no selfish fear of our own personal fortunes in the battle prompts this appeal. It is our firm and fixed belief that the war in the **Pacific** will be long and hard and that the retention of **Fiji**

and the successful defence of New Zealand are, in the highest sense of the words, absolutely essential.

6. This telegram is being repeated to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia**, to Vice-Admiral Leary, and to the New Zealand Minister at **Washington**. Would you please give a copy to the High Commissioner for New Zealand in **London**, who is being instructed to bring it before the **Far East Council** as a matter of the greatest urgency and importance with a view to its consideration. As we are naturally anxious that our views should be understood not only in **London** but also in **Washington**, and as under the arrangements at present in force we have no direct means of bringing our views on the strategical requirements of the Western Pacific before the American authorities, who are of course responsible for the defence of the Anzac and **Pacific** areas, you might perhaps think it possible to convey a copy of this communication to President Roosevelt.

³ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**, Vice-Admiral Leary (Anzac Station) and the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

⁴ No. 200.

¹ **Singapore** fell on 15 February.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

200 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ – [EXTRACT]

200

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹
[Extract]

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

19 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister:

With reference to paragraph 1 of my telegram [**No. 199**], I now set out the immediate defence requirements for New Zealand. These requirements are not related to what the requirements will be if it is decided to constitute New Zealand as a main base area. They are related to the defence of New Zealand against a division of Japanese troops supported by warships and four aircraft carriers. The lists include only such resources as could be employed effectively by the time of their arrival if released in the near future.

AIR

2. The air defence forces of New Zealand, **Fiji** and **Tonga** at present comprise the following:

8 squadrons (3 in **Fiji**) comprising the following aircraft:

Airacobras (Pursuit) – 25 now erecting in **Fiji**, two of which are available.

Hudsons (Reconnaissance) – 32 (12 in **Fiji**)

Vincents (obsolete) (Reconnaissance) – 45 (9 in Fiji)

Hinds (obsolete) (Army Co-operation) – 21

Singapores (obsolete) (Flying Boats) – 3 (in Fiji)

In addition, the following aircraft in training schools are being equipped for operational use and organised into emergency squadrons to be employed in the event of invasion:

Oxfords 81

Harvards 54

Moths 108

Vincents 16

Gordons 15

We have also four air warning RDF sets (three in Fiji).

An organisation is now being prepared to command and operate existing squadrons, auxiliary squadrons, and new squadrons as they become available, in three groups—Northern, Central and Southern. These groups will also comprise the training schools.

3. Requirements. As I indicated in my telegram, I have the greatest difficulty in putting forward specific requirements for defence. This relates particularly to Air requirements. It is clear that the success of anti-invasion operations depends to the greatest extent on air superiority, without which our land forces and coast defences will be at the worst possible disadvantage. In our remoteness from sources of production it is, of course, essential to keep our **Air Force** to such a size that its maintenance against wastage will not place impossible demands on shipping. I recognise also that we must avoid tying up squadrons which might otherwise be actively engaged. But it is clear that unless squadrons are already in the Dominion in sufficient strength to be capable of defeating the enemy when he comes, there will be little prospect of restoring the situation after that event. I suggest that New Zealand is the final base area. On the information available to us I consider that New Zealand can be made relatively secure from the Air

point of view for the time being if, in addition to the specified Army and anti-aircraft requirements, the following can be provided in the near future:

2 torpedo-bomber or medium bomber squadrons

2 long-range fighter squadrons

2 short-range fighter squadrons

1 Army co-operation or dive-bomber squadron

4 troop-carrying aircraft

These squadrons should be completely manned and equipped. The maintenance of such a force would normally require an Aircraft Depot but we could make do without. We are, of course, organising and contriving in every possible way to make the most of our resources and, in putting forward the above request for squadrons, I have taken full account of what we already have here. You will understand that a handful of Hudsons reinforced by numerous obsolete bombers and trainers will make an impression more for gallantry than for their execution.... ¹

¹ Detailed requirements of aircraft, bombs, airfield construction and communication equipment, coast-defence artillery, field and anti-aircraft artillery, engineer and signal equipment, tanks and armoured vehicles, infantry weapons and ammunition, anti-submarine vessels, minesweepers, mines, and naval weapons, stores and equipment (covering six typed foolscap sheets) have been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

19 FEBRUARY 1942

19 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister:

With reference to paragraph 1 of my telegram [[No. 199](#)], I now set out the immediate defence requirements for New Zealand. These requirements are not related to what the requirements will be if it is decided to constitute New Zealand as a main base area. They are related to the defence of New Zealand against a division of Japanese troops supported by warships and four aircraft carriers. The lists include only such resources as could be employed effectively by the time of their arrival if released in the near future.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

AIR

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We have also four air warning RDF sets (three in Fiji).

An organisation is now being prepared to command and operate existing squadrons, auxiliary squadrons, and new squadrons as they become available, in three groups—Northern, Central and Southern. These groups will also comprise the training schools.

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2 torpedo-bomber or medium bomber squadrons

2 long-range fighter squadrons

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1 **Air Force co-operation or dive-bomber squadron**

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These squadrons should be completely manned and equipped. The maintenance of such a force would normally require an Aircraft Depot but we could make do without. We are, of course, organising and contriving in every possible way to make the most of our resources and, in putting forward the above request for squadrons, I have taken full account of what we already have here. You will understand that a handful of Hudsons reinforced by numerous obsolete bombers and

trainers will make an impression more for gallantry than for their execution.... ¹

¹ **Detailed requirements of aircraft, bombs, airfield construction and communication equipment, coast-defence artillery, field and anti-aircraft artillery, engineer and signal equipment, tanks and armoured vehicles, infantry weapons and ammunition, anti-submarine vessels, minesweepers, mines, and naval weapons, stores and equipment (covering six typed foolscap sheets) have been omitted.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

201 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

201

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*²

19 February 1942

Following for Prime Minister:

Reference my telegram of 17 February [**No. 199**]. In your telegram of 14 February [**No. 198**] you referred to our urgent requirements for fighters in New Zealand and offered to make certain future allocations to us to meet a proportion of our requirements. You were good enough to suggest that you would be willing for your part to agree to the two **United States** pursuit squadrons destined for Northern Ireland to be diverted to New Zealand. I need hardly say that my colleagues and I are more than ready to accept this suggestion, and I shall be most grateful to you if you will represent to the President of the **United States** that it would be more advantageous at the present time to divert the two pursuit squadrons to New Zealand.

You are aware that we have at the present time no fighters whatever in New Zealand, and that our expectation of receiving fighters is not as high as we consider necessary. Unless complete units can be diverted to us the position will remain most unsatisfactory. You have already arranged to ship from British orders in the **United States** eighteen Kittyhawk fighters, and you were in hopes that a further eighteen might be made available from **United States** orders. These we propose to use immediately they arrive for the operational training of our pilots, and we shall be in a position to maintain an output of trained fighter pilots to maintain the strength of the fighter squadrons that may be located in

New Zealand. But we are not in a position immediately to organise and operate complete fighter units with all their ancillary details, and it is for this reason particularly that I welcome the possibility of the arrival of complete pursuit units from the [United States](#).

You are aware that apart from the necessity for protecting our very limited bomber forces proceeding to the attack of enemy aircraft carriers or other ships, and apart from the necessity for employing fighters over the zone of operations in the event of invasion, we have the permanent necessity for providing fighter protection over our main ports and cities, which at any time are liable to air attack.

While, therefore, two pursuit squadrons will be of the greatest assistance and will afford considerable protection for certain purposes, there will remain an urgent need for a substantial increase in our fighter defences, and I sincerely hope that the squadrons destined for this part of the world may be duly apportioned to cover this urgent requirement as far as possible and as soon as possible.

² Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, [Washington](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

202 – THE NEW ZEALAND LIAISON OFFICER (LONDON) TO THE CHIEF
OF THE GENERAL STAFF (WELLINGTON)

202

*The New Zealand Liaison Officer (London) to the Chief of the
General Staff (Wellington)*

25 February 1942

Secret and personal for General Puttick.

In allotting Joint Planning Committee activity I am somewhat handicapped by the lack of up-to-date information on the present situation in New Zealand. In this respect I particularly request your views on the scale of attacks now possible on New Zealand (a) if **Fiji and **New Caledonia** are held, (b) if these islands are lost. In a proposed paper the Joint Planning Committee are suggesting that in (a) only sporadic raids by enemy cruisers and aircraft carriers are likely, and in (b) one brigade group with naval and air support, which I consider too light and have not accepted. The basis of their argument is that all Japanese activity after the capture of the **Netherlands East Indies** will be westwards to **India** and northwards to **Burma**.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

203 – THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF (WELLINGTON) TO THE NEW ZEALAND LIAISON OFFICER (LONDON)

203

*The Chief of the General Staff (Wellington) to the New Zealand
Liaison Officer (London)*

27 February 1942

For Brigadier Park from General Puttick.

Your telegram of 25 February.

My personal views, which may not necessarily be shared by the Chief
of the Naval Staff and the Chief of the Air Staff, ¹ are as follows:

1. The scale of attack on New Zealand depends upon the following
factors:

(The power of Allied naval forces to interfere decisively with an
a) expedition or at least to inflict serious casualties.

(The number and quality of **RNZAF** units.
b)

(The Japanese estimate of the strength and quality of the New
c) Zealand land forces which could be concentrated at the point or
points of attack.

(The Japanese estimate of the value of New Zealand as

d) (i) a link in the **USA** reinforcing chain;

(ii) an enemy base to intensify attacks on **Australia** and on Allied
shipping proceeding east to west;

(iii) the final advanced **USA** base if **Australia** is lost;

(iv) a produce exporter.

(Axis strategical plans, of which there is insufficient data to form
e) an opinion. If these include a south-east drive by **Germany** and a
western drive by **Japan**, both aimed at **India**, which seems to depend
upon the Axis estimate of Russian strength and of the actual and

potential strength of **India**, both military and political, then the scale of attack on New Zealand may possibly be reduced, though from an estimate of the Japanese divisions available she could simultaneously attack New Zealand in strength.

(The Japanese shipping situation. In a recent survey there is some
f) indication of a shortage, and casualties have since occurred but are probably balanced by captures and charters. On the information available I do not accept the shortage of shipping as restricting Japanese expeditions.

(The Japanese estimate of the effect of a heavy attack on New
g) Zealand on the morale of the NZEF in the **Middle East**, and the consequent effect on operations there.

2. *Conclusions:* There are so many imponderable factors in paragraph 1 that any forecast of enemy intentions must be largely guesswork. If it could be clearly established that Allied naval forces could effectively intervene against the expedition, I agree that the scale of

¹ Then in **Australia**. See p. 159.

attack is likely to consist of sporadic raids only, but the defeat of the Allied naval forces would at once make invasion possible. If our air forces could attain a strength sufficient to be considerably superior at or near to the point of attack to a Japanese air force of four carriers plus aircraft from warships, then again invasion would appear to be improbable. But while these conditions are unfulfilled and while, at the same time, our land forces are only partially trained and are deficient in many important items of modern equipment, I regard the scale of attack against which New Zealand must prepare, and in fact is preparing, as one division supported by strong naval forces, including four aircraft carriers, and followed by a second division with reinforcing aircraft ferried by carriers. As Japan should feel competent, subject to the naval situation, to seize sheltered waters such as the Bay of Islands or Marlborough Sounds, I do not regard the capture of **Fiji** or **New Caledonia** as essentially a condition precedent to the invasion of New Zealand. In any case I cannot agree that **Fiji** or **New Caledonia** affect the scale of attack against which New Zealand must prepare as, in the event of their

capture, it would be far too late to make increased preparations. At the same time I regard both places as highly important advanced bases for the enemy and the Allies and requiring the strongest possible defences.

3. I regard any suggestion of a brigade group as fantastic. What could it hope to achieve? It is a case of either initially a division, perhaps of a special type, or mere raids. ¹

¹ On 28 February the Prime Minister sent copies of this telegram to the New Zealand Minister in **Washington** and to the **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**, c/o Prime Minister of **Australia, Canberra**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

204 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

204

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

28 February 1942

PEFRA **No. 5.**

Major-General Puttick has just shown me a personal telegram he has received from the New Zealand Liaison Officer in **London** from which it appears that the Joint Planning Committee in **London**, in considering the possible scale of attack on New Zealand, estimate it at 'sporadic raids by enemy cruisers and aircraft carriers' if **Fiji** and **New Caledonia** are held by us, and, if **Fiji** and **New Caledonia** are lost, at 'one brigade group with naval and air support'.

Candidly I must tell you that my colleagues and I are appalled by this attempt to think in terms of the past, and if this line of thought is persisted in we must brace ourselves to meet the fate of **Malaya** and with infinitely less reason or excuse. To suggest, as we must assume is the case, that an attack by a brigade group is all that New Zealand should prepare to meet seems to us to be unreal and dangerous to the last degree, and we do beg you to ensure that if this kind of appreciation is to be laid before the **Pacific War Council** it be accompanied by our very strongest protest and our most pointed reference to the appreciation contained in my telegram of 17 February [**No. 199**], which was and is fully concurred in by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.

A telegram sent tonight by the Chief of the General Staff to the New Zealand Liaison Officer in **London** has our entire concurrence and I

think it well worth repeating to you in full, as follows:

[Text of telegram No. 203]

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

205 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

205

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

Your PEFRA No. 5. The estimate you refer to is leakage at a very early stage of examination of the question for which you asked, and in no way represents the views of the Chiefs of Staff, who have not yet even been consulted. This shows that there are disadvantages as well as advantages in liaison between your officers and ours in initial stages of staff study.

I agree with you that whatever is likely to invade New Zealand will not be a brigade group. Your telegram will be shown to the Planning Staff at the same time that any reports from their juniors are considered.

I am aiming at three large measures for New Zealand security. First, inducing the United States Navy to give effective protection in the Anzac area; second, their reinforcement of **Fiji and **New Caledonia**, which we arranged at **Washington**; and third, the sending of American troops into New Zealand as an alternative to recalling the New Zealand Division from the **Middle East**, thus saving shipping and needless movement.**

It is impossible to say with certainty that the Japanese will not attack New Zealand in force, but there are many other far more tempting objectives for them and their resources are not unlimited. I am hoping that the recovery of sea power during May by the **United States of**

America and our own naval developments in the **Indian Ocean** may alter the strategic values which at present exist.

I am doing everything in my power to get you the weapons and munitions for which you have asked. All good wishes.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

206 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

206

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

6 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:

I am very much obliged to you for your telegram. Your messages are always most helpful and my colleagues and I are greatly relieved to learn that the situation is as you explain it.

In view, however, of your reference to a 'leakage', I think I should explain at once, in order to avoid any misunderstanding or injustice to Brigadier Park, New Zealand Liaison Officer in London, who is a thoroughly competent and trustworthy officer, that I think it was his duty to communicate personally with the New Zealand Chief of the General Staff as he did, and that I take upon myself the full responsibility for the nature of the message sent to you.

I am not yet in a position, nor indeed does the time seem appropriate, to comment in detail upon the more general problems your telegram raises, but I should like you to know at once that we very warmly appreciate the efforts that you are making to supply us with the necessary equipment and otherwise to improve our means of defence.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

207 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

207

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

7 March 1942

In order to assist the Combined Chiefs of Staff to estimate the degree of support, both in military formations and in weapons, required in the defence of **Australia** and New Zealand, it will be necessary for us to give them the latest appreciation of the defence problems of the Dominion.

The New Zealand Service representatives in **Washington**, in collaboration with the British Joint Planners, have been instructed to obtain the following information as quickly as possible:

- (a) A brief appreciation of the land and air defence problems of New Zealand, with an estimate of the land and air force facilities and equipment required to meet the new situation.
- (b) A statement of the facilities and equipment of the land and air forces at present available.
- (c) A summary of the steps now being taken within the Dominion to increase their security, e.g., raising and equipping new formations and increasing weapon production. This to include equipment already ordered from the **United Kingdom** or the **United States of America**; estimates of the state of readiness of the armed forces should be given for 30 June and 31 December 1942.
- (d) A statement in order of priority of requirements in land and air reinforcements and in equipment which the Dominion considers should be provided from outside sources.

You have already supplied a very comprehensive list of equipment required, and a copy of this cable has been made available to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, but it would be helpful if in your reply you set out the major types of equipment that would meet the most urgent and

immediate needs.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

208 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

208

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

10 March 1942

Following for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

1. In response to the various suggestions and requests which I made to the President for the common conduct of the war against **Japan** I have received a message containing the following passage:

‘We concur in your estimate of the importance of the Indian and **Middle East** areas and agree that reinforcements are required. We also agree that the Australian and New Zealand divisions now in that region should remain. The **41st Division** is leaving the **United States** by the 18th of this month, reaching **Australia** about 10 April. As a replacement for Australian and New Zealand divisions allotted to the **Middle East** and **India**, the **United States** is prepared to despatch two additional divisions, one to **Australia** and one to New Zealand. A convoy of one-half a division could leave about 15 April and the remainder of this division about 15 May. Another United States division can also leave for the South-West Pacific about 15 May. It should be understood that our willingness to despatch these two divisions over and above the 41st, which is already set up to go, is based on the necessity for economising in shipping and the continuing security of the **Middle East**, **India** and **Ceylon**. It is therefore dependent upon the retention of a similar number of Australian and New Zealand divisions in those theatres. The above movements in the South-West Pacific can be accomplished provided that some twenty-five cargo ships are withdrawn for one voyage from those

engaged in transport of Lend-Lease material to the **Red Sea** and to **China** and scheduled to sail in April and May.’

2. Our 5th British Division is about to sail from the **United Kingdom**. The President has also promised to give me the shipping to move two additional British divisions (40,000 men) in April and May and we are sending other British divisions during the next few months in our own shipping. How these divisions will be disposed between the **Middle East** and **India** must depend upon how things are going when they have rounded the Cape. We have also postponed for an indefinite period the completion of the movement of various **United States** divisions into Northern Ireland and **Iceland**, on which we had counted, in order to facilitate all the above movement of troops to the East and the **Far East**.

3. It is certain, in view of the shipping position, that an American division can reach New Zealand sooner than the New Zealand Division can be withdrawn from the **Middle East**, and that a more economical use can be made of our resources and a more rapid deployment against the enemy. Moreover, you may be sure that the presence of considerable **United States** forces in the Anzac area will emphasise to the **United States** the importance of protecting that area by its main sea power and also of accelerating the equipment of existing New Zealand forces, for which I am pressing.

4. You have never asked for the withdrawal of your Division and we have admired the constancy of spirit and devotion to the cause which has animated your Government and people. ¹ All the more do I feel this promised aid from the **United States** will be gratifying. I hope, therefore, you will empower me to accept the offer and to thank the President on your behalf. It would of course be very good if you care to cable him yourself.

¹ See also Vol. II, *Reinforcement of 2nd NZEF, 1940–42*, No. 57 ff.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

209 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON² – [EXTRACT]

209

*The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington*²
[Extract]

² Repeated to the High Commissioner for New Zealand in **London**. This message is also dated 14 March on other file copies, but messages from both Mr Nash and Brigadier Park give 13 March as its date.

13 March 1942

Reference Mr Nash's telegram [**No. 207**].

A general appreciation of the defence situation of this Dominion was contained in a telegram addressed by the Chief of the General Staff to the Military Liaison Officer, **London**, and repeated to you ... [on] 28 February last. Though the appreciation given therein was stated as the personal opinion of the Chief of the General Staff, it does in fact represent the views of the Chiefs of the Naval and Air Staffs and is in general concurred in by us.

2. It is noted that in your telegram no request is made for an appreciation of the naval defence problems, and it is assumed that this omission is due to the fact that naval defence is to a large extent now the responsibility of the United States Navy. It must be emphasised, however, that the most effective insurance against invasion is that given by naval forces, which should with adequate air support intercept any enemy expedition before it reaches New Zealand. Moreover, naval forces with adequate air cover must be the mainstay of our subsequent offensive, for which we should start to prepare now. The preparation of

naval bases for the United States Pacific Fleet must therefore receive very high priority. Proposals for **Auckland** and **Suva**, including an estimate of the materials required, were furnished to you in a telegram from the New Zealand Naval Board No. 2223Z of 8 March, ¹ and a message from the Commonwealth Naval Board No. 1438Z of 3 March (amended by 2100 of 4 March) to the British Admiralty Delegation, **Washington**. ² The defences of **Nandi** are being investigated by the staffs of COMANZAC and the **Australian Commonwealth Naval Board** in collaboration, and proposals are contained in a message from the Commonwealth Naval Board to the British Admiralty Delegation, **Washington**, 0930Z of 9 March. ³ Plans for **Tongatabu** have not yet been made pending a decision as to whether this will become, as we propose, a **United States** responsibility. ⁴ As to equipment, the provision of additional auxiliary vessels is particularly urgent, and in this connection my telegram of 19 February [**No. 200**] refers.

3. In my telegram of 28 February the scale of enemy attack estimated by the Chief of the General Staff was two divisions. We do not consider this excessive. There can be no certainty it will not be exceeded in view of the fact that a greater proportion of the twenty-nine Japanese divisions or more in the South-West Pacific area may, having now completed their first task, be diverted for the attack on this area. The problem must therefore be approached from the point of view of doing the maximum possible to secure both **Fiji** and New Zealand as bases for a future offensive. The most convenient way of answering the questions on land and air defence which you ask in your telegram is to consider the army and air problems separately. Section II of this message will therefore deal with the army side and Section III with the air. There is an added Section IV giving a brief appreciation of the manpower situation.

¹ Not published.

² Not published.

³ Not published. Listed in detail the requirements recommended for anti-submarine defence at **Nandi**.

⁴ See *Relief of New Zealand Garrisons in Fiji and Tonga*, No. 292.

SECTION II

4. The strength of the army required to secure the safety of New Zealand is naturally much influenced by the naval situation and by the strength of the New Zealand air forces. The naval situation, even if in our favour, is liable to a complete upset by defeat and cannot at present be regarded as in any way a substitute for local defences. Air defence depends upon quality and number of aircraft, efficiency of air units and the capacity of aerodromes, and does not appear likely to afford a sufficient deterrent against heavy scale attack for a long time. Land forces are therefore of prime importance meanwhile until the naval and air situations develop materially in our favour.

5. Factors of importance in the land defence of New Zealand are:

- (i) Isolation of New Zealand from other land, which virtually prevents enemy use of shore-based aircraft during approach and enhances the value of both strong New Zealand air forces and of strong land forces to prevent the enemy securing a footing anywhere in New Zealand.
- (ii) Elongated shape, lengthy coastline, present incomplete warning system, prevalence of harbours and landing beaches, great distances between vulnerable points, the existence of Cook Strait, limited capacity of main roads, and 3 ft 6 in. gauge railways.

These factors require strong mobile forces in at least seven widely separated areas and local garrisons for secondary ports and sheltered waters in addition to fortress areas. Aerodrome protection is difficult as many are close to the coast and there is much flat land in sparsely populated areas. Thus, the forces required in each island must be considerably superior to likely enemy forces to ensure speedy and

effective opposition by at least equal forces and rapid concentrations of superior force.... ¹

8. Your paragraph (c)

Increasing existing companies to battalions and calling up personnel to form garrison battalions.

Raising Maori battalion.

Training and throwing off cadres to man additional coast, medium, field, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery due to arrive.

Training Home Guard instructors and personnel to man various anti-aircraft equipment and Coast Defence artillery sets.

Training in the Army approximately 6000 Air Force recruits for aerodrome battalions until required in the **Air Force.... ²**

¹ Detailed estimates of the land forces required for the defence of New Zealand and **Fiji, as well as a statement of the forces then available, have been omitted.**

² Proposals for the production of weapons and equipment are omitted.

9. State of Readiness.

(i) By 30 June: Two-thirds of force complete minimum of six months' continuous training, balance three months. On present indications the equipment situation should then be satisfactory except for 9·2-inch equipments, anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft searchlights, tanks for nine AFV regiments, anti-tank mines, and possible rifles for 100,000 Home Guard. Forces should be well able to undertake active operations. Entrenchments, obstacles and improvements to roads and bridges should be well advanced.

(ii) By 31 December: Forces should be thoroughly fit for any operations.... ¹

¹ Details of reinforcements and equipment required from outside sources for the defence of New Zealand and **Fiji** are omitted.

SECTION III

11. It is not possible to make a satisfactory statement of immediate and ultimate air requirements for the defence of New Zealand and **Fiji**. These must be related to a central strategic plan. We cannot intelligently state requirements without knowing strategic intentions. So far we have been requested to prepare for the reception in New Zealand of two hundred heavy bombers and invited to consider preparing for nearly four hundred naval aircraft. These proposals are evidently parts of a plan related to the South-West Pacific. A plan on such a scale is considered essential, and within that plan we estimate that very large air forces would be based in New Zealand and **Fiji**.

12. The following roles fall to air forces countering enemy invasion:

(Reconnaissance of sea areas of approach for which we will be
a) responsible to locate enemy carriers, warships and transports.

(To strike at enemy transports during their approach.

b)

(To destroy enemy aircraft carriers and otherwise to obtain air

c) ascendancy over enemy carrier-borne aircraft in the area of operations.

(To give bomber and reconnaissance support to the Army.

d)

(To provide fighter protection over important targets, main ports

e) and aerodromes.

13. The following secondary roles fall to the **Air Force** in the protection of New Zealand and **Fiji** against raiders:

(a) Reconnaissance of sea areas other than invasion approach areas.

(b) Escort of shipping convoys.

14. The air forces required for all the above purposes are in excess of available aerodrome accommodation. Numerous excellent aerodromes exist in New Zealand, but these mostly require extension and concreting and the preparation of protected dispersal positions.

15. As regards land aircraft, the first essential is to supply large quantities of aerodrome construction machinery. We have, you know, sent very large proportions of our construction machinery to the **Middle East, Far East and Fiji**, and there is now an acute shortage of machinery in New Zealand. Our immediate requirements are given in our telegram of 19 February [**No. 200**] and have been sanctioned for release from **United Kingdom** allotments in the **USA**.

16. If Fiji and New Zealand are to be held and are to become important base areas in future offensive operations, we estimate that we require the following as soon as possible.... ¹

17. Not knowing what might be made available we cannot state our preferences for priority. We desire that we may be informed of the Combined Chiefs of Staffs' intentions and requirements as regards New Zealand and **Fiji**, and we will immediately recommend what we can undertake and what we require to give effect to these intentions and requirements.

18. At the present time we are prepared to receive and operate in New Zealand and **Fiji** any number of squadrons which can conceivably be sent here within the next three months. Our immediate requirements to counter an invasion operation were stated in paragraph 3 of my telegram of 19 February 1942. We are prepared to disrupt our Empire Air Training organisation to any extent required for the purpose of accommodating operational squadrons while new aerodromes are being prepared.... ²

20. We possess at the present time in New Zealand and **Fiji** 30 Hudsons and 24 Airacobras. Otherwise we have no modern aircraft, although we can and would put into the air four squadrons of 'Vincents', seven squadrons of 'Oxfords', 'Harvards' and 'Moths' armed to bomb and fight.

But recent experience has shown that obsolete aircraft can achieve very little result in the presence of strong enemy air forces. We have eight air warning sets, four of which are unsuitable for detecting the approach of low-flying aircraft.

21. We recognise that our future success in the **Pacific** must depend upon regaining control of sea communications, and that when this has been achieved the danger to New Zealand will recede and its importance as a base for offensive operations will increase. In present and in future circumstances we must be powerfully equipped with air forces, but the planning of those air forces must be left to the Combined Chiefs of Staffs and to a Supreme Commander.

¹ The Air Force units, aircraft assembly plant and airfield defence equipment required are omitted.

² Details of the aircraft and equipment which New Zealand was prepared to accept and operate within the next three months are omitted.

22. All service squadrons in New Zealand and **Fiji** are in constant readiness. All auxiliary squadrons are available at a few hours' notice....

1

¹ Paragraphs 23–27 inclusive have been omitted. They discussed air requirements. In Paragraph 27 it was suggested that the major part of the air training done in New Zealand could in future be done in **Canada**. This would save shipping space, and fewer tankers would be required to carry fuel to New Zealand.

SECTION IV

28. The following is a brief statement of the manpower position:

(a) SENT OVERSEAS
Navy 2,074

Air 6,582

Army 52,712

Total 61,368

(b) IN NEW ZEALAND

Navy 3,001

Air 11,280

Army 52,983

Total 67,264

Grand Total 128,632

This total represents 7·6 per cent of the total population and 38 per cent of men within the age groups from which they are drawn. A proportion of the additional 26,500 men to complete the **Territorial Force establishment has been balloted and is in process of joining units, while the remainder will be balloted almost immediately. The total mobilised will then be 155,132, leaving a balance of approximately 185,000 in the age group 19 to 45. The bulk of this balance will not be available because of unfitness or postponement for industry.**

In addition to the above there is a **Home Guard drawn from men between the ages of 16 and 60, with a strength of 100,000, which will be mobilised in the event of attack.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

13 MARCH 1942

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IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

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IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

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In addition to the above there is a **Home Guard** drawn from men between the ages of 16 and 60, with a strength of 100,000, which will be mobilised in the event of attack.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

210 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

210

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*²

15 March 1942

With reference to your telegram of 10 March [**No. 208**], and with further reference to your telegram of 4 March [**No. 205**]. Following is for Prime Minister from Prime Minister:

We warmly welcome your message of 10 March and particularly the prospect that it opens of definite reinforcements for New Zealand from **United States** sources. Your communication has, however, given us much food for thought, and as I am sure you will agree that there is everything to be gained and nothing to be lost by the fullest communication of views between us, I am setting out below our comments on your messages and on the situation as it appears today.

1. In connection with President Roosevelt's offer the following thoughts occur to us:

(The dates of despatch and arrival of the contemplated
a) reinforcements are distant and we cannot avoid the apprehension that they may be too late. It may well be that shipping difficulties or other restraining factors are such as to preclude the despatch of these troops at an earlier date, but it does seem necessary to say at once that from our point of view time is the very essence of the matter, that we would much prefer an earlier date, and that if, by way of illustration, we were forced to select an alternative, we would choose half the troops in half the time rather than the whole body at the times indicated.

(It is not clear from President Roosevelt's message which of the

b) flights is to come to New Zealand. We cannot, of course, enter into competition with **Australia**, but we would like to stress the urgency of our needs and hope that you will be able to take this matter up with the President.

(We note that owing to the pressure of shipping demands this
c) movement of troops, even to the extent and at the dates proposed, must be at the expense of diverting twenty-five vessels from the supply of the **Middle East** and **China** and this at a time when, as indicated in the recent Chiefs of Staff appreciation in **London**, it is in any case proposed to take great risks in the **Middle East**, which is of course at the same time exceedingly important and exceedingly vulnerable.

(We note also that the despatch of the division is subject to the
d) condition that our own Division remains in the **Middle East**. This raises for us problems of the first magnitude. It is a fact, as you have so kindly emphasised, that we have not asked for the return of the New Zealand Division and we do not ask it now. But Australian troops are, we are informed, being returned, and with your experience you will realise what a difficult position we will have to face here when this fact becomes known. Our troops have been in the **Middle East**, divorced from their homes and their people, for two years. Added to their natural desire to see their people again is a much more serious feeling, which I am told is becoming marked in the Division, that their proper place when their own country is in danger is in the **Pacific** theatre, and I must say that we have a lot of sympathy with that point of view, which may well be the cause of grave embarrassment and that [not] before long. Again, on this aspect of the matter, the pressure on New Zealand's manpower at the moment and the physical difficulties of transporting troops to the **Middle East** are such that at present we do not see the possibility of reinforcing the Division. Actually, **General Freyberg** has enough troops at the moment to carry him on without reinforcements for a lengthy period, but the time must arise when the question of reinforcing or not reinforcing will present very great difficulties to us. Finally, on this particular subject, our Division is now trained and experienced in war itself and thus would unquestionably be of infinitely greater value to us in this theatre than any American division can be until it has had equal experience.

(I must now tell you with what uneasiness we have noted the
e) strength of the reinforcements which President Roosevelt proposes to despatch and, indeed, the strength of those which you hope to find it possible to send from the **United Kingdom**. We fully realise the limitations imposed by shipping inadequacies, but if this is the best

movement of troops to the areas at present threatened, if there can be no acceleration and no increase in the forces which it is contemplated to send, then we must tell you, and I think we must tell President Roosevelt also, that the prospects in this part of the world seem to us to be bleak indeed. The Japanese have as we know some twenty-nine divisions in the South China seas and the ABDA area. Many of these divisions have largely completed their tasks and will be available for further adventures, west or south or both. In addition, the Japanese have large numbers of surplus troops in other areas which they can use as circumstances require, subject only to their estimate of the advantages of any particular plan, their physical means of transporting them, and their freedom from apprehension regarding the safety of that transport. To meet this possible attack we gather from your message that all that is in sight at the moment between now and May are three British divisions, who are presumably to go to the **Middle East**, **India**, or **Burma**, and the three American divisions referred to in President Roosevelt's message. To be perfectly frank, this scale of reinforcement seems to us to be patently and perhaps fatally short of the requirements of the situation. You cannot, of course, summon ships from the vasty deep but I do beg you, and President Roosevelt, to employ every means to increase the scale and accelerate the tempo of the reinforcements which this part of the world needs if it is to meet what we expect will come. I know you will not misunderstand me. We are not dismayed and, believe me, we will not disgrace you when the test comes, but we have seen so often in this war the preparation of inadequate means of defence which have led merely to the dissipation and loss of forces without effective results. We most earnestly suggest that the attack which we expect on **Australia** and New Zealand cannot be allowed to succeed, and we suggest this not only from our own point of view but also from a very deep conviction that if it does succeed the conduct of the war in the **Pacific** will become extremely difficult, if not impossible.

(
f) It seems to us to be possible that in the **United Kingdom** and the **United States** the possibility of a Japanese attack southwards is given less weight than it merits in comparison with the chances of their choosing now to attack solely to the west. We consider they may do both, and that if they had to choose one course only the strategical prize to be gained by their early capture of **Australia**, New Zealand and **Fiji**, as the obvious bases for our offensive when it develops, might well outweigh the advantages to them of an immediate attack westwards. In any case we feel also, especially having regard to your comment on 4 March that 'there are many other far more tempting

objectives' for the Japanese than New Zealand, that the prospects of an attack against New Zealand before an attack on **Australia**, and for the purpose of isolating **Australia**, are substantial and have perhaps not been adequately weighed.

2. No doubt as a result of your communications with President Roosevelt, Mr Nash asked us last week, for the information of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington**, to supply an appreciation of the situation as we see it in this part of the world at the present moment and an estimate of the forces and equipment which we felt we required. A reply has just been despatched to Mr Nash and repeated to Mr Jordan, who has been asked to transmit a copy of both communications to you at once. You will observe that the necessities as now calculated by our Chiefs of Staff have increased materially over those formerly communicated to you, and I suggest to you that this increase is in itself an indication of the rapid alterations of view that have been imposed upon our technical advisers by the still more rapid deterioration of the situation in the **Pacific**. You will notice that the Chiefs of Staff estimate not only that very large air reinforcements are required, but also that the minimum land force to provide safety in this Dominion is six divisions. Of the six we have, in addition to the troops that we have already sent abroad to the **Middle East** and **Fiji**, managed to provide ourselves with three, at present both inadequately trained and inadequately armed. We cannot find more, and the one division which President Roosevelt at present promises to us still leaves us two divisions short of what our Service advisers consider to be the minimum required.

3. Again, please do not misunderstand me. We warmly welcome the present proposal and, indeed, we will gratefully receive any help that we can get. It is, however, as we see it, our duty to lay our position fully before you, knowing that you will do your utmost with the means that are available to enable us to defend ourselves and Allied interests in this part of the world.

Would you kindly supply a copy of this telegram to Mr Jordan.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

211 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

211

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

15 March 1942

Following from Prime Minister for Prime Minister:

- 1. I am very glad to learn from your [No. 210] that you welcome the President's offer and I am telling him so today as the matter is most urgent. I have not yet heard from Australia.**
- 2. You are quite right in supposing that shipping is the stranglehold. We are sending nearly 50,000 men a month from the United Kingdom round the Cape to the East. The five monthly convoys beginning in March carry in these totals three British divisions from the United Kingdom. In addition I have obtained from the President the shipping to carry two additional divisions in May, making five in all from this country. This absolutely exhausts all shipping possibilities from our end for the period in question.**
- 3. It is true these forces will have to be sent according to need, either to the Middle East or to India. We have to fear a German break-through in the Caucasus should the Russian defence weaken. We have also to defend India. Of course, if you or Australia were actually invaded in force we should come to your aid at all costs.**
- 4. We hope, however, to regain our sea power in the Indian Ocean in the next two or three months, and this should enable minor offensive action to be taken by us against the Japanese-conquered islands.**

5. At the same time the United States Fleet is regaining its strength and is already a powerful protection for the Anzac area. It would be a very serious enterprise for the Japanese to start a heavy invasion over the immense distance to New Zealand or [Australia](#). Not only has a landing to be effected but the invasion has to be nourished when set on shore. The Japanese are already completely spread about their conquests. Only nine divisions are left in [Japan](#). Twenty have to be kept opposite [Russia](#) in Manchukuo. They have [China](#) on their hands. After only three months of war food troubles have already begun in [Japan](#) itself. New Zealand or [Australia](#) may well be attacked in order to draw large bodies of Allied troops from other quarters, but I doubt very strongly whether anything in the nature of a serious invasion will be attempted. In any case, there is no possibility of any troops reaching you sooner than the American division which is offered, whose departure I will endeavour to hasten in every way.

6. Our great aim must be to regain even a partial initiative, which will make the enemy fearful of every place he holds, instead of our trying to be safe everywhere, for that is utterly impossible.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

212 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

212

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

17 March 1942

Your telegram of 15 March. Following from Prime Minister for Prime
Minister:

Your prompt reply to my message [**No. 210**] is very much appreciated. In the light of your comments we have again studied the situation as objectively as possible. I am sorry to say we are quite unable to agree with the views expressed in your paragraph 5 that anything in the nature of a serious invasion of New Zealand or **Australia** is unlikely, and we must make it plain to you that nothing you have said has removed our grave apprehension lest the reinforcement which it is intended to send to us from the **United States** may prove to be too weak or too late or both. We reaffirm our conviction that the retention of **Australia** and New Zealand as strongpoints for gathering our forces during the defensive period and as essential bases for offensive action when the time arrives is absolutely vital to the Allied cause in the **Pacific**, and that the Japanese must be fully cognisant of this and may well act accordingly. Having said this, we feel that there is nothing more that we can usefully say, except to renew our most earnest and urgent representations that both you and President Roosevelt will do all in your power to strengthen our position in this part of the world at the earliest possible moment.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

213 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

213

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

19 March 1942

Your telegram of 19 February ¹ and connected correspondence. The following is the text of a message sent to the Joint Staff Mission at Washington by the Chiefs of Staff as COS (W) 122: ²

‘The New Zealand Government asked last month for a review of their defence problem. The following are our conclusions, though we realise it is likely to become an American problem when the Pacific area question is settled:

(An early review of the proposals for the defence of New Zealand a) has brought to light the urgency of completing the following measures regarding New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa, which you should bring before the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the earliest possible moment:

- (1) The Anzac area should be enlarged to include the Samoan Islands (Eastern and Western).
- (2) Naval forces allocated to the Anzac area should be reinforced by three 8-inch cruisers, one large aircraft carrier and eight modern destroyers, bringing the total strength in this area to six 8-inch cruisers, three 6-inch cruisers, one large and one small aircraft carrier, four armed merchant cruisers, and twelve destroyers. This cannot be done from British resources.
- (3) The Army and Air Force should be completed to the target figures in WW 13 (see my telegram of 6 February, No. 97) ³ with the following additions: Fiji – one long-range General Reconnaissance squadron, one torpedo-bomber or medium bomber squadron. New Caledonia – one long-range General Reconnaissance squadron.

This is not possible from British resources.

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 266.

² A copy of this message was also sent by the British Chiefs of Staff to the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.

³ Not published. This telegram contained an estimate of the garrisons recommended for **Fiji, Canton** and Christmas Islands, and listed the naval, army and air requirements for their defence.

(4) An Air Commander should be appointed to co-ordinate all air forces in islands under the strategic direction of the Commander-in-Chief Anzac area, who should also direct the necessary aerodrome development.

(5) The United States should be invited to assume responsibility for **Western Samoa, Fanning Island** and **French Oceania**. ¹

(6) The development of a protected fleet anchorage in the Fiji Group should be accelerated and adequate anti-submarine and minesweeping vessels provided.

(7) Improved coastwatching and RDF systems should be organised.

(A copy of the above has been telegraphed to New Zealand, who
b) have been invited to comment direct to you.

(Report follows by air.'

c)

It is suggested that New Zealand views on the above be communicated to **Washington** for the Joint Staff Mission.

¹ See

Defence of the South Pacific and

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

214 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

214

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister,
Washington*

19 March 1942

Will you kindly convey the following message through the appropriate channels from me to President Roosevelt:

'1. Mr Churchill has advised me of the offer which you have been so good as to make through him to despatch to New Zealand a division of the United States Army in order to enable us to retain in the Middle East the New Zealand Forces which are at present engaged there. I have informed Mr Churchill that we warmly welcome and at once accept this offer, and I wish to extend to you personally an expression of our deep gratitude and appreciation.

'2. In our view it is impossible to exaggerate the importance in the war against Japan of New Zealand and Fiji as essential stepping-stones on the route of aerial reinforcements from the United States, or of New Zealand itself as one, with Australia, of the only two possible strongpoints in this part of the world which can and must be held during the defensive period until, when the time for the offensive arrives, they become vitally essential as the only possible bases from which that offensive can spring. These facts seem to us to be so patent that they must be apparent to the Japanese, who may well act accordingly. Substantial Japanese forces are obviously now free for further adventures, and it seems to us, therefore, that time is of the very essence of the matter if a Japanese attack in this direction is certainly to be repulsed, and we are not without the gravest apprehension lest the

help that you are sending to us may arrive too late.

‘3. If, therefore, in addition to the naval forces which we have been so happy to welcome in the South-Western Pacific (whose recent activities have been such a great encouragement and inspiration to us) there is any opportunity of expediting and, if possible, indeed increasing, the help in men and, not less important, in equipment which the **United States is now so generously extending to us, believe me Mr President this would not only be a matter of the greatest satisfaction to us but, we think, a very substantial contribution to our combined war effort in the **Pacific.**’**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

215 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

215

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

24 March 1942

At an interview with the President this afternoon he handed me a message to you in the following text:

'To the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

'Your message of 19 March has been received through Mr Nash. I am glad to learn that the arrangement which we proposed meets with your warm approval.

'I am in complete agreement with your statements in regard to the importance in the war against **Japan of New Zealand and the Fiji Islands which, together with **Australia**, can and must be held and used as bases for an offensive against **Japan**.**

'I want you to know Mr Prime Minister that we are straining every effort to send the forces to which you refer at the earliest possible moment. We shall also do what we can toward increasing the help in men and in equipment. Everything that it is possible for us to do in this regard as a contribution to our combined war effort will be done. (Signed) ROOSEVELT.'

The original is being sent by next mail.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

216 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

216

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

24 March 1942

Your telegram of 19 March [**No. 213**].

The measures which the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff indicate

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

in their message COS (W) 122¹ to the Joint Staff Mission at **Washington** as necessary for the defence of New Zealand are presumably based on the estimate of the scale of attack and the requirements set out in telegrams despatched by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand during February last and on the situation as it then existed. The position has since materially altered and the message appears now to have little application to the situation today. The New Zealand Government's views on the present necessities are as set out in telegram [**No. 209**] to their High Commissioner in **London** (a copy of which he was asked to deliver to the Dominions Office) and to **Washington**, and it is the forces specified in that telegram which His Majesty's Government in New Zealand now consider necessary to afford them a reasonable prospect of meeting the threat in this area.²

¹ See **No. 213**.

² Mr Nash was asked to send a copy of this message to the Joint Staff Mission.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

217 – THE NEW ZEALAND LIAISON OFFICER (LONDON) TO THE CHIEF
OF THE GENERAL STAFF (WELLINGTON)

217

*The New Zealand Liaison Officer (London) to the Chief of the
General Staff (Wellington)*

26 March 1942

Secret and personal for General Puttick.

With reference to [New Zealand Government](#) cable of 24 March [[No. 216](#)] and [Dominions Office](#) cable of 19 March [[No. 213](#)]. Message COS (W) 122 gave only those measures considered immediately essential as giving a reasonable standard of security for the islands mentioned and upon which action [was] to be completed forthwith. It did not represent the complete defence plan for New Zealand, a summary of which follows in my next succeeding cable.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

218 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

218

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

21 March 1942

I spent an hour with General Marshall yesterday and set out our needs as I saw them, particularly with regard to your appreciation of 13 March ³ and the need of fighter squadrons and troops. There are many difficulties in allocating available supplies, but he advised me in complete secrecy that, in addition to those which have already left for **Australia** and other places, one division was due to leave on 15 April and one on 20 May. The 15 April division is scheduled for **Australia**, the 20 May division for us.

I stressed the need for three divisions and urged that at least half a division should be sent early, and when I see him again next week I will suggest that if the 15 April convoy cannot come to New Zealand then at least half of each division should come to us.

He promised to examine the position regarding fighter squadrons, and I am to see him again on either Wednesday or Thursday next.

³ See No. 209.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

219 – THE NEW ZEALAND LIAISON OFFICER (LONDON) TO THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF (WELLINGTON)

219

The New Zealand Liaison Officer (London) to the Chief of the General Staff (Wellington)

27 March 1942 ¹

Most secret and personal for General Puttick.

¹Although dated 28 March on all file copies, this message is later referred to by Brigadier Park as having been sent on the 27th.

The following is a summary of a report by the Chiefs of Staff on the New Zealand Defence Plan, dated 18 March 1942:

The defence of New Zealand is recognised as primarily a naval problem entailing the provision of adequate naval and air forces in the area, and dependent on denying bases to **Japan on the eastern and southern coasts of **Australia**. The report consists of two parts, the first dealing with the South Pacific Islands, including **New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa, Fanning Island** and **French Oceania**, the second with New Zealand.**

PART 1: SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

(1) If adequate naval and air forces could operate from the South Pacific Islands and the Australian mainland be held, the invasion of New Zealand is extremely unlikely, although raiding operations against shipping and shore installations in New Zealand are possible.

(2) With the Japanese in possession of the **Netherlands East Indies, attack on these Islands becomes almost a certainty.**

(3) The scale of attack is assessed at not less than one division, but this could be increased if the Japanese thought it necessary. Naval escort would consist probably of six 8-inch cruisers, three to five aircraft carriers (120 to 240 aircraft) and twenty destroyers, with the addition of one to thirty submarines operating in the area. Simultaneous attacks are possible against more than one group of islands, or alternatively these forces could be concentrated against each group in turn.

(4) The report discusses the responsibility for local defence, naval, army and air, and points out the weakness in regard to **Western Samoa.**

2

(5) Recommendations on **New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa. To achieve as rapidly as possible a reasonable standard of security for these islands the following action should be taken immediately:**

(a) The Anzac area should be extended to include the Samoan Group of islands.

(b) The naval forces in the Anzac area should be maintained on the following scale: six 8-inch cruisers, three 6-inch cruisers, one large aircraft carrier, one small aircraft carrier, four armed merchant cruisers, twelve destroyers; reinforcements to effect this cannot be provided from British sources.

(c) The army and air forces in the Islands should be completed to the approved target figures noted in Dominions Office telegram No. 97 dated 6 February 1942 to the **New Zealand Government, ¹ plus one long-range General Reconnaissance squadron and one torpedo or medium bomber squadron for **Fiji**, and one long-range General Reconnaissance squadron for **New Caledonia**. These cannot at present be provided from British sources.**

(d) The operation of all air forces based in these Islands should be coordinated under the strategic direction of the Commander-in-Chief Anzac Area. A single Air Commander is essential.

(e) The necessary aerodromes should be developed under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief Anzac Area.

(f) The United States of **America should be invited to assume the responsibility for the local defence of **Western Samoa** and to provide such additional measures of defence as are required.**

(g) Development of a protected fleet anchorage in the Fiji Group, to

g) be selected by the Commander-in-Chief Anzac Area, should be accelerated, and adequate anti-submarine and mine-sweeping vessels should be provided.

(An improved coast-watching and RDF system should be organised.
h)

(6) In regard to **Fanning Island** and **French Oceania**, the report recommends that the **USA** be invited to assume responsibility for the defence of these islands.

² See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 266.

¹ See p. 247, note 3.

PART 2: NEW ZEALAND

(7) The scale and probability of attack against New Zealand depends on ability to operate adequate naval and air forces from **New Caledonia**, **Fiji** and **Samoa**, and denial of these islands to the Japanese.

(8) If we hold secure bases in the Islands and can continue to operate reconnaissance and naval and air striking forces from them, the naval hazards to large invading forces and the difficulty of refuelling enemy naval escorts would render invasion extremely difficult, if not impracticable. Enemy raiding forces unencumbered by heavy transports and their escorts might reach New Zealand.

(9) If the Island Groups be lost, a full-scale attack on New Zealand is much more possible, but is considered unlikely for the following reasons:

(Possession of the South Pacific Islands will place the Japanese
a) across the Allied lines of communication and isolate New Zealand from the **United States**. This will probably be sufficient for their purposes.

(The despatch of a powerful force to New Zealand entails a serious
b) dispersion of Japanese strength and increased maintenance problems.

(Moves against bases in the **Indian Ocean** will inflict greater
c) damage on the Allies, threaten the lines of communication in the

Indian Ocean, and be a step towards closing the gap between **Germany and Japan**.

(**The United States Fleet flanking the enemy lines of communication to New Zealand is a very real threat to an invasion expedition. This requires protection by a formidable force of capital ships, which the Japanese are most unlikely to risk at such a distance from Japan.**

(10) Although arguable that **Japan** will invade New Zealand with a view to obtaining a powerful bargaining counter in any future negotiations, on balance it is considered the Japanese are more likely initially to direct any major offensive against the west and north rather than attempt an invasion of New Zealand and **Australia**, with the possible exception of Port Darwin.

(11) In the event of **Japan** deciding to invade New Zealand, the report estimates she could make available some ten to eleven divisions accompanied by a very large naval force including five aircraft carriers (240 aircraft); she would, however, probably consider six to seven divisions sufficient.

(12) In view of the distance involved, the seizure of a base in New Zealand by the Japanese would be a prerequisite to the successful occupation of the country. It is estimated that the Japanese might use one or two divisions to seize such a base, and the land forces in New Zealand should be designed to defeat such occupation.

(13) To provide sufficient land forces to prevent Japanese occupation once they had established a base in New Zealand would be far beyond the shipping resources of the Allied powers.

(14) If we are unable to operate from **Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia**, the probability, scale and scope of raiding operations against shipping, ports and installations in New Zealand are likely to be increased. Measures taken to meet invasion would also embrace defence against these raids.

(15) The report makes the following recommendations on New

Zealand:

- (**The naval forces in the Anzac area should be maintained on the**
a) following scale: six 8-inch cruisers, three 6-inch cruisers, one large aircraft carrier, one small aircraft carrier, four armed merchant cruisers, twelve destroyers; sufficient local antisubmarine and minesweeping craft for the ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Dunedin.
- (**The underwater defences of the ports should be completed.**
b)
- (**The United States should now be asked to be prepared to move**
c) powerful naval forces south in the event of a threat to the Pacific Islands or New Zealand, and to make the necessary arrangements for fuelling in New Zealand and south-east Australian waters.
- (**The military forces (excluding static anti-aircraft and coast**
d) defence guns) should comprise: seven brigade groups (including light anti-aircraft, anti-tank, and AFV elements), two light AFV regiments, twenty-three infantry battalions, but the actual target figures to be agreed with the United States Government.
- (**Those troops now stationed in New Zealand who are at present**
e) poorly armed should be brought up as early as possible to a full scale of equipment.
- (**The coast defence artillery and anti-aircraft requirements for**
f) ports and aerodromes in New Zealand should be provided on a scale to be agreed by the New Zealand Government.
- (**The air forces should be the existing five squadrons comprising:**
g) 20 Hudsons, 36 Vincents, 21 Hinds, and a number of training aircraft, augmented by four fighter squadrons (two long-range), one General Reconnaissance squadron (long-range), two torpedo or medium bomber squadrons, ¹ one bomber reconnaissance or dive-bomber squadron, four transport aircraft. These cannot be provided from British resources at present.
- (**Facilities should be provided in New Zealand for the operation of**
h) American heavy bomber squadrons.

(16) Coastwatching and RDF should be organised on the lines of the Williams report. ²

¹ This section of the text was mutilated in transmission. The above agrees with the printed version of the report.

² *Appreciation on the Defence Requirements of New Zealand in the Event of War with **Japan***, dated 1 Oct 1941, by General Sir Guy Williams, Military Adviser to the **New Zealand Government**, May – Nov 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

27 MARCH 1942 1

27 March 1942 ¹

Most secret and personal for General Puttick.

¹Although dated 28 March on all file copies, this message is later referred to by Brigadier Park as having been sent on the 27th.

The following is a summary of a report by the Chiefs of Staff on the New Zealand Defence Plan, dated 18 March 1942:

The defence of New Zealand is recognised as primarily a naval problem entailing the provision of adequate naval and air forces in the area, and dependent on denying bases to **Japan on the eastern and southern coasts of **Australia**. The report consists of two parts, the first dealing with the South Pacific Islands, including **New Caledonia**, **Fiji**, **Samoa**, **Fanning Island** and **French Oceania**, the second with New Zealand.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PART 1: SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

PART 1: SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

(1) If adequate naval and air forces could operate from the South Pacific Islands and the Australian mainland be held, the invasion of New Zealand is extremely unlikely, although raiding operations against shipping and shore installations in New Zealand are possible.

(2) With the Japanese in possession of the **Netherlands East Indies**, attack on these Islands becomes almost a certainty.

(3) The scale of attack is assessed at not less than one division, but this could be increased if the Japanese thought it necessary. Naval escort would consist probably of six 8-inch cruisers, three to five aircraft carriers (120 to 240 aircraft) and twenty destroyers, with the addition of one to thirty submarines operating in the area. Simultaneous attacks are possible against more than one group of islands, or alternatively these forces could be concentrated against each group in turn.

(4) The report discusses the responsibility for local defence, naval, army and air, and points out the weakness in regard to **Western Samoa**.

2

(5) Recommendations on **New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa**. To achieve as rapidly as possible a reasonable standard of security for these islands the following action should be taken immediately:

(The Anzac area should be extended to include the Samoan Group
a) of islands.

(The naval forces in the Anzac area should be maintained on the
b) following scale: six 8-inch cruisers, three 6-inch cruisers, one large aircraft carrier, one small aircraft carrier, four armed merchant cruisers, twelve destroyers; reinforcements to effect this cannot be provided from British sources.

(The army and air forces in the Islands should be completed to the
c) approved target figures noted in Dominions Office telegram No. 97 dated 6 February 1942 to the **New Zealand Government**, ¹ plus one

long-range General Reconnaissance squadron and one torpedo or medium bomber squadron for **Fiji**, and one long-range General Reconnaissance squadron for **New Caledonia**. These cannot at present be provided from British sources.

(
d) The operation of all air forces based in these Islands should be co-ordinated under the strategic direction of the Commander-in-Chief Anzac Area. A single Air Commander is essential.

(
e) The necessary aerodromes should be developed under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief Anzac Area.

(
f) The United States of **America** should be invited to assume the responsibility for the local defence of **Western Samoa** and to provide such additional measures of defence as are required.

(
g) Development of a protected fleet anchorage in the Fiji Group, to be selected by the Commander-in-Chief Anzac Area, should be accelerated, and adequate anti-submarine and mine-sweeping vessels should be provided.

(
h) An improved coast-watching and RDF system should be organised.

(6) In regard to **Fanning Island** and **French Oceania**, the report recommends that the **USA** be invited to assume responsibility for the defence of these islands.

² See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 266.

¹ See p. 247, note 3.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PART 2: NEW ZEALAND

PART 2: NEW ZEALAND

(7) The scale and probability of attack against New Zealand depends on ability to operate adequate naval and air forces from **New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa**, and denial of these islands to the Japanese.

(8) If we hold secure bases in the Islands and can continue to operate reconnaissance and naval and air striking forces from them, the naval hazards to large invading forces and the difficulty of refuelling enemy naval escorts would render invasion extremely difficult, if not impracticable. Enemy raiding forces unencumbered by heavy transports and their escorts might reach New Zealand.

(9) If the Island Groups be lost, a full-scale attack on New Zealand is much more possible, but is considered unlikely for the following reasons:

(Possession of the South Pacific Islands will place the Japanese
a) across the Allied lines of communication and isolate New Zealand from the **United States**. This will probably be sufficient for their purposes.

(The despatch of a powerful force to New Zealand entails a serious
b) dispersion of Japanese strength and increased maintenance problems.

(Moves against bases in the **Indian Ocean** will inflict greater
c) damage on the Allies, threaten the lines of communication in the **Indian Ocean**, and be a step towards closing the gap between **Germany and Japan**.

(The United States Fleet flanking the enemy lines of
d) communication to New Zealand is a very real threat to an invasion expedition. This requires protection by a formidable force of capital ships, which the Japanese are most unlikely to risk at such a distance from **Japan**.

(10) Although arguable that **Japan** will invade New Zealand with a view to obtaining a powerful bargaining counter in any future negotiations, on balance it is considered the Japanese are more likely initially to direct any major offensive against the west and north rather than attempt an invasion of New Zealand and **Australia**, with the

possible exception of Port Darwin.

(11) In the event of Japan deciding to invade New Zealand, the report estimates she could make available some ten to eleven divisions accompanied by a very large naval force including five aircraft carriers (240 aircraft); she would, however, probably consider six to seven divisions sufficient.

(12) In view of the distance involved, the seizure of a base in New Zealand by the Japanese would be a prerequisite to the successful occupation of the country. It is estimated that the Japanese might use one or two divisions to seize such a base, and the land forces in New Zealand should be designed to defeat such occupation.

(13) To provide sufficient land forces to prevent Japanese occupation once they had established a base in New Zealand would be far beyond the shipping resources of the Allied powers.

(14) If we are unable to operate from Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia, the probability, scale and scope of raiding operations against shipping, ports and installations in New Zealand are likely to be increased. Measures taken to meet invasion would also embrace defence against these raids.

(15) The report makes the following recommendations on New Zealand:

(a) The naval forces in the Anzac area should be maintained on the following scale: six 8-inch cruisers, three 6-inch cruisers, one large aircraft carrier, one small aircraft carrier, four armed merchant cruisers, twelve destroyers; sufficient local antisubmarine and minesweeping craft for the ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Dunedin.

(b) The underwater defences of the ports should be completed.

b)

(c) The United States should now be asked to be prepared to move powerful naval forces south in the event of a threat to the Pacific Islands or New Zealand, and to make the necessary arrangements for

fuelling in New Zealand and south-east Australian waters.

(The military forces (excluding static anti-aircraft and coast
d) defence guns) should comprise: seven brigade groups (including light anti-aircraft, anti-tank, and AFV elements), two light AFV regiments, twenty-three infantry battalions, but the actual target figures to be agreed with the United States Government.

(Those troops now stationed in New Zealand who are at present
e) poorly armed should be brought up as early as possible to a full scale of equipment.

(The coast defence artillery and anti-aircraft requirements for
f) ports and aerodromes in New Zealand should be provided on a scale to be agreed by the **New Zealand Government**.

(The air forces should be the existing five squadrons comprising:
g) 20 Hudsons, 36 Vincents, 21 Hinds, and a number of training aircraft, augmented by four fighter squadrons (two long-range), one General Reconnaissance squadron (long-range), two torpedo or medium bomber squadrons, ¹ one bomber reconnaissance or dive-bomber squadron, four transport aircraft. These cannot be provided from British resources at present.

(Facilities should be provided in New Zealand for the operation of
h) American heavy bomber squadrons.

(16) Coastwatching and RDF should be organised on the lines of the Williams report. ²

¹ This section of the text was mutilated in transmission. The above agrees with the printed version of the report.

² *Appreciation on the Defence Requirements of New Zealand in the Event of War with **Japan***, dated 1 Oct 1941, by General Sir Guy Williams, Military Adviser to the **New Zealand Government**, May – Nov 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

220 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON¹

220

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister,
Washington¹*

31 March 1942

1. The War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff have had under consideration a telegram from the New Zealand Liaison Officer, **London**,² summarising a report by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff on the New Zealand Defence Plan, dated 18 March 1942, in which the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff regard the defence of New Zealand 'as primarily a naval problem entailing the provision of adequate naval and air forces in the area, and dependent on denying bases to **Japan** on the eastern and southern coasts of **Australia**'.

2. The Army forces which the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff recommend as sufficient for the defence of New Zealand are practically identical with the forces summarised in the Dominions Office telegram [**No. 213**], sent to **Washington** as COS (W) 122, and were agreed upon by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff before they had read the statement of our requirements in the light of the new situation represented in our telegram of 14 [13] March [**No. 209**]. We have already commented upon the scale of defence forces for New Zealand proposed by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff in our telegram of 24 March [**No. 216**], in which it was observed that the **United Kingdom** appreciation did not take full account of the likely scale of attack which might be delivered by the Japanese against New Zealand. The report by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff now under consideration represents that the Japanese might employ 'ten to eleven divisions, accompanied by a very large naval force including five aircraft carriers (240 aircraft)' for the conquest of New

Zealand, and might employ one or two divisions for the initial purpose of seizing a base in New Zealand. But no corresponding increase of defence forces in New Zealand is recommended by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff.

3. We recognise that our principal security must rest in the ability of the [United Nations](#) to maintain dominance at sea in the South-West Pacific. But while sea supremacy remains in dispute, and in view of the fact that at any time as the result of naval action or attrition our sea power might be so weakened as to reduce our security at sea for a prolonged period, we are not content to rely for our defence so fully upon sea power as the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff indicate.

4. The United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff consider that the initial invasion of New Zealand would be undertaken by two divisions and that the

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand High Commissioner, [London](#).

² Brigadier Park cabled General Puttick on 28 March: 'Would make it clear that the Chiefs of Staff report summarised in my telegram of 27 March was prepared previous to receipt of NZ Government cable [[No. 209](#)] dated 13 March.'

occupation of the country could be undertaken by seven divisions supported by 240 aircraft. These invading forces might effect landings at several widely separated points. Yet they consider that our Army defence is adequate in seven brigade groups and subsidiary formations; and our air defence in five air squadrons (only two of which are partially equipped with modern aircraft) and a number of training aircraft which we now possess, augmented by four fighter squadrons, two [one] General Reconnaissance squadrons, two torpedo [or] medium bomber squadrons, one bomber reconnaissance or dive-bomber squadron, and four transport aircraft. ¹

5. We are aware that a decision to form a naval base in [Auckland](#) (which

must take about six months to effect fully) and the movement of American naval forces to that base would bring with it substantial forces of naval aviation, which presumably would be in addition to those recommended by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff. Although this scale of air defence would still fall short of the requirements to meet the scale of attack envisaged by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, it would come much nearer to our requirements than the recommended provision of Army forces. But these additional air forces cannot be established and operated in the near future, and this makes it all the more necessary that our armed forces should be substantially strengthened at once.

6. You should inquire from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, **Washington**, as to whether they have received the report by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff and, if they have, represent to them in the strongest terms that it does not reflect the view of this **War Cabinet** and the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, which has been fully set out in our telegram [**No. 209**] to you. In particular, you should stress the importance of the early arrival of at least one American division in this country, as indicated in your telegram [**No. 218**] of 27 March.

7. We recognise the difficulty of increasing the defences of New Zealand sufficiently to ensure our security until Japanese sea power is so effectually reduced or overshadowed as to make the invasion of New Zealand impracticable. Until this position is reached, however, it must be of the greatest interest to **Japan** to deny to the Allied nations the potentiality of New Zealand as a future main naval and offensive base area. Nothing could be more clearly established by what has happened in the last two months than the absolute necessity of securing main bases by army and air power. The point we wish to establish is that the existence of powerful defence forces in New Zealand is the only safe insurance against a possible calamity which might jeopardise the whole course of the **Pacific** war by the loss of New Zealand. And we would emphasise, furthermore, that the establishment of strong forces

¹ See p. 254, note 1.

in New Zealand and the intensive training of all three Services in co-operation are the best means of preparing for future offensive operations in conjunction with complementary offensive operations from [Australia](#). It appears that the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff have overlooked this latter offensive aspect of the present defensive requirements of New Zealand.

8. With regard to [Fiji](#), we feel that the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff have similarly failed to measure the defence requirements there in relation to the anticipated scale of attack and the extent of the area to be defended. In regard to land forces, we consider that at least one additional division is required for the defence of [Viti Levu](#). This would still leave Vanua Levu undefended.

9. It seems to us that the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, having adequately visualised the very possible dangers to New Zealand and consequently to the Allied strategy in this part of the [Pacific](#), fail to carry the matter to its logical and reasonable conclusion, inasmuch as they set forth defence requirements that cannot be reconciled either with the possible scale of attack or the needs of future offensive operations.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

221 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

221

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

[Extract]

31 March 1942

Your telegram of 19 February [**No. 200**], paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. ¹

Following for Prime Minister:

1. The Air Ministry have discussed [the matter] with the New Zealand Air Liaison Officer, who has we understand been in communication with the New Zealand Chief of the Air Staff. As a result of this consultation it appears that New Zealand's requirements in squadrons as formed units completely manned and equipped are to be regarded as two fighter (long-range), two torpedo-bomber or medium bomber, one Army co-operation or dive-bomber, one flying boat.

2. It is understood that personnel can be furnished from New Zealand for the other squadrons mentioned in paragraph 3, viz., two fighter (short-range) and also the personnel for the Operational Training Unit backing. Confirmation of this is requested and also whether New Zealand still require four troop-carrying aircraft, which were not mentioned in the communication received by the Air Liaison Officer from the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff.

¹ Paragraph 4 was not reproduced.

3. We greatly regret that we cannot transfer existing units to New

Zealand from other theatres of war, and it would therefore seem necessary for these units to be formed in New Zealand by the use of aircraft allotted from time to time under the **Munitions Assignment Board** procedure, which has now started to function both here and in **Washington**. The Air Ministry will do their best to meet New Zealand's requirements in key personnel to assist in the manning of the squadrons so formed.

4. Against the aircraft requirements set out in paragraph (4) (a) the **Munitions Assignment Board** in **London** have allotted 12 Hudsons for March, 12 for April, and 12 for May. In respect of Kittyhawks see my immediately following telegram [**No. 222**]. In regard to other types the present position is as follows:

(Long-range fighters. **United Kingdom** production will not for some a) time make good the grave shortage in this type, and no relief can be expected from the **United States** so long as the Lightning remains unfit for operational use.

(Medium bomber or torpedo-bomber. Medium bomber aircraft b) cannot be shipped or flown from this country to New Zealand at present. We are also very short of torpedo-bomber aircraft, our home production of which is not likely to exceed thirty per month. We should, however, hope that it may later be possible for a share of the Australian production of Beauforts to be allotted to New Zealand.

(Army co-operation or dive-bomber. The only suitable types are c) Vengeance and Bermuda, and of these it is feared that for some time to come priority must be given to the needs of **India** and **Australia** and of the Army co-operation squadrons formed or to be formed in this country.

(Catalinas. Here again we are very deficient and we cannot at d) present draw on our slender resources available for the protection of our lines of communication in the **Atlantic**, **Mediterranean** and Indian Oceans.... ¹

¹ A brief statement of the steps being taken to meet New Zealand's requirements in **Air Force** equipment and personnel has been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

222 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

222

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

31 March 1942

Following for Prime Minister:

Your telegram of 19 February [No. 201].

1. The question of the diversion of two **United States** pursuit squadrons to New Zealand was referred to the United States Chiefs of Staff at the same time as our suggestion that no pursuit squadrons should be sent to this country at present. A reply has been received from the Chief of Staff, United States Army, as follows:

‘There appears to be no question that a real need exists for a pursuit squadron in New Zealand. I have had the situation investigated to determine the possibility of complying with this request. I find that other requirements of higher priority render it impossible to furnish these squadrons from the **United States**, nor does it seem advisable to divert to New Zealand any **United States** pursuit units now in the Australia ABDA area, considering the greater threat to this area and the weakness of pursuit aviation available there. It is noted that the British are sending planes for two pursuit squadrons to New Zealand. I understand that there is a considerable pool of trained pilots now in **Australia** for whom no planes exist. I suggest the possibility of utilising these excess pilots for the constitution of two squadrons in New Zealand. I would also suggest the possibility that the necessary pursuit planes might reach New Zealand more promptly by taking them from planes

now in the **United States** and allocated to Great Britain.'

2. We should be only too willing to agree to the suggestion in the last paragraph of the above reply were it not that these aircraft are those we are urgently relying upon to raise the forces in the **Middle East** and **India** up to the minimum strength essential for meeting the large-scale threats which are impending in both these areas. American aircraft deliveries are, as you are aware, generally much in arrears, and in addition the totals on which we were depending have been cut since the **United States'** entry into the war. The shortage of Kittyhawk aircraft in the **Middle East** is indeed so critical that we cannot, I fear, allot you more than thirty-six of this type and must revise the recent allocations so as to make up with another type the total of ninety short-range fighters which you are expecting.

3. Large numbers of **United States** aircraft are now assembling in **Australia**, including those previously allotted to the Dutch. With the transfer of strategic control of the **Pacific** area to the **United States**, it will be for the decision of the controlling authority to settle what proportion of disposable air strength in the **Pacific** area should be utilised in New Zealand. This will be one of the first questions for consideration when the new machinery of control takes effect.

4. We will continue to represent through the **Munitions Assignment Board** procedure the need for an increased [group mutilated - allocation?] of fighters in order to meet the additional requirements of New Zealand and **Australia**.

5. As regards the suggestion made by the **United States** authorities regarding surplus Australian pilots, we assume that if you desire to pursue this suggestion you will approach the Commonwealth Government direct.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

223 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

223

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

5 April 1942

I am grateful for your telegrams [**Nos. 221** and **222**] and I appreciate the endeavours which have been and are being made by the United Kingdom Government to strengthen the forces in New Zealand. With regard to paragraph 2 of your telegram [**No. 221**], I have to confirm that we should be able to meet the personnel requirements referred to from our own resources, with the exception of certain key personnel asked for by the Air Department in their telegram A.313 dated 14 February to the **Air Ministry**.² I confirm also that four troop-carrying aircraft are required as part of our larger requirements in this category of aircraft.

2. Paragraph 1 of your telegram [**No. 221**], which alludes to an exchange of departmental telegrams, states what were then regarded as New Zealand's immediate requirements in manned and equipped squadrons from overseas as distinct from squadrons manned and equipped in New Zealand, and excluding any air forces which might accompany **United States** naval forces based in New Zealand. These requirements were related to invading forces not exceeding one division. In the meantime, however, the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff have estimated that if the enemy attempted the invasion of New Zealand he might employ seven divisions out of an available ten or eleven divisions. In this connection I have asked the High Commissioner for New Zealand to furnish you with copies of my telegrams to him [**Nos. 209** and **220**].

3. It is, of course, of the utmost importance to New Zealand that the

system of responsibility for the planning and conduct of operations in the **Pacific** should be decided upon with the least possible delay. When this is settled the defence requirements of New Zealand will take their place in the general allotment of forces to the **Pacific** from the resources of the **United Nations**. These requirements must be largely dependent upon the strategic intentions of the **United Nations** in relation to the **Pacific**, which so far have not been clarified. We hope then that plans will soon emerge which will provide by successive stages for the establishment of the requisite forces in New Zealand and **Australia** and the islands to the north, sufficient to arrest the southward movement of the Japanese and eventually sufficient to thrust the Japanese backwards whence they came.

4. In the meantime we will employ to the best advantage such forces as we have and such assistance as is now forthcoming. I will keep you informed of any urgent requirements, more particularly in specialist air personnel to enable us to form new units with equipment which may from time to time be shipped to New Zealand.

5. I still hope that all our requirements may be co-ordinated with those for **Australia**, and that the distribution of forces and equipment in both **Australia** and New Zealand may be directed by a Supreme Commander.

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister, **Washington**.

² Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

224 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

224

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

9 April 1942

General Marshall, who left for London shortly after our last discussion, assigned the reply relative to the division which is coming to New Zealand to Colonel Stevens, who advises me that it is not practical either to send the 15 April division to New Zealand or to split the April and May divisions, but they are arranging to advance the despatch of about 6000 of the May division to early May. The number may be varied according to available shipping but the estimation is fairly sound. They require to know from our Chiefs of Staff at once approximately where the division on arrival will be located. The advance party of 190 will leave next week and they are trying to drop these off at [group mutilated – New Zealand?] to avoid transshipment.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

225 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

225

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

11 April 1942

Your telegram of 9 April.

We are of course most anxious that everything possible be done to accelerate or increase the assistance to be afforded to us by the **United States**, and as a step in this direction we welcome the decision to advance the despatch of about 6000 of the May division to early May. ¹ This first flight will be located in **Papakura Camp** south of **Auckland**, and the remainder will on arrival be located in the same area.

Appropriate arrangements will be made for the reception of the advance party.

¹ See also *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 280, Sections C and D in particular.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

226 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

226

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

18 June 1942

The United States 37th Division unit have arrived in Suva and Auckland and the first flight of the Marine Division in Wellington.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

227 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND
MINISTER, WASHINGTON

227

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister,
Washington*

19 June 1942

We have recently given further consideration to the effect of the exclusion of the New Zealand land and air forces from Admiral Ghormley's command. It had been our intention that he should take full advantage of, and assume full responsibility for, the development and equipment of all our forces to meet the requirements both of defence and future offensive operations.

2. As regards the Army, we feel that the developments now in progress will produce forces which eventually will be capable of being employed on offensive operations in conjunction with American forces. But that does not apply to the **Air Force** unless special arrangements are made.

3. Before making any representation to Admiral King or to the **Pacific War Council** we desire to know the circumstances which led to the exclusion of the New Zealand land and air forces from Admiral Ghormley's command. We appreciate that Admiral King may have desired to prevent Admiral Ghormley being concerned too much with domestic matters in New Zealand or with land defence problems, but we feel that if the exclusion resulted from any idea that it was our wish that the exclusion should be made, then a misunderstanding has arisen which ought to be removed at once.

4. If you are able to answer this question adequately without reference to Admiral King we would prefer that you should do so at this juncture. If it

is necessary for you to consult Admiral King, then you should make it clear to him that it was never our desire to exclude any of our forces from the **South Pacific Command**, and that we are anxious that these forces shall play their full part in future offensive operations as far as they may be required to do so (subject always to the condition agreed to by Admiral King as set out in your telegram [**No. 181**] ¹—that each nation retains the power to refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable), and that they should be trained and equipped in co-ordination with **United States** forces with this object in view. In this connection you should stress that this proposal relates particularly to the New Zealand Air Force, which has excellent and extensive resources for producing first-class squadrons and only lacks the means of equipping those squadrons with modern equipment. We do not wish, at the moment, to press for the inclusion of the New Zealand Army within Admiral Ghormley's command beyond what is already provided for.

5. It may be that the development and re-equipment of the **RNZAF** can proceed independently of the remainder of the **United States** air forces in the South Pacific, but in our judgment it is desirable that the principle of unity of command should be applied. This principle may become of great importance in the event of naval operations within striking distance of New Zealand air bases. It would be almost essential in the event of air attack against **Auckland** or **Wellington**, when **United States** air forces and anti-aircraft defences would have to operate under **RNZAF** control. It might apply with advantage also in the matter of maintenance and base facilities for American air forces in New Zealand.

6. If, in the event of your consulting Admiral King, it transpires that he does not wish Admiral Ghormley to become involved in the planning for future operations except in regard to the forces placed at his disposal, then you should ask whether King would be willing to receive an appreciation of the potentialities of the New Zealand Air Force which might be taken into consideration by his own planning staff at **Washington**.

¹ See *Division of Strategic Responsibility between the United Kingdom and United States*.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

228 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

228

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

22 June 1942

Your telegram of 19 June.

The statement in your first paragraph, 'It has been our intention that he should take full advantage of, and assume full responsibility for, development and allow all our forces ¹ to meet the requirements both of defence and future offensive operations', appears to conflict with the last sentence in paragraph 4: 'We do not wish, at the moment, to press for the inclusion of the New Zealand Army within Admiral Ghormley's command beyond what is already provided for.'

With regard to paragraph 2. King has already expressed his agreement with the suggestion that New Zealand should train an amphibious

¹ The text of telegram No. 227 was mutilated in transmission. In the original text this passage read: 'the development and equipment of all our forces'.

force to work in conjunction with American forces, and I believe he would co-operate completely in making special arrangements for any proposal necessary to enable us to take part in offensive operations. ¹

The circumstances which led to the exclusion of the land defence of New Zealand from the South Pacific directive, as referred to in paragraph 3, are set out in my telegram [**No. 177**] of 2 April. ² Such exclusion was,

however, clearly subject to the command fitting in with the general naval strategy of the South Pacific. I do not think that King had anything special to do with the exclusion.

I have several times discussed the question of the use of our forces in offensive operations with King, and in particular see my telegram [No. 299] of 9 June.³ I have no doubt he will concur in any arrangement to ensure the fullest effectiveness of our forces in any role, either under command of the New Zealand GOC or Admiral Ghormley, whichever is most satisfactory.

Other than normally discussing the question of command, I will await your instructions before specially raising the subject of any alteration.

It is difficult to understand paragraph 5, but if it means the handing over of command of the Royal New Zealand Air Force to Ghormley, who in turn would delegate the command of it and the American Air Forces in New Zealand to our Air Command, there seems no objection to it. But I cannot clearly understand the text. In any case, paragraph 5 of Ghormley's order from Nimitz appears to give him control of *all* aircraft in the South Pacific. Could you clarify the position?

With regard to paragraph 6. If you will advise me what is required with regard to the unified control of land and air forces, I will approach King and endeavour to obtain his approval of your proposals. There is nothing more important at the present time than to secure unity of command and effective co-operation, and the sooner every possible doubt is cleared up the easier our minds will be and the more effective our operations.

¹ See *Formation and Employment of 3rd NZ Division*, No. 337.

² See *Division of Strategic Responsibility*.

3 See

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

229 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

229

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the New Zealand Minister,
Washington*

27 June 1942

Your telegram of 22 June.

It is unfortunate that enciphering errors this end damaged the sense of paragraph 1 of our [[No. 227](#)]. The sentence should have read: 'It had been our intention that he should take full advantage of and assume full responsibility for the development and equipment of all our forces'. A misunderstanding by us also requires explanation. We noted from your telegram [[No. 177](#)]¹ that the New Zealand land and air forces were to remain under the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff. It was not until we met Ghormley that we appreciated that the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were not responsible to Ghormley for the land defence of New Zealand.²

2. The significance of our paragraph 5 was, on the one hand, that in our view Ghormley should be in a position to order the [RNZAF](#) to support naval operations and, on the other hand, that American air forces and anti-aircraft guns in New Zealand should be fully under the operational control of our air defence organisation. These matters, however, are not of first importance since they can no doubt be settled locally.

3. Ghormley's instructions from Nimitz expressly exclude the [Air Force](#) in New Zealand. It was McCain's³ directive from Nimitz which did not expressly exclude the New Zealand Air Force. It has been clearly determined, however, that as the New Zealand Air Force is not under Ghormley it is consequently not under McCain, despite the latter's

directive, which in this respect was loosely worded.

4. We appreciate King's recognition of our wish to train amphibious forces, but this will not cover the question of the development of the **RNZAF** as a whole. We feel it imperative to press on with the modernisation and strengthening of the **RNZAF**, partly, it is true, for the defence of New Zealand, but primarily for supporting amphibious and naval operations and for taking the best advantage of our resources to assist in every way.

¹ See

² On the **New Zealand Government's** suggestion the directive was subsequently amended by the deletion of paragraph 10 (c) (**No. 178**) and its replacement by the following:

‘Paragraph 10 (c) (1). In the exercise of command over the armed forces which the **New Zealand Government** has assigned, or may assign, for the local defence of New Zealand, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff will be the agency through which such local command is exercised.

‘(2) In the exercise of command the “principles of command” as set forth in paragraph 14 of ABC-1 are applicable.

‘(3) With regard to the possible movement of New Zealand forces out of New Zealand territory, the following by the United States Chiefs of Staff to the President is self-explanatory:

“Proposals of the United States Chiefs of Staff (for operations in the Pacific Ocean areas) made to the President as United States Commander-in-Chief are subject to review by him from the standpoint of higher political considerations and to reference by him to the **Pacific War Council in Washington** when necessary. The interests of the nations whose forces or whose land possessions may be involved in these military operations are further safeguarded by the power each nation retains to refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable.”

The change was approved by President Roosevelt on 20 September.

³ Vice-Admiral J. S. McCain, USN; commanded all Allied land-based air forces, **South Pacific Command**, May – Sep 1942.

5. We need to determine the best means of ensuring that our demands for equipment shall be in accordance with American requirements and that these demands shall be fully supported by those responsible. It may be that the best approach on this matter would be through Dill or Evill.

6. At the present time the re-equipment of the **Air Force** is stagnating for lack of any accepted policy. We consider that any demands from us on the basis of defence would fail to impress. We wish to base our demands on our offensive potentialities. For this we have no real basis while the role of the **RNZAF** is as at present defined, namely, for the land defence of New Zealand, and possibly for partaking in amphibious forces.

7. As regards your final paragraph, we do not see any necessity for unifying the command of the **RNZAF** under the New Zealand Army. We desire the unification of the Air Forces in the South Pacific area under McCain. The **RNZAF** should not in our opinion be placed under the GOC New Zealand Army. Army co-operation squadrons only should be placed under Army command at the present time.

8. In brief, we wish to have a forward plan for the **RNZAF** to equip, say, twenty modern squadrons of the required types by 1943. To make this possible, we desire that the **United States** should accept responsibility for the equipment and development of the **RNZAF**, taking full account of its potentialities for training and maintenance. American control could be achieved either by placing the **RNZAF** under McCain and Ghormley or else direct under Nimitz or even King. You may consider that Dill or Evill would be best placed to represent the professional aspects of this matter and, if they are willing to sponsor it, we will send an appreciation of our requirements for that purpose.

9. You should discourage any inclination of King or Marshall to place the **RNZAF** wholly under Army command. The Air defence of New Zealand is essentially an **Air Force** matter, and the future role of the **RNZAF** should, we consider, be principally aligned to naval operations and consequently under naval command.

¹ Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, GBE, KCB, DSC, AFC (then Air Marshal D. C. S. Evill); head of **Royal Air Force Delegation in Washington**, 1942; Vice-Chief of the Air Staff, 1943–46.

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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230 – DESPATCH FROM THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI¹ TO THE GOVERNOR-
GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

230

*Despatch from the Governor of Fiji¹ to the Governor-General of New
Zealand*

18 December 1939

MY LORD

,

With reference to Recommendation No. 33 of the Wellington
Defence Conference Report² to the effect that the **New Zealand
Government** should consider reinforcing the local Defence Forces in the
south-west **Pacific** generally, and in **Fiji** in particular, by despatching
there a Brigade Group when the emergency arises, I understand from the
Secretary of State for the Colonies³ that His Majesty's Government in
New Zealand have not as yet indicated officially whether or not they
accept this Recommendation.

2 As, however, it will clearly be necessary for your Government to
concert with the Fiji Government in advance the necessary
arrangements to facilitate the reception of the Brigade should it be sent,
I have the honour to inquire if your Government considers that the time
has arrived when it would be convenient for preliminary arrangements
to be considered between the two Governments concerned.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant

,

¹ Sir Harry Luke, KCMG; Governor and Commander-in-Chief, **Fiji**, and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1938–42.

² The Defence Conference was held in **Wellington** on 14–26 Apr 1939, and was attended by delegations from the **United Kingdom**, **Australia** and New Zealand.

³ Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, PC; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1938 – May 1940.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
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231 – DESPATCH FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND
TO THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI

231

*Despatch from the Governor-General of New Zealand to the
Governor of Fiji*

19 February 1940

Sir

,

With reference to your Secret despatch No. 10 of 1 February, ¹ and to previous correspondence, I have the honour to inform you that the question of the despatch of a Brigade Group to **Fiji** is at the moment under active consideration by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand and that it is hoped to forward a reply in the near future.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

(*Signed*) GALWAY

Governor-General

¹ Not published. In this despatch the Governor asked when he could expect a reply to his despatch of 18 Dec 1939.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

232 – THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW
ZEALAND

232

The Governor of Fiji to the Governor-General of New Zealand

24 June 1940

Your despatch of 19 February.

Has His Majesty's Government in New Zealand as yet been able to come to a decision as regards the Brigade Group?

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

233 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS² – [EXTRACT]

233

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*²

[Extract]

27 June 1940

...³ His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have recently been directing some attention to the proposal that they should despatch a brigade group to **Fiji** in the event of a threat of hostilities in the **Pacific**, and if it should not be considered desirable to despatch the **Third Echelon** to the **United Kingdom** on the completion of its preliminary training here they are inclined to believe that it might be prudent at that point to transfer a portion of it to **Fiji**, thus ensuring its being in position if required, and to hold the remainder here, after recruiting to full strength, until the situation in the **United Kingdom** with respect to equipment is easier. All these matters have been giving some concern to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, and they would be glad to have at an early date the comments and advice of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.

This communication has been repeated to **Canberra**.

² Viscount Caldecote.

³ See Vol. I, *Third Echelon*, No. 213, for complete text.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

234 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

234

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

2 July 1940

Your telegram of 27 June.

We greatly appreciate the suggestion that a brigade group should be sent from New Zealand to **Fiji** and our provisional view is that this would be a very valuable role for the New Zealand Forces. The position is that at the moment we are giving active consideration to the situation in the **Far East** generally and hope in the near future to be able to communicate a full appreciation of the position in the **Pacific** as we see it. ¹ It was as a preliminary measure resulting out of this examination of the position that we thought it desirable to approach the Commonwealth Government as to the possibility of sending military and air reinforcements to **Singapore**, in my telegram of 28 June, **No. 228**, which was repeated to you. ²

Our examination of the situation will of course take into account the considerations advanced in your telegram of 27 June regarding the use of New Zealand forces generally.

¹ See **Appendix IV**.

² Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

235 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³

235

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

12 July 1940

In preparation for the possibility that it may be necessary to despatch a brigade group to **Fiji** in accordance with the recommendations of the Pacific Defence Conference, it is proposed at a very early date to send a small party of expert officers to **Fiji** with the object of discussing in advance with the Fijian authorities the necessary technical details in this connection. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful to learn whether His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** see any objection to this course being adopted.

³ Repeated to the Governor of **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

236 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

236

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

16 July 1940

Your telegram of 12 July.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** much appreciate the proposal of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to send a small party of expert officers to **Fiji** to discuss with local authorities detailed arrangements in case it became necessary for a brigade group to be sent there from New Zealand, and they consider that such discussions would be valuable. It will be recognised that all possible steps are being taken to avoid deterioration in our relations with **Japan**, and that at the present moment no question arises of the despatch of forces to **Fiji**. Any action on these lines might, it is thought, be liable to misconstruction on the part of the **Japanese Government**. It is hoped very shortly to communicate a full appreciation of the situation in the **Far East** and the **Pacific**, but it is not yet possible to define the precise suggestions which we should like the **New Zealand Government** to consider as regards employment and location in that area of their available forces. In these circumstances it is hoped that the utmost secrecy will be preserved in regard to the despatch of any mission to **Fiji** so that no publicity would attach to the matter. The Secretary of State for the Colonies ¹ is telegraphing to the Governor of **Fiji** in this sense with a view to ascertaining whether he concurs in the despatch of such a mission, and the **New Zealand Government** will thus be in a position to communicate direct with the Government of **Fiji** in the matter.

¹ Lord Lloyd, PC, GCSI, GCIE, DSO; Secretary of State for the Colonies, May 1940 – death, 4 Feb 1941.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

237 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

237

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

17 July 1940

In view of your secret telegram of 16 July and of a subsequent communication ² from the Governor of **Fiji** expressing his concurrence in the proposal made in my telegram of 12 July [**No. 235**], His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to despatch the three Chiefs of Staff ¹ with a few expert officers to **Fiji** in HMS *Achilles* ² forthwith. At the same time they are arranging to forward to **Fiji** an adequate supply of aviation spirit and bombs. They fully appreciate the desirability of secrecy and will take every step that is possible to avoid unnecessary publicity.

On receipt of the report of the Chiefs of Staff His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose again to consider the question of despatching a force to **Fiji**, to which they attach considerable importance for the defence of New Zealand as well as **Fiji**, and the necessity for which they feel might conceivably arise at very short notice. ³

² Not published.

¹ Major-General Sir John Duigan, Chief of the General Staff;
Group Captain H. W. L. Saunders, Chief of the Air Staff;
Commodore W. E. Parry, RN, Chief of the Naval Staff.

² HMS *Achilles*, 6-inch cruiser, 7030 tons.

³ A copy of this telegram was sent on 18 July to the Governor of Fiji.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

238 – THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

238

The Governor of Fiji to the Governor-General of New Zealand [Extract]

28 July 1940

The following telegram has been sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

‘The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff after four days’ visit to Fiji are submitting recommendations to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand based on the premises that the changed situation in Europe and its possible consequential effect on the Japanese situation renders it essential that the defences of Fiji should be brought to a higher state of readiness without delay.

‘2. Following are their major recommendations:

- (a) The despatch of a Brigade Group from New Zealand to Fiji at the earliest possible date, preceded by the immediate despatch of a Field Company to prepare necessary dispositions, half of the Brigade force to be stationed near Suva and half near Lautoka.**
- (b) Bringing the local Fijian Defence Force up to their war establishment without delay.**
- (c) Mounting of two 6-inch guns on existing gun emplacements for the defence of Suva port and the transfer of two 4·7-inch guns now in Suva to the western side of the Island for the defence of the entrance of Lautoka Harbour.**
- (d) Provision for two flying boats and four land planes based on Fiji for reconnaissance duties in the area New Hebrides – Fiji – Tonga, linking up with Royal Australian Air Force flying-boat reconnaissances already established in the New Hebrides – Solomons – New Guinea area.**

(The officer designated to command the New Zealand Brigade
e) Group ¹ to include in his command the **Fiji Defence Force**, inclusive
of battery or batteries, and to be responsible for operational control of
all land forces in **Fiji, Tonga** and **Fanning Islands**.

‘3. I am in general agreement with the above recommendations....’ ²

¹ Maj-Gen Sir William Cunningham, KBE, DSO, ED (then Brig W. H. Cunningham); commanded **8 Bde Gp**, 1940–41; GOC Fiji, 1940–41; GOC Pacific Section, **2 NZEF**, Jan – Feb 1942; died **Wellington**, 20 Apr 1959.

² Sir Harry Luke's comments on these recommendations are omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

239 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

239

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

5 August 1940

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have now had an opportunity of considering the report of their Chiefs of Staff on their recent visit to **Fiji** and **Tonga** and they have come to the conclusion, as indicated in the penultimate paragraph of my most secret telegram [**No. 185**] of 3 August, ³ that the time has now arrived for the despatch of a Brigade Group. They would be grateful to receive at the earliest possible date the concurrence of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, on the receipt of which they would propose to despatch forthwith a small preliminary party to make the necessary arrangements for accommodation, etc., to be followed by the main force which it is contemplated will comprise 3050 all ranks.

³ See

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

240 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

240

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

9 August 1940

Your telegram of 5 August.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** greatly appreciate the willingness of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to provide a brigade group for **Fiji** and consider that this decision of the **New Zealand Government** represents a most valuable form of assistance to the common cause. We note that the **New Zealand Government's** view is that the force should be despatched in the near future, and we agree with the view. We also agree to the advance party being sent at once as proposed, but we should hope that as far and as long as possible all publicity will be avoided. The Governor of **Fiji** is being advised accordingly and will make all preliminary arrangements for the reception of the New Zealand troops.

The Governor of **Fiji** has telegraphed a summary of the recommendations made by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff on their recent visit and this is under close consideration here so far as it affects **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

241 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR
OF FIJI – [EXTRACT]

241

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji
[Extract]

11 October 1940

In view of the threatening situation in the Pacific His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have now decided to accelerate to the utmost degree possible the despatch to **Suva** of the contemplated Brigade Group. It is proposed therefore that the first portion, consisting of approximately 1000 men, will leave New Zealand for **Suva** on about 27 October.... ¹ It is proposed that a further 1000 troops will be despatched approximately a week later and the remainder as soon as possible.

In addition it is proposed to despatch four land planes as soon as possible.... ²

¹ The first flight left **Wellington** on 28 October and arrived at **Suva** on 1 November.

² The two passages omitted were concerned with arrangements for accommodation.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

242 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³

242

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

22 November 1940

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have approved of the recommendations for the defence of **Tonga** made by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff in July last.⁴

On the assumption that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and the Government of **Tonga** similarly approve of these recommendations and are prepared to increase the strength of the **Tonga Defence Force** to 30 officers and 450 other ranks, to provide this force with three months' continuous training, and to accept the principle that the Officer in Command of the **Fiji Defence Force** should be regarded as in command of the Tongan Defence Force also, the **New Zealand Government** are prepared for their part:

- (to make immediate arrangements to despatch to **Tonga** suitable
- a) key personnel, which they suggest, as recommended by the Chiefs of Staff, should comprise the Officer Commanding **Tonga Defence Force**, Adjutant, Regimental Sergeant-Major, and at least two instructors;
- (to supply such additional equipment as may be required.
- b)

They would be grateful to receive at an early date the comments of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and the Government of **Tonga**.

³ Repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (Suva).

⁴ Not published. The chief of these recommendations concerned the strength, training and command of the force – see second paragraph of this telegram.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

243 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC (SUVA) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES¹

243

*The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (Suva) to the
Secretary of State for the Colonies* ¹

5 January 1941

The **Tonga** Government has agreed to:

(Increase its defence force to 30 officers and 450 other ranks.

a)

(Provide the force with three months' continuous training and
b) more if required.

(Accept operational control by the Officer Commanding Troops,
c) **Fiji**.

(Welcome key personnel from New Zealand.

d)

(In the interests of efficiency, request a New Zealand officer to
e) take over command of the local force, the present Commandant to be
a Staff Officer, next in rank to the Commanding Officer, to advise on
Tongan affairs.

2. Estimates are not yet completed, but the **Tonga** Government has
offered to provide £20,000 annually for the next two years, £5,000 from
revenue and £15,000 from surplus funds. This island's spirited offer was
entirely voluntary.

3. I will telegraph further when estimates are received from the Agent
and Consul, ² together with his views on the proposed contribution by
the **Tonga** Government.

¹ Repeated to the Governor-General of New Zealand.

² Mr A. L. Armstrong, CMG, OBE; Agent and Consul, **Tonga**,
1937-43.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

244 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF
FIJI

244

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

7 January 1941

In the opinion of War Cabinet the time has arrived for the immediate and complete mobilisation of the Fiji Defence Forces and I urge most strongly that this be ordered forthwith, exempting only absolutely essential key men.

It is recognised that this will mean considerable dislocation which, however, should be accepted in the interests of the safety of the island and in order to advance the training of the men to the utmost extent possible.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

245 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

245

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

17 January 1941

Circular telegram.

We have had under consideration the question of providing some form of fixed defence for relatively isolated ports throughout the Empire which are of some commercial or other importance, but for which it has not hitherto been possible to provide defences and which have not been included in the category of defended ports. It is thought that a certain number of such places may form attractive targets for enemy raiders for the destruction of trade facilities or of shipping found in port. With our present lack of cruisers we cannot hold out any hopes of German surface raiders which are known to be operating at the moment being rounded up in their entirety in the near future, while the greater becomes the efficiency of our measures for the protection of shipping at sea the greater also becomes the temptation for raiders to attack our trade ports.

It is moreover considered that, to a raider far from its nearest base, a relatively low scale of defence should prove an effective deterrent. On the other hand, our available resources of guns which could be mounted for the purpose are very limited, and we have to take into full account in assessing the claims of individual ports overseas the necessity for maintaining the highest possible scale of defence against the threat of German invasion of the **United Kingdom.**

As the Dominion Governments are aware, the programme for the modernisation of defended ports overseas is under constant review, and the claims of each major port are taken into careful account and are being met as production permits. It should be emphasised that the present review is confined to minor ports for which no fixed defences have yet been provided at all. It is, however, suggested that the Dominion Governments should [group mutilated – consider?] whether in their own defence areas there are any such places which appear to them to be in urgent need of defence, and whether, if guns were provided, arrangements for mounting could be made and personnel be found and trained to man them. Any recommendations which may result would be taken into most careful consideration though, so far as the supply of guns from **United Kingdom supplies is concerned, we should have to bear in mind the claims of other places in the Empire, including, moreover, the defence of the **United Kingdom** itself.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

246 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

246

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

3 February 1941

Governor-General's telegram of 22 November [**No. 242**] and the telegram from the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific of 5 January to the Colonial Office [**No. 243**], repeated to you.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** greatly appreciate the offer of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to assist in the defence of **Tonga** and would be grateful if the **New Zealand Government** would arrange, in consultation with the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, for the despatch of the key personnel and equipment proposed. We welcome the proposal at (e) in the High Commissioner's telegram under reference, that a New Zealand officer should take over command of the local force, and we hope that the **New Zealand Government** will be able to arrange for an officer to be posted accordingly.

2. It is noted that it is stated in your telegram under reference that the **New Zealand Government** are prepared to supply such additional equipment as may be required. The United Kingdom authorities understand, however, that the New Zealand Liaison Officer in **London** has been informed that the New Zealand authorities propose to supply some but not all the equipment suggested by the Agent at **Tonga** in a statement which was discussed with the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff on their visit to the island last July. In view of this latter telegram we are not clear whether the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff regard the

outstanding items recommended by the Agent as unnecessary, or whether it is desired that they should be obtained from other sources.

¹ Repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

It is thought that most of these outstanding items (other than the 6-inch coast defence guns) could be supplied from **Australia**, and it is suggested that if they are thought to be necessary the question of their supply from **Australia** might be taken up with the Commonwealth authorities subsequently by the **New Zealand Government** or by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

3. As regards the Agent's suggestion that three 6-inch coast defence guns should be provided, we note that the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff made no mention of this in their report, which was approved by the **New Zealand Government** (see your telegram under reference). The New Zealand Government will have seen from my telegram of 17 January that the question of the provision of defences for minor ports is under review, and it will be appreciated that it may be impossible to supply guns to all places which are in need of them. If, therefore, the provision of coast defence guns for **Tonga** is recommended, we should be glad to know whether in the **New Zealand Government's** view:

(it would be possible to reduce the number required from three to
a) two or one, and,

(the **Tonga** requirements should take priority over the
b) requirements of **Fiji** for two 6-inch guns (see your telegram **No. 15** of
17 January ¹).

¹ Not published. Discussed the role and siting of coast defence guns in **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

247 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

247

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs* ²

7 February 1941

With reference to your telegram of 3 February on the defence of **Tonga**, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will despatch at the earliest opportunity the key personnel and such of the equipment for the land forces as has already been agreed to. ³

2. With regard to paragraph 2 of your telegram, the New Zealand Army Liaison Officer in **London** can supply a list of equipment and stores which it is possible to despatch immediately. The remaining equipment for the land forces asked for by the British Consul and Agent cannot be made immediately available, but all steps will now be taken to explore the possibility of securing the outstanding items, which were only omitted because they were not available in New Zealand. A list of these items can also be supplied by the New Zealand Army Liaison Officer. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will be grateful to learn whether His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** could supply any of these items, as supply from **Australia**, if possible, would prejudice supply from that source of New Zealand's needs, which are fairly acute. Approval has been given to the supply to **Tonga** of six teleradio sets and eleven telescopes, as asked for by the British Consul and Agent, and these will be sent as and when available.

3. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff do not consider **Tonga** of sufficient strategic importance to justify the mounting of 6-inch guns there.

4. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand warmly appreciate the offer made by the Tongan Government to make some financial contribution to the defence of their own territory.

² Repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

³ In a telegram to the Dominions Secretary on 18 February the Prime Minister advised that these men and stores would sail that day.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

248 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ – [EXTRACT]

248

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

[Extract]

7 March 1941

With reference to your Circular telegram of 17 January [No. 245], His Majesty's Government in New Zealand note with pleasure that it is proposed to provide some form of fixed defences for relatively isolated ports, which they understand to refer to such places as **Fanning Island**, **Ocean Island**, etc., and not to secondary ports in New Zealand for which cover is provided by the Air Striking Force.

2. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have expressed their concurrence in the proposals made by the Commonwealth Government to provide fixed defences, *inter alia*, at Nauru and Ocean Island, and have indicated their willingness to provide personnel for the battery at the latter island. In this connection please see my telegram No. 631² of 19 February....³

4. Further recommendations have been submitted by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff that fixed defences (one battery each of two 6-inch guns) be provided at Navula Passage, **Fiji**, and also in certain circumstances at Makatea. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand agree with the proposal concerning Navula Passage and recommend it to the favourable consideration of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**. The position at Makatea appears to depend upon the desirability

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

² Not published.

³ See *Fanning Island*, No. 329, for text omitted.

or otherwise of obtaining supplies of phosphate from that island. This matter has been under discussion with the Australian Minister who has recently been in New Zealand, ¹ and it is proposed that the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, who will shortly be proceeding to **Australia** in connection with the recent Singapore Conference, should discuss the question of Makatea there, and a further communication will be despatched on this subject in due course. ²

5. The Chiefs of Staff have considered the question of the installation of fixed defences at Nukualofa and Papeete and have come to the conclusion that they are unnecessary. In this connection reference is invited to my telegram No. 39 of 7 February. ³

6. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand assume that if the recommendations for the provision of fixed defences at the places referred to in this telegram are accepted, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** will, at the same time as guns are provided, arrange also the supply of an adequate reserve of ammunition.... ⁴

¹ Hon. H. L. Anthony; Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Minister of Commerce, 1940; Minister of Transport, Jun – Oct 1941.

² In a telegram dated 27 March the Prime Minister said that heavy guns were not recommended for Makatea.

³ Not published. The Government supported a recommendation of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff that the port defences of **Wellington** be increased by the installation of two 6-inch naval

guns originally intended for Papeete and asked that they be retained in New Zealand.

⁴ In the text omitted the United Kingdom Government was asked to provide guns and ammunition for the ports of Lyttelton, Port Chalmers and Dunedin.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

249 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND⁵ TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS⁶ – [EXTRACT]

249

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand⁵ to the Secretary of
State for Dominion Affairs⁶*

[Extract]

28 August 1941

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have under urgent consideration major questions affecting the defence of the territories of the South Pacific under their operational control and, in particular, the responsibility for ordering and financing essential defence measures in **Fiji**. Recommendations covering this and other defence matters have been placed before them by their Military Adviser, General Sir Guy Williams,⁷ and these have been endorsed by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.

2. In view of the deterioration of the situation in the **Pacific**, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel that a decision is a matter of extreme urgency, and an early expression of the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on these questions would be greatly appreciated.

3. Although **Fiji** and **Tonga** have, for defence purposes, been placed within the sphere of responsibility of New Zealand, in actual practice the control of defence in those territories is still divided, with the result that the Commanding Officer of the New Zealand Forces has to look both to the New Zealand War Cabinet and to the Governor of **Fiji** for approval and financial sanction of any form of defence work, a considerable amount of which is urgently needed. It will readily be appreciated that in the event of active hostilities such divided control is impossible and

might spell disaster, and at the present time it constitutes a considerable hindrance to essential defence preparations.

4. In reporting on the defences of **Fiji** and **Tonga**, General Williams has recommended that both operational control and the approving and financing of all necessary defence works should, as soon as possible, be placed under the **New Zealand Government**—any financial adjustments would of course be made in due course between the Colonial Office and this Administration. Arrangements are being undertaken meanwhile to expedite defence work, and special authority is to be given by the **New Zealand Government** to the local Commander for this purpose.

5. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand also desire to bring before the attention of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** the question of the payment of costs incurred in connection with measures already taken for the defence of **Fiji** and territories under the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, in so far as they provide for the defence of **Fiji** and the defence of New Zealand, through **Fiji** as an outlying base.

6. At the Defence Conference held in **Wellington** in April 1939 it was recommended, *inter alia*, that New Zealand should maintain aerial reconnaissance along the line **New Hebrides – Fiji – Tonga**, establish an air base at **Fiji**, provide certain material and key personnel for the **Fiji Defence Force**, despatch a brigade group when necessary, and arrange the construction of two landing grounds in **Fiji**. These recommendations have been accepted and have been or are being implemented.... ¹

⁵ Hon. W. Nash.

⁶ Repeated to the Governor of **Fiji**.

⁷ General Williams's reports on the defences of **Fiji** and **Tonga**, dated 4 Aug 1941, have not been reproduced.

¹ Estimates of expenditure and proposals for the apportionment of costs have been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

250 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

250

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

14 October 1941

Your telegram of 28 August [**No. 249**], and subsequent telegrams
regarding the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**.²

1. His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** much appreciate the study which His Majesty's Government in New Zealand and their service advisers have given this question, the measures already adopted by New Zealand for the defence of British territories in the **Pacific**, and the offer of the **New Zealand Government** to assume further responsibilities in relation thereto. Proposals have been carefully considered with the desire to ensure the most efficient co-operation in defence by all the Governments concerned.

2. With this object we are prepared to agree in principle that, for the duration of the war, New Zealand should be responsible for deciding upon and carrying out all general defence measures which they consider necessary in **Fiji** and **Tonga**.

3. We feel, however, that the Governor and High Commissioner should remain responsible in matters of civil administration to His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, who have obligations to the peoples of the islands in question and are in turn answerable to Parliament. We think it essential, therefore, that the responsibility of the Governor or High Commissioner (and of the Government of **Tonga**) in local matters should continue to be fully recognised, and that he should accordingly

be informed in advance of all measures proposed so that he may have an opportunity of considering whether they might raise political issues or affect civil administration, e.g., in questions of native affairs or public utility services. If he thinks they might, we should like his approval to be given before they are carried out.

4. In the event of **Fiji** or **Tonga** becoming a theatre of active hostilities, the closest possible collaboration between the civil power and service authorities would be particularly necessary, and no doubt the New Zealand authorities will discuss with the Governor and High Commissioner with a view to ensuring that in such an event the necessity of reference to the civil power would be reduced to an absolute minimum, and that the maximum possible assistance would be rendered by the civil power to service authorities.

¹ Repeated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of **Fiji**.

² These messages were largely concerned with detailed requirements (including financial arrangements) for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** and have not been reproduced in this volume.

5. We think that detailed arrangements and the most expeditious channels of communication to give effect to the arrangements in paragraphs 3 and 4 above could best be worked out on the spot. The Secretary of State for the Colonies ¹ is communicating with the Governor and High Commissioner to this effect.

6. The Governments of **Fiji** and **Tonga** should in our opinion remain responsible for raising, organising and administering local forces (military and naval) and for requisitioning any property required for these forces, but in matters affecting local forces the Governor and High Commissioner would regard the New Zealand authorities as his advisers and would submit any proposals requiring consultation to them instead of to the **United Kingdom** authorities. The New Zealand authorities

would be responsible for training and the operational command of local forces. The scale of equipment would be settled between the Governor and High Commissioner and the New Zealand authorities, and it would seem convenient that the requirements of the local forces should be aggregated with New Zealand requirements as suggested in the Governor's telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, **No. 285**, of 29 September. ² So far as possible all such matters as those in your telegram to the High Commissioner of 3 September, **No. 80**, ³ and your telegrams to me, **No. 368** of 4 September and **No. 369** of 3 September, ⁴ and any similar future proposals, would be settled direct between the New Zealand authorities and the Governor or High Commissioner, who would not normally need to refer to the Secretary of State for the Colonies decisions on measures to be adopted locally. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will, however, appreciate that the Governor and High Commissioner should remain entitled to refer to the Secretary of State any matters of importance on which there is a difference of opinion or which, in his view, is one of policy with which His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** are concerned.

7. The points in paragraph 3 (*d*) and (*e*) of your telegram of 18 September, **No. 394**, ⁵ regarding local forces are covered by the foregoing paragraph.

¹ Lord Moyne succeeded Lord Lloyd as Colonial Secretary on the latter's death on 4 Feb 1941.

² Not published.

³ Not published. Reported the arrangements made by the **New Zealand Government** with Mr Armstrong, Agent and Consul at **Tonga**, in recent discussions in New Zealand. These covered various aspects of the assistance to be given by New Zealand in the defence of **Tonga** and in the training and equipping of the Tongan Defence Force.

⁴ Telegrams 368 and 369 are not published. The first advised that the **New Zealand Government** had decided to strengthen the defences and garrisons of **Fiji** and **Tonga** in accordance with the recommendations of General Sir Guy Williams, and listed deficiencies in the equipment of both garrisons. The second summarised the General's report on the defences of **Fiji**.

⁵ Not published. Paragraph 3 (*d*) concerned channel of communication on minor policy matters; in paragraph 3 (*e*) the **New Zealand Government** recommended that the local control of the Governor of **Fiji** over promotions, etc., be continued.

8. With reference to paragraph 3 (*f*) of your telegram No. 394, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** agree that the present procedure for the acquisition of private land for defence purposes should be continued.

9. We ourselves see no reason why arrangements on these lines should not work smoothly and eliminate delays which might otherwise be involved by reference to **London**, and we trust they will be acceptable to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

10. We shall be glad to be kept informed as proposed in paragraph 5 of your telegram No. 394, and suggest that methods of doing so be arranged in consultation with the Governor and High Commissioner. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will no doubt keep in touch with His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** on proposals affecting **Pacific** defence generally, such as for the construction of additional landing grounds and seaplane bases (recommendation (*k*), **No. 369**). ¹

11. We have not yet received General Williams's report summarised in your telegram No. 369, and any comments on detail might require modifications when the full text is available. Subject to this reservation, and without necessarily being committed to the acceptance of all requests for equipment, etc., in this and in connected telegrams, we

concur generally in unrestricted defence proposals. The extent to which they can be executed, however, necessarily depends on the availability of material in relation to the general supply position and requirements elsewhere, and it is thought that allocation of, e.g., coast defence and anti-aircraft equipment, should continue to be settled in **London**, where the relative priorities of all actual and potential coastal areas can be co-ordinated.

12. The request for equipment in paragraph 4 of your telegram of 4 September, **No. 368**,² has been considered by the **War Office** and is being taken up by them with the New Zealand Military Liaison Officer. In connection with recommendation (j) of your telegram No. 369 as to the provision of PBVs and Hudsons, see my telegram **No. 375** of 20 September.³

13. We have given preliminary consideration to the financial proposal in your telegrams Nos. [**249**], **394**, and **396** to me and your telegram No. 80⁴ to the High Commissioner. We are now awaiting the observation of the Governor and High Commissioner and will telegraph on this aspect as soon as possible. In principle, whatever arrangements may ultimately be agreed on, we favour the suggestion of fixed annual contributions in future by **Fiji** and the Western Pacific Governments concerned.

¹ Not published.

² See p. 282, note 4.

³ Not published.

⁴ Telegrams 394, 396 and 80 are not published. See p. 282, notes 3 and 5.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

251 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

251

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*¹

8 November 1941

With reference to your telegram of 14 October.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand agree with the suggestion that the detailed arrangements and the most expeditious channels of communication to give effect to their proposal for direct responsibility for defence in **Fiji** and the High Commission territories could be best worked out on the spot. They therefore propose, on the assumption that this will prove acceptable to the Governor of **Fiji**, to despatch a party consisting of two members of **War Cabinet**, together with certain New Zealand officers (the names of whom will be communicated to the Governor of **Fiji** in an immediately following telegram),² to **Suva** by flying boat, leaving **Auckland** on 14 November and returning on the 19th. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will communicate their considered views on the return of this Mission.

¹ Repeated to the Governor of **Fiji**.

² Not published. The chief members of this mission were the Minister of Defence (the Hon. F. Jones), the **Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates**, and the three Chiefs of Staff, Commodore Parry, Major-General E. Puttick (who had succeeded Major-General Sir John Duigan on 1 Aug 1941) and Air Commodore Saunders.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

252 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³

252

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

26 November 1941

With reference to my telegram of 8 November.

The representatives which His Majesty's Government in New Zealand sent to **Suva** recently have now returned, having completed during their stay there an Agreement with the Governor of **Fiji** and the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific regarding the respective responsibilities for defence in these territories. Copies of this Agreement are being sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Governor of **Fiji**.

2. **Fiji** and **Tonga** will always remain as advance bases of this Dominion, and it may therefore be necessary to consider the need for continuing this arrangement after the cessation of hostilities. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would therefore propose that this question be left open for further consideration when hostilities end. Express reference is made to this in paragraph 2 (a) of the Agreement.⁴

3. Paragraph 2 of your telegram of 14 October [**No. 250**] limits the arrangement to **Fiji** and **Tonga**, but it has been agreed that the defence responsibility of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand is not limited to these territories but extends generally to the remaining British territories in the High Commission within the boundaries of the New Zealand Naval station.

4. The Agreement provides for the formation of a Local Joint Defence

Committee to consist of the Commander, Fiji Defences, the Officer Commanding RNZAF and the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Fiji. This Committee will be convened normally by the Officer Commanding Fiji Defences, but by the Governor when matters raising political issues or affecting civil administration are under consideration. Paragraph 2 (e) defines the procedure which will be followed for keeping the Governor or High Commissioner informed of proposed defence measures, and subparagraph (f) the arrangements which will apply if the exigencies of the military situation make it impossible to follow the ordinary procedure.

5. It has been agreed that local forces raised or to be raised will conform to the requirements of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand in respect of:

(Establishment.

a)

(Organisation, training and employment.

b)

(Period of enlistment.

c)

(Scale of equipment.

d)

(Selection, appointment and promotion of officers, including

e) Commanding Officers, of local forces (these to be made by the Governor on the recommendation of the Commander, Fiji Defences, or the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Fiji, as the case may be).

Pay, rations and conditions of service otherwise of local forces will be matters for the decision of the Governor, but His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will have the right in any case to make representations.

6. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will be responsible for keeping His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom informed on all questions of defence, and any messages which may be sent will be repeated to Suva. Similarly, any official communications which originate in Suva and are addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies will be repeated to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

7. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel that this arrangement will operate to the mutual benefit of [Fiji](#), the High Commission territories in which they are concerned and New Zealand, and they are most grateful for the spirit of willing co-operation which has been shown by the Governor of [Fiji](#) and the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

³ Repeated to the Governor of [Fiji](#).

⁴ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

253 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

253

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

20 December 1941

The following is a telegram addressed on 14 December by
Lieutenant-General Short,² then Commanding General, **Hawaii**, which
has been received by the Chief of the Air Staff³:

‘Completion of base for heavy bombers is imperative. We are rushing
completion Christmas. **Canton** doubtful but planes can hop from
Christmas to **Fiji**. **Fiji** essential. Strongly recommend your Government
take all possible steps for its defence. We will send additional
construction equipment for aerodromes as soon as possible and have
instructed Sverdrup⁴ to rush completion. Advise.’

2. A message has been sent in reply by the Chief of the Air Staff giving
particulars of the strength of the forces in **Fiji**, of the dispositions made
for the defence of the island, and of the reinforcements being
despatched. A summary of this information is given in my immediately
following telegram.⁵

3. The defence of **Fiji** has assumed a high degree of importance as, with
the development of the landing ground at **Nandi**, it will be a vital link in
the **United States** air reinforcing route. On this account the Japanese
can be expected to attach importance to the capture of the island, and
they may be able to employ greater forces than were previously
anticipated for this purpose in view of their initial successes. In these
circumstances His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have been

giving urgent consideration to the additional steps which should be taken for defence and are of the opinion that the following are necessary:

- (i) Two battalions of infantry in addition to the one now allocated for the defence of the **Nandi–Momi** area. While it may be possible for His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to provide the additional personnel, which can only be done at the expense of reinforcements for the 2nd NZEF, they are not in a position to provide all the equipment necessary, particularly anti-tank guns, rifles and light machine guns.
- (ii) Wire defences should be provided as soon as possible to prevent landing on the beaches in the **Nandi–Momi** area, but there is a very real difficulty in providing immediately the quantity of wire required for this purpose.
- (iii) At least one battery of heavy and one of light anti-aircraft guns should be provided for each of the **Nandi** and **Suva** areas. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are despatching the *only* four 3-inch anti-aircraft guns in New Zealand for the defence of the **Nandi** aerodrome, and six searchlights.
- (iv) No fighter aircraft are available for the defence of the island and at least one squadron is essential. There are no fighter squadrons in New Zealand. An MB2 radio-location equipment is being installed at **Nandi**.
- (v) A separate wireless telegraphy installation will be necessary at **Nandi** to work American aircraft.
- (vi) The island of Vanua Levu, which is adjacent to **Viti Levu**, is completely undefended and it is most desirable that some forces be disposed for the defence of this island, mainly to deny it to the Japanese as a base for an attack on **Viti Levu**.

4. The above is, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, the provision which should be made as soon as possible to provide reasonable measures of defence for **Fiji**. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel that, in view of the importance of **Fiji** to the **United States**, the Government of that country might be approached with a suggestion that they assist in the defence of the territory in the manner suggested above. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be very glad to know whether His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** concur in this suggestion, and if

they do, they would be glad if they would, as soon as possible, approach the **United States** authorities concerning the matter and advise them of the issue.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**, the Governor of **Fiji**, and the New Zealand Naval Liaison Officer, **Washington**, for the information of the Joint Staff Mission.

² Lt-Gen W. C. Short, **US Army**; Commanding General, **Hawaii**, Feb – Dec 1941.

³ Air Commodore R.V. Goddard succeeded Air Commodore Saunders as Chief of the Air Staff on 13 December.

⁴ Maj-Gen L. J. Sverdrup, **US Army**; Chief United States Engineer in South-West Pacific, 1942–45.

⁵ A further telegram from the Prime Minister despatched later on 20 December (but not reproduced here) gave a brief outline of service dispositions for the defence of **Fiji** and of the reinforcements being sent from New Zealand.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

254 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

254

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

23 December 1941

Your telegram of 20 December.

We are in full agreement with your estimation of the increased importance of the South Pacific air route and have already instructed our representatives in **Washington** to raise with the **United States** authorities the question of providing assistance in defence at **Fiji**, **Canton** and Christmas Islands.

We have now sent a further message to your telegram under reference so that your recommendations may be taken into [group omitted – account?] when this question is discussed.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

255 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

255

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

23 December 1941

My telegram of 23 December.

We have asked the Prime Minister ¹ personally to raise with the **United States** authorities the question of the defence of the South Pacific air route with a view to increased **United States** assistance, and our representatives have been instructed to inform him of the **New Zealand Government's** views.

¹ Mr Churchill was then in **Washington** to confer with President Roosevelt. See p. 112, note 1.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

256 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND²

256

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*²

24 December 1941

My telegram of 23 December [**No. 254**], repeated to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia**. His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** concurs in the reinforcement of Fiji Island at the expense of reinforcements for the 2nd New Zealand Division in the **Middle East**. We are also making arrangements for the early provision of such equipment for these reinforcements as cannot be supplied by New Zealand. Details are under discussion between the **War Office** and the New Zealand Military Liaison Officer here.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

257 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL (WASHINGTON)

257

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill
(Washington)*

24 December 1941

1. The New Zealand Government have from time to time called attention to the strategic importance of **Fiji**, not only to New Zealand but to the British Commonwealth and its Allies. In accordance with the responsibility which we accepted for the defence of that territory, we have, as you perhaps know, had a brigade group of New Zealand troops stationed there for a lengthy period and we have done what lay in our power to strengthen the defences of the territory. Recent events in the **Pacific**, including the crippling of the United States Pacific Fleet at **Pearl Harbour**, the loss of HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*, the violent and successful attacks by the Japanese upon **Malaya**, the **Philippines**, **Hong Kong**, **Guam** and Wake Island have, in our opinion, increased both the probability of an attack on **Fiji** and its importance to the general scheme of Allied defence in a degree that can scarcely be exaggerated. If, as indicated by Mr Duff Cooper in his telegrams conveying the recommendations of the recent Singapore Conference ¹ (which have now been approved by the Chiefs of Staff and his Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**), and as indicated in the recent Chiefs of Staff appreciation of the general situation, it has become essential to reinforce the **Far East** from **America**, then the retention of **Fiji** becomes, in our opinion, absolutely essential, especially as regards reinforcement by air, which, at the moment, would appear to be completely impracticable without that base.

2. As you may perhaps know also, the **New Zealand Government**, at the

suggestion and with the co-operation of the **United States**, are hastening to the utmost of their power the extension of **Nandi** aerodrome in **Fiji**, which is, of course, intended as an essential landing ground for air reinforcements crossing the **Pacific** from the **United States**. This aerodrome, unless properly defended, becomes not an asset but a distinct liability, and while the **New Zealand Government** can and will despatch immediately to **Fiji** another brigade group of troops, they would regard this reinforcement as inadequate for the task, while they themselves are quite unable to send more. Further, with conditions as they are, the **New Zealand Government** would be quite unable to equip the troops that they can send. We have already despatched a substantial proportion of our very exiguous air defences to **Fiji**. We have sent the only (four) heavy anti-aircraft guns and the only (four) Bofors guns which we possess, and we have denuded ourselves, to a degree which causes us the gravest concern for the safety of this Dominion, of such artillery and other equipments as are required in **Fiji**, but this, despite the risk to the Dominion, is also quite inadequate. A list of the Army deficiencies in New Zealand itself, the supply of

¹ Not published. A conference of inter-Allied representatives took place at **Singapore** on 18 December, at which Mr Duff Cooper acted as the chief New Zealand representative. His report, in two parts (telegrams 516 and 517—not published), outlined the recommendations made by the conference and stressed the ‘urgent and immediate need’ for reinforcements.

which is urgently required, is set out in my immediately following telegram. ¹ Lists of naval and air deficiencies will follow as soon as possible.

In two further telegrams addressed today to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, repeated to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of **Australia**, to the Governor of **Fiji**, to the New Zealand Naval Liaison Officer at **Washington** for the information of the Joint Staff Mission, and to you, a list of what we consider to be the minimum

requirements at **Fiji** has been set out. ² While I do hesitate to trouble you in the midst of your many preoccupations, I would most strongly urge you to impress upon President Roosevelt the extreme importance of **Fiji**, not solely or primarily as an outpost of the defence of New Zealand, but as an essential link with the **United States** in the general Allied scheme of operations in the **Pacific** and the **Far East**, and to request him to provide as quickly and as completely as possible the deficiencies set out in the list, as well as the list of New Zealand deficiencies. Early offensive action by the substantial United States Pacific Fleet still available would, of course, immediately assist the general situation, but until the British and United States Fleets are in a position to reassert naval supremacy in the **Pacific** we are definitely up against a tough proposition in this area. No one here is dismayed and we will overcome our present difficulties, but this matter of equipment both for **Fiji** and New Zealand we regard as, in the strongest sense of the word, vital, and I do urge you to give it your personal and immediate consideration.

¹ Not published.

² Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

258 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³

258

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

25 December 1941

With reference to your telegrams Nos. 516 and 517 of 21 December⁴
and my telegram of 20 December [**No. 253**].

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have considered the
conclusions of the conference of inter-Allied representatives held at
Singapore, and for their part fully agree that it is imperative that steps
be taken, and urgently, to improve the defences of **Malaya** in the manner
suggested in paragraph 2 of telegram No. 517.⁵ They

³ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**, the Governor
of **Fiji**, the New Zealand Liaison Officer, **Washington**, for the
information of the Joint Staff Mission, and to Mr Churchill in
Washington.

⁴ See p. 289, note 1.

⁵ Paragraph 2 listed the minimum air and land
reinforcements required immediately in **Malaya**.

regret that for their part they cannot, after the most careful
thought, find it possible to provide any direct reinforcements for the
defence of **Malaya**, but they would draw the attention of His Majesty's
Government in the **United Kingdom** to the steps which in their telegram

[No. 253] they recommended should be taken for the defence of **Fiji**, the importance of which as the vital link in the reinforcing route for the **United States** aircraft for the **Far East** and in the maintenance of the general strategic position is emphasised by the conference in paragraph 7 of telegram No. 516. ¹

2. In view of the deterioration of the position in the **Pacific**, the defence of **Fiji** has been further reviewed by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

3. While it is impossible to forecast the scale of enemy attack, it seems reasonable to assume that the Japanese might well devote at least a division in an attempt to capture **Fiji**. Moreover, this force might be directed against either **Viti Levu** or, alternatively, Vanua Levu (which is completely undefended), the latter being employed as an advanced base and a potential aerodrome area. The natural first-line defences of these islands are the surrounding coral reefs, but these are penetrable through channels which are not in normal use and need to be mined, patrolled, and commanded by guns.

4. The land defence problem can be divided into four main areas:

(**Nandi** aerodrome area;
a)

(b) Suva Harbour and aerodrome area;

(c) the potential aerodrome area in the north of Vanua Levu;

(Savusavu Bay, an 'A' Class anchorage on the south of Vanua
d) Levu.

5. It is considered that the defence of Vanua Levu, although highly important, should not be undertaken until (a) and (b) are more adequately defended.

6. For these two areas in **Viti Levu** one brigade group each is required and a striking force of one mobile battalion and a force of armoured fighting vehicles. The defence of Vanua Levu will require at least one and probably two battalions of infantry, with adequate anti-tank weapons and a force of AFVs. The forces required for Vanua Levu are

now the subject of urgent reconnaissances, but it is considered that in no case will New Zealand be in a position to provide for the defence of this island, in addition to what is necessary for the reinforcement of **Viti Levu**.

7. As regards the **Air Force**, it is essential to provide a deterrent to the employment of aircraft carriers and a striking force of at least two

¹ Paragraph 7 listed the air and sea lines of communication which the conference considered should be kept open.

squadrons of reconnaissance bombers is required. The protection of the **Nandi** aerodrome area and support of air and land operations in this area require a squadron of fighters.

8. One heavy and one light battery of anti-aircraft guns will be required each for the **Nandi** and **Suva** areas, and a battery of light anti-aircraft guns for Vanua Levu.

9. A radio-location system adequate to surround the two main islands for the detection of high-flying and low-flying aircraft is also necessary.

10. The foregoing air defence provision does not meet the requirements for air reconnaissance seaward around the islands and extending to the **New Hebrides** and **Tonga** groups, nor indeed does it appear possible to provide adequately for such reconnaissance. But it is highly desirable that the Catalina squadron so long expected should now be made available and based at **Suva**, where the accommodation for it is nearing completion.

11. **Nausori** aerodrome, on the **Suva** side, is not adequate for modern aircraft, and it is considered undesirable to extend it because it is in the wet weather area and is beyond the garrisoned defences of **Suva**. It is considered preferable that a second aerodrome should be provided as soon as possible near to **Nandi** aerodrome. This would provide for reinforcement. It is considered unwise to concentrate two

reconnaissance bomber squadrons, a fighter squadron, and the American reinforcing aircraft for the **Far East** on the one aerodrome.

12. As regards naval forces, patrol motor-boats are required for the **Nandi–Momi** area. All suitable local motor-boats have already been taken up for the **Suva** area. No mines are available from **Australia** or New Zealand, and it will be necessary to provide a suitable small minelayer with the technical personnel, none of which are available from British sources, in order to lay the mines in close proximity to the reefs.

13. The above are considered to be the minimum essential requirements, and this estimate has been made on the assumption that Japanese naval forces escorting the expedition would not include more than two carriers.

14. Although it will be possible to provide the personnel for the defence of **Viti Levu**, there is no means of equipping them. A summary of equipment required is contained in my immediately following telegram ¹ and it is suggested that the assistance of the United States Government might be obtained in providing this equipment, which is urgently necessary. This would include not only the AFVs referred to in paragraph 6, but also the troops required for their operation.

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

259 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

259

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

26 December 1941

The following is secret and personal for **General Freyberg**:

Your telegram of 8 December. ¹ In view of the situation in the **Pacific** and the threat to **Fiji**, which has recently increased enormously in importance, we are considering the necessity of diverting to that area some or all of the 8th Reinforcements intended for the **Middle East**. We have, of course, no intention of ignoring our responsibility for maintaining the Middle East Forces at proper strength, though neither we nor you can disregard the possibility that events in this part of the world may greatly increase our difficulties in this respect. Should it be necessary to divert the 8th Reinforcements as suggested, ² I am sure you will understand the position, and I should greatly appreciate your comments. ³

¹ See Vol. II, No. 51. Headquarters 2nd NZEF asked if the outbreak of war with **Japan** would affect the supply of reinforcements to the **Middle East**.

² On 27 December Army Headquarters advised Headquarters 2nd NZEF that the sailing of the 8th Reinforcements had been postponed indefinitely.

³ **General Freyberg** replied on 5 Jan 1942 that he fully appreciated the present circumstances in the **Pacific**, and added that the reinforcement situation in the **Middle East** was 'quite satisfactory for some months to come'. See Vol. II, No. 54, for full text.



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

260 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

260

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

26 December 1941

The following telegram has been received from the Prime Minister at
Washington:

Prime Minister to Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Your telegrams [**No. 257**] and No. 253. ⁴ I am consulting the
President and his officers about the points involved.

I will send you a full telegram shortly about all the measures we are
taking in conjunction with the **United States** to cope with the Japanese
in the **Pacific**.

I profoundly admire the courage and composure with which New
Zealand is facing the new situation so full of immediate danger and of
ultimate safety.

⁴ No. 253 is not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

261 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

261

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

31 December 1941

My telegram of 24 December [**No. 256**].

On receipt of your telegrams [**No. 258**] and No. 550 of 25 December,
² it appeared to us that the best way of getting assistance from the
United States would be to ask them to undertake one specific task. Our
Chiefs of Staff have therefore despatched the following telegram to the
Joint Staff Mission in **Washington**:

‘Reference New Zealand telegrams [**No. 258**] and No. 550, you should
urge the **United States** to meet as many as possible requirements for the
defences of **Fiji**, and in particular to provide a garrison for **Nandi**
aerodrome of each of one [group mutilated – infantry brigade?] of three
battalions, one or two tank squadrons, one light anti-aircraft battery,
one heavy anti-aircraft battery, together with air squadrons and the
necessary ancillaries for the above. In addition, mines, from [group
omitted – **United States** sources?], and patrol boats will be required.’

In the meantime, we are accepting the possibility of sending
equipment from here, but the final decision will have to await an answer
from the **United States**.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and by the
Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of **Fiji**.

² No. 550 is not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

262 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³

262

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

31 December 1941

Further to my telegram No. 539 of 20 December.⁴

1. All the field artillery mentioned therein has arrived at **Fiji** excepting 25-pounders, which will proceed immediately, together with four 3-inch anti-aircraft guns and six anti-aircraft searchlights. It has now been decided to despatch at the same time our only four Bofors guns. Reinforcements of 46 officers and 718 other ranks to complete the third battalion of **8 Brigade** have also arrived at **Fiji**.
2. It has also been decided to despatch to **Fiji** forthwith approximately three officers and 600 men as further reinforcements, and 154 officers and 2900 men to raise the forces in **Fiji** to approximately eight battalions, also two 60-pounders and two 6-inch howitzers to cover the waters west of **Nandi**. A proposal to hold Vanua Levu with one of the eight battalions mentioned above and two additional 60-pounders is under consideration, but appears unlikely to eventuate as present information points to much larger forces than New Zealand can provide being necessary there to deny the various anchorages. The forces mentioned in this paragraph will proceed in two flights, commencing in a few days.
3. Transport vehicles to the limit of shipping space available have been and will be despatched from New Zealand, where impressment is in full operation.

³ Repeated to the Governor of **Fiji**, the Prime Minister of **Australia**, and the Naval Liaison Officer, **Washington**, for the information of the Joint Staff Mission.

⁴ Not published. This was the telegram referred to on p. 286, note 5.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

263 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

263

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

11 January 1942

Following is from Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:

Your most secret and personal message ¹ has been conveyed to me
by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

I cannot tell you how greatly we appreciate the efforts that you have
been making to acquire for us essential arms and equipment for the
defence of **Fiji** and also for the defence of New Zealand. We earnestly
trust that this, and what further supplies you can make available, will
arrive in time, and we can assure you that they will be used to the
fullest advantage. I am including my comments on paragraphs 3, 4 and
5 of your message in my immediately following telegram, ² to which I
would beg your earnest and personal attention.

¹ See *Command in the Pacific: ABDA and Anzac Areas*, No. 116.

² No. 117.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

264 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND³

264

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*³

3 February 1942

My telegram of 23 December [No. 254].

The following recommendations have been under consideration by
the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington**:

(That the **United States** should arrange for the local defence of
a) **Palmyra**, Christmas Island, **Canton**, American Samoa and Bora Bora.

(That the **United States** should assist New Zealand, which is
b) responsible for the local defence of the Fiji Islands, in providing
equipment and air defences for them.

(That as a temporary measure to be taken immediately after
c) meeting the emergency in the ABDA area, the **United States** should
[group mutilated – furnish?] forces for **New Caledonia**, for the local
defence of which the Commonwealth of **Australia** is responsible. The
opinion of the Commonwealth Government should be sought as to the
prior arming of Free French troops in the Islands.

(That the Commonwealth of **Australia** and New Zealand should be
d) invited to afford all possible supplies to such **United States** forces as
might be assigned to assist in the defence of **New Caledonia** and **Fiji**.

2. Estimates of garrisons recommended for **New Caledonia**, **Fiji**,
Christmas and **Canton** will be communicated separately. ¹

3. It is understood, on the assumption that the proposals in general are
acceptable to the Commonwealth and New Zealand Governments, that
detailed arrangements are being made in **Washington** to give them
effect.

4. The text of this telegram is being repeated to the Joint Defence Mission in [Washington](#).

³ Addressed also to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#) and repeated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of [Fiji](#).

¹ Not published. See [p. 247, note 3](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

265 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

265

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of Australia

14 February 1942

In the light of the recent and rapid deterioration of the situation in the **Pacific**, we have recently been considering the position of the various island territories which might be used by the Japanese as a stepping stone southward. Our attention has naturally been directed *inter alia* to **New Caledonia**, the capture of which would, it seems to us, directly jeopardise our position in **Fiji** and indirectly militate strongly against the line of reinforcement by air and sea from the **United States of America**. We would be most grateful if His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** would urgently consider what steps they could find it possible to take to strengthen the defences of **New Caledonia**, in much the same way as we have taken great risks to strengthen **Fiji**. A somewhat similar position arises with reference to **Norfolk Island** which, it will be noted, contains an important cable connection. ¹

¹ On 26 February the Australian Government replied that the defence of **New Caledonia** had been discussed by the British and United States Chiefs of Staff and plans agreed upon. An AIF company was already located there and a **United States** force then en route to **Australia** would probably provide a temporary garrison for the island.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

266 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS² – [EXTRACT]

266

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*²

[Extract]

19 February 1942

Your telegram of 3 February [No. 264].

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand concur in the recommendations which are under consideration by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington**, and for their part they will be glad to afford all possible supplies to such **United States** forces as might be assigned to assist in the defence of **Fiji**.

2. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would point out that the Anzac area, for the defence of which they are committed to employ all the resources they can command, does not include *inter alia* the Mandated Territory of **Western Samoa** or **Fanning Island**. In view of the proximity of **Western Samoa** to American Samoa, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be glad to learn whether it is the intention of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in **Washington** to recommend and arrange for the **United States** to provide such additional measures of defence there as will ensure that its present weakness does not constitute an undue menace to American Samoa. The garrison comprises 1 Warrant Officer, 150 natives with rifles, 6 medium machine guns, 2 light machine guns, 11 sub-machine guns with 18,000 rounds, 197,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition and 1000 grenades....³

5. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand assume, but would be glad

to receive confirmation or otherwise of this assumption, that the defence dispositions of the **United States in French Oceania** will not be limited to Bora Bora but will extend generally to the whole group.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**, the Governor of **Fiji** and the New Zealand Minister in **Washington**.

³ See *Fanning Island*, No. 330, for text omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

267 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

267

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

4 April 1942

Your telegram of 19 February [No. 266].

I have discussed the defence of **Western Samoa** with **Admiral King** this morning. He has arrangements in hand for a garrison, etc., and will let me have a memorandum with details, when I will communicate with you again. ¹

¹ See p. 300, note 2.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

268 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND²

268

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*²

5 April 1942

In connection with arrangements for the despatch of **United States** forces to **Tongatabu**, Admiral King has asked the Joint Staff Mission, **Washington**, for authority for the **United States Forces** to use any **Pacific** island under **United Kingdom** or Dominion control without prior notification as may be required by the exigencies of war. He points to security objections to disseminating prior information of movements to the number of persons necessarily concerned if the normal procedure were followed.

2. In respect of **Pacific** islands under **United Kingdom** administration, we are prepared for our own part to agree to entry without prior notification when **United States** authorities consider this essential, on the understanding that whenever possible prior notification will be given. The reply would explain that this is thought desirable not only for formal reasons, but also because it may in certain cases be expedient that prior arrangements should be made for the reception of **United States** forces, and that we assume that the new procedure would not affect any existing arrangements for the **United States** authorities to notify local service authorities.

3. We would be glad to know whether the Commonwealth Government and the **New Zealand Government** concur in a reply on these lines.³

4. It is assumed that a reply in respect of the islands under the

Australian and New Zealand Administrations will be sent direct.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

³ See *Fanning Island*, No. 333.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

269 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

269

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

10 April 1942

WESTERN SAMOA—Occupation by **United States Forces**.

An agreement was drawn up and signed on 20 March 1942 between Brigadier-General Larsen, ¹ Military Governor of American Samoa, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt, ² New Zealand Staff Corps, covering the establishment of **United States forces in Western Samoa**. A copy of the agreement is being forwarded to you by post. A summary of the main points covered follows:

The object of the agreement is to ensure that [**United States forces for?**] the defence of American Samoa and British Samoa would be established in **Western Samoa** with the utmost despatch, and that the defence of both American and British Samoa would be treated as one by the Commander of the American forces.

The United States is to have full and free use of the areas and facilities required; facilities include ports, land areas, roads, communications, seaplane base, etc.

The Samoan Group shall be considered as a tactical entity, both Western and American Samoa being under the same military status.

Under the principle of unity of command the Military Governor of American Samoa shall exercise the same authority in **Western Samoa**. The functions of civil government in **Western Samoa** will continue to be exercised by the Administrator, but in military matters the approval of

the Military Governor will be required.

The local detachment of New Zealand troops will act as patrols and military police and may be assigned missions in the general defence scheme.

Camps, airfields, and similar areas placed at the disposal of the United States forces shall pass to their exclusive jurisdiction.

The New Zealand Government agrees to provide the United States forces with the necessary land and water areas and their unrestricted use during the period of the agreement.

The airfield facilities involve some 5000 acres of land, including the waterfront along the seaplane runway at Satapuala.

The provisions of the agreement became operative immediately and were to be subject to final ratification by the Governments of the United States and New Zealand.

I have today informed General Hurley that the New Zealand Government accept and ratify this agreement. ³

¹ Maj-Gen H. L. Larsen, US Marine Corps; Military Governor of American Samoa, 1942–44; island commander, **Guam**, 1944–45.

² Brig F. L. Hunt, OBE, commanded 8 Bde, 3 NZ Div, May – Jul 1942; 16 Bde Gp (**Tonga**) Feb 1943 – Feb 1944; QMG, Army HQ, 1946–48.

³ The first detachment of United States Marines landed at **Apia, Western Samoa**, on 24 Mar 1942. Later, **United States** forces under this agreement were greatly augmented.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

270 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

270

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

14 April 1942

Your telegram No. 134 of 10 April. ¹

You will have observed the disparity between the number of personnel considered necessary for **New Caledonia** and the number at present available in **Fiji**.

In view of urgent demands in New Zealand itself there is little more that we can do to increase the strength in **Fiji**, though we are endeavouring to the limit of our capacity to man equipment as it arrives.

In the further consideration of the matter which is contemplated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, please endeavour to ensure that the special position of **Fiji**, particularly having regard to the fact that Vanua Levu is totally undefended, is given the consideration that it merits.

¹ Not published. Contained the text of a memorandum dated 7 Apr 1942, submitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the President, on the defences of **Fiji** and **New Caledonia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

271 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

271

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

17 April 1942

We note the conditions on which Admiral King has been good enough to convey to you the information contained in your telegram No. 143 of 12 April ² and we would be strongly opposed to any step that might hinder or stop the flow of such information. There are, however, certain observations which at once occur to us on reading your telegram, and which at the appropriate time and place must obviously be raised with the American authorities. You may under the circumstances consider it inadvisable to mention them to Admiral King, in which case perhaps you might think it proper to discuss them with Admiral Ghormley on his arrival at **Washington**. If your judgment is against either course, then obviously these with other similar matters must be amongst those which we will discuss with the Admiral on his arrival here. The observations to which I refer above are as follows:

1. You will not have failed to notice (as in the case of **New Caledonia**) the disparity between the forces proposed for other **Pacific Islands** and those contemplated for **Fiji**. The personnel proposed for the Samoan Group are in excess of those at present available for the defence of the Fiji Group—if the Air personnel are included, substantially so. But the most remarkable differentiation is in respect of aircraft. You will notice that in the proposals for the Samoan Group the total number of aircraft contemplated is 231. In Fiji there are at present 45, of which only 22 fighters and 10 reconnaissance bombers can be regarded as effective. It is, of course, agreed generally that this air strength is inadequate for the purpose. We have no possibility of increasing it ourselves, nor at the

moment does there seem any prospect of increasing it from **United Kingdom** or, indeed, **United States** sources, but clearly if 231 aircraft are considered necessary for the defence of the Samoan Group a very substantial increase in aircraft is necessary for the safety of the **Fijian Group**.

It occurs to us as possible that in the computation of the air strength required the necessities of the Samoan Group are being considered by the **United States Naval** authorities while those of the **Fijian Group** have perhaps been the responsibility of the **United States Army** authorities, and that the disparity in the proposals may perhaps arise from that source. Whatever the cause, it merits the serious consideration of the **United States** authorities.

2. In connection with the proposal relating to Wallis, it will be noted that only a few weeks ago the views of the **United States Government** were taken on a proposal of the **Free French** authorities in the **Pacific** to take Wallis and Futuna which, though not mentioned in your telegram, is not without importance as a possible enemy base. The conclusion come to at that time—and conveyed by us to the **Free French** authorities in the **Pacific**—was that the destruction of the means of radio communication on Wallis would be a useful course, but that an attempt by the **Free French Forces** to take and hold the island might not be advisable. It is apparent now that the intention is to take and hold Wallis, and we assume that in this matter the **Free French** authorities have been consulted and are fully aware of the proposals.

3. We have been very much interested in the reference to amphibious forces in your telegram ¹ and in two very recent messages from your Legation to Service authorities here, which are the first intimations we have had of any such possibility. You may fully assure Admiral King that any forces sent here for the purpose of training for an expedition elsewhere will be welcomed, that we will provide every facility within our power, and that we will of course raise no objection when they leave on the operations for which they are designed. We would be grateful for any information which you may be able to give us, as and when it is

available, as to the size and constitution of this proposed force and, particularly, when it may be expected to arrive, in order that we may have an adequate opportunity of making the necessary preparations.

² Not published. This message gave details of the American forces and equipment, including aircraft, being provided for the defence of the Samoan Group and other islands. This information was provided by Admiral King on the understanding that it was conveyed to Mr Fraser for his personal knowledge.

¹ The passage read: 'I also discussed the question of amphibious divisions and stated that such troops when in New Zealand would be three parts of the way to the place where they would be required for offensives. King suggested that when the amphibious troops were in New Zealand we might object to them leaving. I replied that whatever agreement we made with regard to any troops which came our way would be kept.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

272 – LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND

272

*Letter from the Governor of Fiji to the Prime Minister of New
Zealand*

21 April 1942

DEAR MR. FRASER

I understand that the Service authorities here have represented to you the inadequacy of present military and air forces to protect and hold **Fiji** against the scale of attack it may have to face. That our defences are entirely insufficient is also the feeling (in their case, of course, not based on expert knowledge) of the civil population of the Colony, in whose interests I am writing this personal letter to you.

I am not clear as to the latest arrangements as regards the New Zealand Defence Area, but I write to offer you what support I may in the representations which your Government is doubtless making with the Allied Command to the effect that **Fiji's** defences may be brought rapidly up to requisite strength.

It would be regrettable if our defences, while sufficiently important to invite attack, were insufficient to repel it.

Believe me,

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) H. C. LUKE

P.S. I would appreciate any information you can give me as to the latest Allied Command arrangements for this area.

H.C.L.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

273 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON – [EXTRACT]

273

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington [Extract]

22 April 1942

The following appreciation by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff on the defence of **Fiji** has been approved by **War Cabinet**, who regard the matter as of the utmost importance and urgency. We suggest that you should discuss it with Admiral Ghormley on his arrival. We leave it to your discretion, having regard to the reconsideration of the defence of **Fiji**, which we understand is now being undertaken, whether you should also at once discuss it with Admiral King. As you are aware, although the Chiefs of Staff have expressed the view that we need six divisions for the defence of New Zealand, there are at present available in New Zealand the equivalent of three divisions only. It is therefore most undesirable to denude New Zealand of further formations. Nevertheless, having regard to the extreme importance of **Fiji** to the Allied cause in the **Pacific**, we have just approved the despatch of a further 2000 troops to **Fiji** to man American equipment arriving there, and there will be a necessity for a further 4000 during the course of this year.

Appreciation begins:

‘1. The increasing importance of **Fiji** and the consequent increased risk of early attack requires, in our opinion, that the forces there should be materially increased at the earliest possible date.

‘2. Since the forces in **Fiji** were raised to their present strength the following developments have occurred:

(A fleet anchorage is to be established at **Nandi** and naval facilities a) increased at **Suva**.

(Allied naval forces have been operating in the vicinity, involving b) greater use of **Fiji** for naval purposes, and this will continue.

(A new aerodrome (Narewa) is being established in the **Nandi** area; c) and **Nausori** aerodrome, which even now is inadequately defended, is being enlarged. An additional three aerodromes are required by the **United States** authorities and these must inevitably be outside the existing defended area.

‘3. The present land forces are barely sufficient to hold the two defended areas of **Nandi–Momi** and **Suva**, while the air forces located in **Fiji** are not strong enough to meet the scale of attack which **Japan** could bring against the island. This is estimated at initially one division supported by strong naval forces, including four carriers, though it could be materially increased. The reinforcements sent to **Fiji** in December-January may, however, have achieved the important purpose of deterring **Japan** from an attempt to capture the island with a small force. The larger enemy forces now required for that operation would not only absorb more shipping and escort, but also present a good target for Allied naval and air forces.

‘4. While the threat of Allied naval action must be a strong deterrent against a Japanese attack on **Fiji**, the naval situation is liable to rapid alteration which may at short notice increase the risk and scale of attack.

‘5. A considerable expansion of the existing air forces in **Fiji** is necessary for the following reasons:

(i) Apart from naval forces, the defence of the island can best be secured by the maintenance of adequate air forces in **Fiji**, together with facilities for receiving reinforcing squadrons by air.

(ii) The need for strong air anti-submarine patrols to escort shipping to and from the vicinity of **Fiji** is continually increasing.

While existing aerodromes are capable of operating more aircraft than are at present in **Fiji**, any major expansion of the air forces such as is considered necessary will require the construction of new aerodromes.

This, in turn, necessarily entails an increase in the land forces which must precede commencement of the construction of the new aerodromes to provide adequate ground defence....

‘7. Strategically it is undesirable to lock up strong air forces at every point in the strategic chain of islands across the Pacific. We consider that the principle of mutual reinforcement should be developed in these islands. It is, however, necessary that certain minimum forces should be located at the most vulnerable places so that they can by immediate action attack invading forces in sufficient strength to hamper effectively invading operations while reinforcements are being despatched....

‘9. At the present time both Suva and Nandi are inadequately protected against underwater attack. The necessary underwater defences are still under consideration with the American authorities in Washington. The United States Navy Department are supplying certain equipment. In our opinion adequate arrangements are being made for Suva, but the proposed defences for Nandi are insufficient....¹

‘13. The arrival of United States naval, land and air forces in New Zealand will progressively increase the security of New Zealand. As the air forces increase to the point where superiority over the probable scale of enemy air attack is reached, so land forces could be made available for elsewhere, including participation in an Allied offensive.

‘14. RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recommend that—

(The Fiji situation be placed fully before the Commander, South a) Pacific Area, at the earliest possible moment with the recommendation that United States Forces reinforce Fiji to the extent indicated in paragraph 12.

(On the implementation of (a) the construction of additional b) aerodromes required in Fiji will be commenced.

(Arrangements be made for the rapid reinforcement of air forces in c) Fiji from adjacent areas.’

¹ Paragraphs 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 are not reproduced. They listed army, air and naval requirements considered essential for the defence of Fiji.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

274 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

274

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

23 April 1942

Your telegram of 22 April. I discussed the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff appreciation on the defence of **Fiji** with Admiral King this morning and have sent copies to him, Admiral Ghormley, and General Marshall.

The appreciation will be referred at once to the United States Plans Division for report.

The Plans Division have for some time been examining the appreciation set out in cable [**No. 209**] ¹ and I hope that a decision will be reached at an early date.

Williams ² will meet the Plans Division in conference tomorrow morning.

¹ See

² **Brig A. B. Williams**, DSO, Legion of Merit (US); NZ Army representative on British Joint Staff Mission, **Washington**, Feb 1942 – Oct 1943; Commander, Central Military District, 1943–44; Northern Military District, 1945–47.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

275 – LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE
GOVERNOR OF FIJI

275

*Letter from the Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of
Fiji*

27 April 1942

DEAR SIR HARRY

,

I have your secret and personal letter of 21 April ³ with reference to the defence of **Fiji**. Believe me, we fully share the views to which you have given expression and we have over a lengthy period of time repeatedly made most urgent and vigorous representations on the matter both to the **United Kingdom** and to the **United States**. These representations we have repeated and reinforced by additional facts during the last few days, and we are informed by the New Zealand Minister in **Washington** that the matter is at the moment receiving the urgent and, I hope, sympathetic consideration of those responsible in **Washington**. You may rely on us to leave nothing undone that will contribute towards the strengthening of the Fijian defences and I shall not fail to use your own views on the matter as and when the occasion arises.

With reference to your enquiry as to Allied Command arrangements for this area, I attach hereto a statement ⁴ showing the boundaries of the various areas in the **Pacific** which have now been agreed to between the Governments of the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands**, **Australia** and New Zealand. From this you will observe that an area bounded on the North by the equator, on the West by longitude 160 East (with a small deviation in the North to exclude the whole of

the Solomon Islands) and on the East by longitude 110 West, now constitutes the ' **South Pacific Area**', including as you will see New Zealand, **Fiji** and, roughly speaking, all the Islands in the **Pacific** south of the equator and east of the **Solomons**. This area will be under an American Admiral, who we understand is to be Vice-Admiral Ghormley, who will, in turn, be responsible to Admiral Nimitz of **Honolulu**. Admiral Ghormley has not yet taken up his post but it is understood that he is at present in **Washington** en route to the South Pacific.

Kind regards,
Yours sincerely

(*Sgd*) P. FRASER

³ No. 272.

⁴ Not reproduced. The statement was a copy of Annex 1 to No. 178 of 3 April.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

276 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

276

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

28 April 1942

We have little information regarding Army troops which the Americans are sending to **Tongatabu**, but we understand that a substantial task force under a Brigadier-General will arrive there shortly.

Lieutenant-Colonel McLeod,¹ now in command of New Zealand troops and the **Tonga Defence Force**, has been ordered to place himself under the operational command of the American general and to render him all possible assistance.

This can only be regarded as a temporary measure as General Mead in **Fiji** is also responsible for **Tonga**.

Please take up with the **United States** authorities the question of American troops assuming complete responsibility for the defence of **Tonga**, including the relief of our artillery unit and New Zealand personnel with the **Tonga Defence Force**, all of which we advocate.

There will be minor difficulties to be overcome with regard to the Defence Force, which as you know consists of local troops with a cadre of New Zealand officers and non-commissioned officers and has British weapons. Complete relief in this case will therefore take time.

Brigadier Williams has full details of the present defences at **Tonga**.

¹ Lt-Col J. M. C. McLeod, MC and bar; OC **Tonga Defence Force**, 1942; CO 4 Bn, Fiji Inf Regt, Jun 1943 – Mar 1944.



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

277 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

277

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

29 April 1942

The following précis of a report prepared by the United States Joint Working Committee after discussions with Williams is being submitted to the United States Joint Staff Planners. The report is still in the preliminary planning stage and is highly secret. It is strongly emphasised that it is submitted to you for the information only of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and not for transmission to any other source.

Part I. GENERAL

‘(1) The United States Joint Working Committee have considered the forces and facilities required for the defence of New Zealand and **Fiji** as related to the South Pacific problem. They are aware of the views expressed by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff in telegrams [**No. 209**] of 14 [13] March ¹ and [**No. 273**] of 22 April and relevant papers. The recommendations have still to be considered by the United States Joint Staff and must not be considered as finally approved.

‘(2) The United States Staff refused to consider **Fiji** as a separate problem and insist that it is one of a series of mutually supporting islands, and that the security of the **Pacific** area and subsequent operations must be considered as a whole.

‘(3) The Committee recommends the following be completed by December 1942:

(**Bora Bora** – 4000 troops now in position.

a)

(**Samoa** and Wallis – 23,000 troops; 13,000 troops are to be mobile and
b) be “for operations anywhere”. This mobile (amphibious) force may
come to New Zealand before a large offensive undertaking, but will
remain in **Samoa** until the defensive situation is more satisfactory.

(**Tongatabu** – 7000 troops, including airmen.

c)

(**New Caledonia** – 24,000 now in position.

d)

(**Efate** – 7000 troops.

e)

(**Fiji** – 1000 **United States** troops; includes **United States** air staff. New
f) Zealand to provide another 12,000 troops from New Zealand.

‘(4) Initial movements of troops for **Tongatabu**, **Samoa**, **Efate**, already
scheduled as follows:

Tongatabu – arrive 7 May; in position 7 July.

Samoa – arrive 5 May; in position 5 June.

Efate – arrive 12 May; in position 12 July.

¹ See

Part II. NAVY

‘(5) The Joint Working Committee is recommending to the United States Joint Staff that anchorages at **Suva and **Nandi** are deficient in coastal, anti-aircraft and underwater defences.**

‘The authorised requisition of more urgent material for the above and **Auckland is quoted and is the same as BAD's [British Admiralty Delegation] 1539 of 31 March. ¹**

‘(6) Projected operations in the South Pacific are to be under the Supreme Naval Commander in New Zealand, with a Deputy Commander to command all troop and air garrisons and all amphibious troops in the area. An advance command post is to be in **Tongatabu.**

‘(7) The Committee's recommendations for **Fiji include:**

- (Two 6-inch naval guns and ammunition by the **United States** for a) **Malolo Island**.**
- (The construction of the necessary houses, magazines and store-b) houses in **Viti Levu** by local resources.**
- (Cold-storage facilities for approximately an 800-bed hospital from c) the **United States**.**
- (One harbour tug, **United States** supplying.**
- d)**
- (One net tender for laying nets and loops, and one gate vessel for e) **Nandi** and one for **Suva** from the **Pacific Fleet**.**
- (Two minesweepers from the **Pacific Fleet**.**
- f)**
- (Four units AMTB ² guns.**
- g)**
- (Four 37-millimetre anti-aircraft guns.**
- h)**

‘(8) Notes by New Zealand Naval Attaché:

- (The Committee's attention was drawn to the request for four anti-**

a) submarine minesweeping vessels and three double L sweepers in your telegram [**No. 273**]. The recommendation is that these should accompany Fleet units when using **Nandi** harbour.

(Ocean-going tugs cannot be spared from **America** and smaller tugs b) cannot be shipped. The provision of flat-bottomed barges with two-ton derrick is being considered for gate vessels. Can New Zealand or **Fiji** assist with the latter?

(Any Fleet requirements of ammunition in **Fiji** would be met by c) ammunition ship.

‘(9) The Committee's recommendations for New Zealand include:

(Warehouses and storehouses to be provided locally.

a)

(Three 6-inch Navy guns from the **United States** for harbour b) defence in New Zealand.

¹ Not published. Contained details of naval requirements to be supplied for **Nandi**, **Suva** and **Auckland** by the United States Navy Department.

² Auxiliary Motor Torpedo Boat.

Part III. ARMY

‘(10) The United States Joint Working Committee contend that when the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff asked for six divisions for New Zealand they were not aware of **United States** intentions in the South Pacific as a whole, and that in view of these dispositions New Zealand will be reasonably [well] off with four divisions, viz., two New Zealand divisions, two **United States** divisions—the remaining New Zealand divisions to be moved to **Fiji**.

‘(11) The United States Joint Working Committee recommend that no air facilities except [those] which can be provided as a temporary measure by the United States Navy should be established at Vanua Levu, and in consequence the forces suggested in the Prime Minister's telegram [**No. 273**] of 22 April should be reviewed.

‘(12) Reference No. 144 of 12 April, ¹ showing deficiencies in major items of equipment, the Joint Working Committee submit that owing to the munitions situation generally they can only recommend absolute essentials. Will you please advise urgently the minimum quantities required to complete the full establishment:

- (a) present New Zealand troops in **Fiji**;
- (b) one division **Fiji** reinforcement from New Zealand;
- (c) one division in New Zealand;
- (d) remaining New Zealand troops in New Zealand, in that order of priority.

¹ Not published.

Part IV. AIR

‘(13) The Committee recommend that the air strengths given in my telegram No. 143 of 12 April ² should be increased as follows: the Catalinas in the Islands area to be increased to 60 and considered as a mobile force based on the general line **New Caledonia – Samoa**, and that a reinforcing reserve of 48 Catalinas and 70 land plane heavy bombers be based on **Hawaii**.

‘(14) The following then becomes the distribution of aircraft:

Bora Bora	6
Samoa (includes 104 aircraft of Marine mobile division)	207
Wallis	24
Tongatabu	25
New Caledonia	111
Mobile	60
Reserve at Hawaii	118
Total	551

‘(15) **Fiji**: The Committee recommends the following air strength and facilities—it is desired that these be based in **Fiji** and maintained by the Royal New Zealand Air Force: Fighter 50; medium bomber 26; observation (Army co-operation) 13; Navy type seaplane 12.

‘In addition, facilities to be provided for the operation of **United States** squadrons of four patrol bombers (48 flying boats), three heavy bombers (36 land planes). *Note*: It was strongly represented that permanent air squadrons at **Fiji** be increased, and the Joint Working Committee agreed to include New Zealand representations that **Fiji** should be increased by at least two dive-bombing squadrons.

‘(16) *New Zealand*:

(Based and maintained in New Zealand by **RNZAF**: Medium bomber a) (Hudson) 57; fighter 80; Army co-operation 64.

(Replacement carrier group based in New Zealand maintained by b) United States Navy: Fighters 27; dive-bombers 37; torpedo bombers 18.

(Based in New Zealand as part of the mobile forces of the South c) Pacific, maintained by the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps: Fighters 36; dive-bombers 36; observation-utility (boats) 39; patrol bombers (flying boats) 12; patrol bombers (amphibian) 12.

‘(17) The Committee recommends the following torpedo storage and maintenance facilities:

Auckland: for one carrier.

Fiji: for one Navy patrol-bomber squadron.

‘(18) It is recommended that the additional aircraft required for strengthening the Royal New Zealand Air Force be made available by the **Munitions Assignment Board**.

‘(19) It is realised that these proposals do not fill your requirements, but they are related to present strengths and production. In view of the shortage of air strength in other and equally important theatres it is not reasonable at present to press for greater allocations. For instance, the

total fighter strength in India, Burma and Ceylon at today's date is approximately equal to the total allocations of fighters advised in Air 117 ¹ of 23 April.'

² See p. 300, note 2.

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

29 APRIL 1942

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IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PART I. GENERAL

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PART II. NAVY

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c) the **United States**.**

(One harbour tug, **United States supplying.
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² **Auxiliary Motor Torpedo Boat.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PART III. ARMY

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a)
- (one division **Fiji** reinforcement from New Zealand;
b)
- (c) one division in New Zealand;
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d) priority.

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IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PART IV. AIR

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‘In addition, facilities to be provided for the operation of **United States** squadrons of four patrol bombers (48 flying boats), three heavy bombers (36 land planes). *Note*: It was strongly represented that permanent air squadrons at **Fiji** be increased, and the Joint Working Committee agreed to include New Zealand representations that **Fiji** should be increased by at least two dive-bombing squadrons.

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18.

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‘(18) It is recommended that the additional aircraft required for
strengthening the Royal New Zealand Air Force be made available by the
Munitions Assignment Board.

‘(19) It is realised that these proposals do not fill your requirements,
but they are related to present strengths and production. In view of the
shortage of air strength in other and equally important theatres it is not
reasonable at present to press for greater allocations. For instance, the
total fighter strength in **India, Burma** and **Ceylon** at today's date is
approximately equal to the total allocations of fighters advised in Air
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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

278 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

278

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

2 May 1942

Your telegram of 29 April.

We have discussed with the Chiefs of Staff the report prepared by the United States Joint Working Committee. The general impression we gather is that the **United States** authorities regard the main threat in the **Pacific** area as one to the chain of islands to the north. This is substantially in accord with our own views, but we cannot disregard the possibility, particularly if they gained a major naval success, that the Japanese might attempt an invasion of New Zealand without previously attacking any of the northern chain of islands.

2. With reference to paragraph 3 (*b*) it is noted that 13,000 of the amphibious troops in **Samoa** and Wallis may come to New Zealand before a large offensive undertaking. In view of the reference to two **United States** divisions in New Zealand in paragraph 10 of the paper, we have assumed, but would be glad to receive confirmation or otherwise of this, that the amphibious force from **Samoa** is additional to the amphibious division which it is proposed to base on **Wellington** and the Marlborough Sounds. Confirmation is also desired as to whether the amphibious division is one of the two American divisions mentioned.

3. Paragraph 3 (*f*) refers to one division of 12,000 troops, and paragraph 10 to the despatch of the remaining New Zealand divisions to **Fiji**. Firstly, is it intended that this division consist of two or three brigades? Secondly, is any indication given by the Working Committee of the total

land forces required for **Fiji**, or can we assume that they accept the New Zealand estimate? If the latter, this would involve sending two brigades. Thirdly, whatever the answer to this question, the reference to New Zealand divisions (plural) for **Fiji** in paragraph 10 is obscure. Fourthly, the statement we made earlier that we had three divisions here is approximate. In some cases units are under strength, and if formations were to be withdrawn from here for **Fiji** this would cause a certain amount of disorganisation and readjustment of dispositions. Further, a large proportion of these men are below the medical standard for overseas service. Fifthly, it would be more economical of shipping and time for **United States** forces to go to **Fiji** direct. Troop movement such as two brigades from here would require assembly of shipping, causing delay, and provision of escort which might be difficult.

In all the circumstances we are still of the opinion that the reinforcement required for **Fiji** should come from the **United States**.

4. Reference paragraph 5, it is hoped that the underwater defences required at **Suva** and **Nandi** will be provided quickly.

5. Reference paragraph 7 (*a*) and (*h*), the installation of 6-inch guns at Malolo will mean detachment of infantry to this island. It is assumed that the four anti-aircraft guns will be for anti-aircraft defence of this battery.

6. Reference paragraph 7 (*b*), it may be possible to secure sufficient untrained labour in **Fiji** for construction work, but trained personnel and equipment cannot be provided from New Zealand except at the expense of aerodrome construction and extension, other major defence and military accommodation works, of which there is a large programme. Possibly the **United States** might provide one constructional unit with all necessary equipment.

7. Paragraph 7 (*c*) – a hospital is already in course of construction near the **Nandi** area. Is it intended that an additional one be erected and, if so, will this be a mobile unit to be provided from **United States**

resources?

8. Paragraph 8 (b) – the provision of flat-bottomed barges will be investigated both here and in [Fiji](#).

9. Paragraph 11 – it was never suggested that air forces be sent to Vanua Levu or air facilities developed there. The intention was that land forces should be sent to Vanua Levu until such time as the air forces in Vitu Levu were sufficiently strong to ensure Vanua Levu against invasion. It was then intended that land forces in Vanua Levu would be substantially withdrawn.

10. Paragraph 12 – my immediately following telegram ¹ gives particulars of the minimum quantities of equipment required to complete establishments in the forces mentioned.

11. Paragraph 16 – we assume, as to which confirmation is desired, that none of the air forces mentioned in paragraph (c) are carrier-borne and that additional facilities and accommodation will be required for operating and maintaining ashore the aircraft disembarked from two carriers when the latter are in harbour.

12. Investigation is being made into the practicability of manning and maintaining from New Zealand resources the air squadrons which it is suggested New Zealand should now form in the Royal New Zealand Air Force. This programme will certainly require substantial assistance in the matter of experienced personnel from elsewhere, presumably the [Royal Air Force](#).

13. Paragraph 17 – it would be appreciated if more details of the type and kind of storage and maintenance facilities required could be submitted in order that a programme could be prepared.

14. You will gather from the above that the main purpose of this message is to inform you of some of our difficulties and doubts. We leave it to your discretion to raise again the question of the despatch of reinforcements from here to [Fiji](#). In any case we are preparing a detailed

statement of our position for discussion with Admiral Ghormley immediately he arrives, and a copy will be telegraphed to you as soon as it is prepared early next week.

¹ **Not published.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

279 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

279

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

5 May 1942

Your telegram of 2 May. Replying to your paragraphs:

(2) Samoan amphibious division, if it should come to the Dominion, will be in addition to one ordinary army division and one amphibious division already provided for.

(3) The question of the provision of forces for **Fiji** is being re-examined and further information will be cabled later.

(5) The anti-aircraft guns will be for the defence of the Malolo battery.

(6) Planners are being notified that equipment and trained personnel must be provided.

(7) Storage accommodation asked for is for the 800-bed hospital already approved.

(11) The aircraft referred to are associated with the Marine group and are not carrier borne. Shore accommodation and facilities required.

Should two aircraft carriers be stationed at **Auckland** it will also be necessary to provide additional shore accommodation and maintenance.

(13) Details of storage and maintenance are being obtained and will be cabled later.

Williams is meeting Planners again today and I will discuss the matter with Admiral King tomorrow morning.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

280 — THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON

280

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

6 May 1942

My telegram [**No. 278**]. Following is the detailed statement of our general views on the defence of **Fiji** and New Zealand:

A. General Principles:

1. During the defensive period we must accept the penalties of the defensive—uncertainty as to where operations will develop and the consequent necessity, to some degree, of dispersing forces.

2. Clearly it must be decided which places it is essential to hold. In our opinion **Australia**, New Zealand and **Fiji** are each of them of first-rate importance and essential to the success of the Allied cause in the **Pacific**.

B. Fiji:

1. We regard **Fiji** as a vital link in the defence of seaborne and air traffic across the Pacific Ocean.

2. We have recognised the importance of **Fiji** since a very early stage in the war. We have not merely formed and announced our views—we have despatched to **Fiji** greater forces than we could reasonably be expected to spare, amounting to approximately a quarter of our effective strength at that time.

3. Though our own defences were extremely weak, we have had a brigade group in **Fiji** since October 1940. This was increased by another

brigade group in January 1942, while in equipment we have sent all and more than we could properly spare. It is only necessary, by way of example, to point out that we sent *all* the anti-aircraft guns, both light and heavy, that we possessed at the time.

4. We agree that **Fiji** should not be considered as a separate problem and that it is one of a series of mutually supporting islands, but if as we believe it is essential to hold it, then the support by land forces that could be made available from the other island bases is most unlikely, considering the distance involved, to arrive in time if a determined attack is launched against it.

5. We are convinced that the forces available in **Fiji** are inadequate for its defence against the probable scale of attack. This seems to be agreed by the **United States** authorities. The question then arises, how are increased forces to be provided? They could come either from New Zealand or from **North America**. If they are to come from New Zealand this leads to a consideration of the defence of this Dominion.

C. New Zealand:

1. Having regard to New Zealand's elongated shape, its length of coastline, the present incomplete warning system, the prevalence of harbours and landing beaches, the great distances between vulnerable points, the existence of Cook Strait (which in view of the transport available at once virtually halves the force that could be made available at any one point), the limited capacity of the main roads and the 3 ft 6 in. gauge railways, and the extent to which naval and air defences are not as yet available, our Service advisers have expressed the view that six divisions are required to give adequate protection against an estimated scale of attack by one division and one in support at any point in New Zealand, north or south. This scale of attack is regarded as reasonable and may well be substantially exceeded (as the British Chiefs of Staff have pointed out) if the Japanese think the operation worth allocating more of the very substantial forces at their disposal. We must be prepared for widely separated invasions mounted simultaneously.

2. Having regard to the scale of air protection which is or is likely to be available to us, we cannot accept the **United States** appreciation that four divisions (two New Zealand and two **United States**) are adequate for the defence of the Dominion against the scale of attack envisaged in the preceding paragraph. Even if we did agree, however, it should be pointed out:

(a) that the New Zealand troops are as yet both inadequately trained and inadequately equipped;

(b) that the **United States** divisions will not be here for a considerable period and that some time will no doubt elapse after their arrival before they are in a position to fight;

(c) that one of the **United States** divisions is intended in due course for operations abroad (though we agree that its removal is unlikely during the defensive period).

3. While it is a fact that for local defence the Dominion has, in addition to its forces overseas, been able to mobilise in New Zealand the equivalent in manpower of three divisions and will shortly mobilise more, a large number of these men (21,500) are required for static roles, e.g., coast and anti-aircraft defence, guards and administration, and the remainder are as yet far from being divisions ready for early operations. Moreover, the establishment proposed for these divisions is seven and not nine brigade groups, two of which will be in the north and two in the south of the **North Island** and three in the **South Island**. At the moment they are much below strength and are deficient in many important items of equipment. Not only are they as yet under strength and inadequately trained and equipped, but they include a large number of men who are either under the age (21 years) which at present we have laid down as the minimum for active operations abroad (estimated at 22,500) or are in unsatisfactory medical categories, suitable only for static roles or those not calling for the highest degree of fitness (estimated at 11,700). The flower of New Zealand's manhood is already overseas fighting or ready to fight.

4. New Zealand has sent abroad in all services over 63,000 men, of whom 9564 are dead, missing, or prisoners of war. Only 4000 have

returned, and of this 4000 only a small proportion are available for the Armed Forces here or for industry.

5. The strength of the Armed Forces now mobilised in New Zealand is over 84,000 (including 69,000 in the Army, 3000 in the Navy, and 12,000 in the **Air Force**).

6. This gives a grand total permanently mobilised at present for the purpose of active operations and entirely withdrawn from industry of more than 147,000, which is equivalent to approximately 1 in 11 of the whole population, or 40 per cent of the total manhood between 18 and 45. These are not proposals; they are actually facts. At least a further 30,000 will be required to fill the establishment laid down for New Zealand which, together with reinforcements at the lowest rate (10 per cent) until the end of 1942, will bring the proportion up to 1 in every 8 of the population, or 52 per cent of the total manhood between the ages of 18 and 45. There are limits to the number that can now be drawn upon and they appear to have been reached.

7. To obtain these men we have long ago abandoned the voluntary principle, which provided 48,655 fit and accepted volunteers for the Army alone, and have called up for service abroad or in New Zealand all single men between the ages of 18 and 45, and all married men, irrespective of the number of their children, up to the age of 31 years.

8. Apart from what can be provided (inevitably a small number) from the combing of exemptions, there are now left for future calling up only those married men between the ages of 31 and 45, estimated to produce some 60,000. From these we have to find the remainder of the New Zealand establishments (at least 30,000) and our reinforcements for the New Zealand Division in the **Middle East**, for the Division in **Fiji**, and for our local forces. At the same time we have to maintain a part-time **Home Guard** of some 60,000 men and to retain our industries at the standard required for the combined war effort, to which we make substantial contributions in raw materials and foodstuffs, and a growing contribution in munitions of war.

D. General:

1. It is essential that we should provide for the defence of New Zealand, not only in our own interests but also for the common cause. For this purpose we consider six full divisions adequately trained and equipped to be the minimum that is required in the present circumstances. We have at the moment only the equivalent in manpower of three divisions, under strength, inadequately trained, inadequately equipped, and in many cases of low medical category.

2. We consider it would be most unwise and dangerous at present to denude the defences of New Zealand further by sending to **Fiji the 12,000 men which the **United States** authorities agree are required. Indeed, in reinforcements to meet normal wastage in **Fiji** and the extra personnel to man the equipment now arriving and to arrive there, we can already see demands for **Fiji** during the present year of at least 6000 men, which it would severely tax our resources to find.**

3. It may well be that on the arrival and deployment of the contemplated American divisions the position may be easier, though we will still be well below the strength which we consider necessary. But the reinforcement of **Fiji is, in our opinion, an urgent and immediate necessity, and whatever may be our potentialities in the future when American help arrives, to provide 12,000 men at the present moment would cripple the defence of this Dominion.**

4. December 1942, the date mentioned by the **United States authorities for the completion of island garrisons, seems to us for all practical purposes to be too late. The island chain in the **Pacific** may well be broken before then.**

5. Another factor which we cannot ignore is the fact that any additional men sent from New Zealand to **Fiji must be equipped and this would, to that extent, denude the Dominion still further of the exiguous supply of equipment now available here or to be made available in the immediate future.**

6. We agree that the American naval screen north of New Zealand and the strengthening of the island bases does add materially to the defence of New Zealand, but even if we could ignore the possibility of a Japanese attempt to bypass these northern defences we cannot disregard the prospect of a naval setback. In the event of a naval reverse, whether the island bases were seized or not, New Zealand would certainly be open to a full-scale attack. It would then be too late to organise reinforcements, and we feel therefore that we must prepare for an attack on New Zealand at least on the scale mentioned above.

7. With the men and equipment available here and the American reinforcements that are coming, we will do all in our power to defend this Dominion and to increase the forces that we can send to **Fiji. But even if we were to withdraw our Division from the **Middle East**, a lengthy period must elapse before its return would enable us to release additional men for **Fiji**, and we feel that without taking an undue and improper risk to the safety of New Zealand we cannot find all the extra troops now and at once required for **Fiji**. We urge, therefore, that the possibility of providing these from **United States** (or perhaps Canadian) sources should be reconsidered. (Ends)**

You will observe that this paper is directed solely to land forces. We fully appreciate the difficulty with reference to air forces and what is already being done and in contemplation in respect of sea power.

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III**

RELIEF OF NEW ZEALAND GARRISONS IN FIJI AND TONGA

Relief of New Zealand Garrisons in Fiji and Tonga

281

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

6 May 1942

During our discussion this morning Admiral King suggested that the United States Government should accept full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**.

The proposal as submitted in rough form would mean the transfer to New Zealand of the troops at present in **Fiji**, and the despatch to **Fiji** of the United States Army division promised to New Zealand.

I am to see Admiral King at noon tomorrow, **Washington** time, and it would be helpful if I could have your first reaction prior to the meeting.

282

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

7 May 1942

Your telegram of 6 May. Our first reactions are generally favourable to Admiral's King's suggestion, but if in the interests of strategy or efficiency it is considered better that New Zealand troops should remain in **Fiji**, we should like it made clear that we are entirely willing that they should do so. We should be glad of further details as they become available.

283

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

7 May 1942

1. Admiral King advises me that up to the present nothing has been done at **Funafuti**.

Action at Wallis is apparently held up by discussions with the Free French.

3. I stressed the need for Futuna to be protected.

4. I advised the Admiral that New Zealand would favourably consider the proposal for the transfer of the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** to the **United States Forces** and would be pleased to examine details of the transfer. He advised me that the President also had approved the change. I have to discuss the subject further at 11 a.m. tomorrow, Friday morning, and would be pleased if you would communicate with the **United Kingdom** with a view to if possible obtaining their reaction tonight. In any case, the islands are in the area for which the **United States** have strategic responsibility, and Admiral King's decisions, if approved by the President, must be carried out. I will cable you again after the discussion tomorrow.

284

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

8 May 1942

We have recently been negotiating with the **United States** authorities with reference to an increase in the strength of the forces available for the defence of **Fiji**.¹ Yesterday we were advised by Mr Nash of a suggestion made by Admiral King that the **United States** should assume full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**, and that the New Zealand forces at present in **Fiji** should return to New Zealand on the early arrival in **Fiji** of an American Army division. Our immediate reactions were requested and we replied that they were generally favourable and asked for further details. Today Mr Nash has informed us that the proposal has already been approved by the President. We are surprised at this rapid development of events, and we are immediately advising you and His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** and will be grateful for your very early comments. For our part we are prepared to concur.

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 280.

285

The High Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington) to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

8 May 1942

The Prime Minister saw me today with reference to a suggestion made by Admiral King that the full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** should be assumed by the **United States**, that the American Army division intended for New Zealand should proceed to **Fiji**, and that the New Zealand forces there should then return to New Zealand.

This suggestion was conveyed to the **New Zealand Government** by the New Zealand Minister in **Washington** yesterday for the first time, with a request for their immediate reactions. The New Zealand Government, who had been negotiating with the **United States** authorities with reference to an increase in the force available for the defence of **Fiji**, replied last night that their first reactions were generally favourable and asked to be supplied with further details. They have this morning been informed by Mr Nash that the suggestion has already been approved by the President, and that as the islands are in the area for which the **United States** have strategic responsibility, Admiral King's suggestion, as approved by the President, must be carried out. This appears to be the case. The New Zealand Government, who intended, of course, to consult His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, the Governor of **Fiji**, and His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** as soon as it appeared possible that the proposal would receive the serious consideration of the American authorities, are surprised at the rapidity with which the situation has developed and regret that time has not permitted of fuller consultation. They would be grateful for a very early indication of the British Government's views. The New Zealand Government for their part are proposing to concur.

The New Zealand Government are today informing the Governor of **Fiji** and asking for his comments.

The High Commissioner for New Zealand in **London** has been supplied by Mr Nash with copies of the relevant telegrams.

286

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

8 May 1942

At my interview with Admiral King yesterday, I objected strongly to the rather precipitate method followed in connection with the proposal to alter the command at **Fiji**. In spite of this method of doing the job I am satisfied the weight of evidence supports the proposal and that it is the best procedure to follow.

This morning I discussed the matter again with the Admiral and he stated that the need for strengthening **Fiji** at once was discussed with Admiral Nimitz when King visited the west coast last week, and they both felt that the necessary urgent strengthening of the islands could be accomplished more quickly if they took over the defence of **Fiji**, and it was the fact that some troops were on the way which caused them to hurry; he agreed that the preliminaries were carried out rather precipitately.

Yesterday he advised Sir John Dill and Admiral Stark, so the question will be raised in **London** from several sources.

The discussion this morning was in every way helpful. I stressed the imperative need of six divisions being available fully trained in New Zealand if it was to be adequately defended, and urged that further amphibious divisions should be trained in the Dominion. The trouble at present is mainly that troops are limited in number and there are pulls for them from all sources, particularly **Australia** and **Britain**. I stressed again the fact that training in New Zealand would serve a double purpose—defence of the Dominion and readiness for the offensive when the time

is ripe. I also suggested that we would train some of our men for amphibious work if essential equipment was provided and then they could take their part with Americans in the offensive. The position looked much better when I left.

When the proposed transfer of **Fiji** has been considered by the **United Kingdom** and yourself, and if approved, we can go into details, which will require much thought.

King said the proposal to take over would provide for **United States** forces on the way to get off at **Fiji**, and the ships to come on to New Zealand with our men.

I have arranged to discuss the Dominion position and the **Fiji** proposals with General Marshall at 11 a.m. Monday morning.

287

*The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (Suva) to the Prime Minister*¹

9 May 1942

Your most secret telegram [**No. 284**] inviting my early comments on the proposal as approved by the President that the **United States** should assume full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**, and that the New Zealand forces now in **Fiji** should return to New Zealand on the arrival of an American Army division. I have, subject to the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, no objection in principle to the assumption of responsibility by the **United States** for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** if this is considered necessary on the grounds of higher policy by all concerned. But, as I represented in my personal letter to you of 21 April,² one division is not sufficient to hold **Fiji** and I had hoped for one **United States** division in addition, not in substitution for, the New Zealand forces at present here. If the New Zealand forces cannot remain, I consider that two **United States** divisions would afford the minimum margin of safety.

On practical as well as political grounds it would be necessary to preserve the identity of the **Fiji** and Tongan Defence Forces within the framework of the **United States** command, which has presented no difficulty hitherto with regard to the New Zealand command, and I imagine would be entirely acceptable to the United States Army authorities.

¹ Repeated to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

² See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 272.

288

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

10 May 1942

Further to my cable of 8 May [**No. 286**], the following is the text of a memorandum just received from Admiral King, dated 9 May:

‘ As previously indicated, in the interest of homogeneity of the **New a) Caledonia- Fiji- Samoa** area, the **United States** division scheduled for New Zealand will be diverted to **Fiji**, thus ultimately relieving New Zealand troops and making **Fiji** a **United States** responsibility. With reference to troops on the way (cable [**No. 286**]), King now says that all troops are ready to embark on 17 May.

‘ The suggested method is that two ships carrying the balance of **b) the force** (infantry, artillery) totalling 4500 men will be despatched direct to **Fiji** from the **United States** on approximately 17 May. The remainder of the division will be despatched direct to New Zealand on the same date.

‘ Method. One of the two ships for **Fiji** will remain at **Fiji** and **c) embark** New Zealand troops to New Zealand. This ship is to run a shuttle service between **Auckland** and **Fiji** with **United States** troops from New Zealand and New Zealand troops from **Fiji** with comparable units. This arrangement is made necessary by comparison of the port facilities **Auckland - Fiji**. Owing to the shipping situation the New Zealand port must be **Auckland**.

‘ The United States division now allocated to **Fiji** will eventually be

d) increased by additional anti-aircraft and special service troops when shipping becomes available—estimated leaving the United States in July or August. In the meantime, anti-aircraft, etc., must remain in Fiji.

(The United States intend to take over all the defence of Fiji, including naval, as soon as personnel, etc., becomes available. In the meantime New Zealand is to continue the responsibility for planned construction of all works and to operate port facilities until naval personnel are relieved by United States forces, when they will be returned to New Zealand.

(The United States generally will eventually assume command of all Army, Navy, and Air forces in the Fiji Islands.

(All plans are held up pending your approval.'

g)

I am to see Marshall tomorrow in this connection, but before I further discuss with King and Williams sees Planners, could I have your reactions at the earliest moment?

Time has not permitted a full study of this suggested plan. My present view is that it does not meet the requirement of urgency. In your reply please include remarks on the capability of Fiji ports to handle more ships. July-August may be too late [group mutilated—unless?] urgency has passed.

289

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

[Extract]

12 May 1942

Your telegram of 10 May.

We agree generally with the proposals. Details of the relief will of course require to be worked out in consultation between USA, New Zealand and Fiji authorities. In the meantime we suggest that it is imperative that the first United States flight arriving in Fiji should go into a reserve camp until reconnaissances are completed, equipment assembled and reserves of ammunition suitably disposed, and that the

first New Zealand troops relieved should remain in reserve in **Fiji** until the first flight of **United States** troops from New Zealand reaches **Fiji**. The ship proposed for the shuttle service would therefore proceed empty from **Fiji** to New Zealand except for such workmen and sick whom it is convenient to return to New Zealand. The shuttle system suggested in your cable could then commence. This system would result in an immediate increase in strength in **Fiji** during the somewhat dangerous initial period of the relief.

We recognise that economical use of shipping and the escort problem demand close attention and will affect the detailed planning. It may be possible to supplement from New Zealand resources the shipping required to transport **United States** troops from New Zealand to **Fiji**.

Action has already been taken to prepare for the accommodation of **United States** troops in the vicinity of **Auckland**.

Anti-aircraft, coast defence, and any other units and services required and now in **Fiji** will, as suggested, remain there till relieved by **United States** units.

New Zealand will continue works and the operation of port facilities until relieved.

We assume that the **United States** troops will bring vehicles with them and that, dependent upon the capacity of ships, either the New Zealand vehicles now in **Fiji** will be exchanged for vehicles brought to New Zealand with **United States** troops or the New Zealand vehicles returned to New Zealand. It is of course essential that all troops during all stages of the relief should have their vehicles available.... ¹

It is desirable to effect the transfer of forces expeditiously but deliberately. To effect a too hasty transfer would endanger the defence of **Fiji** at what may well be the most dangerous time.

¹ Text omitted gave details of the capacity of **Suva** and **Lautoka**

ports.

290

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)

13 May 1942

Your telegram of 8 May [**No. 285**].

Please thank the Prime Minister for his message. The United States proposals have now been considered by our military advisers, and in all the circumstances we also for our part see no objection to them.

We have been given to understand informally that the **United States** authorities also propose to station in New Zealand a **United States** amphibian force, starting shortly with the elements of one Marine division and rising by the end of 1942 to two Marine divisions and several Marine battalions with Corps troops.

291

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

13 May 1942

The United States plan for the relief of **Fiji** was issued this afternoon. A copy is being forwarded to you by air, leaving tomorrow, also a copy to GOC Fiji. In the main it is the same as indicated in my telegram of 10 May [**No. 288**]. Details of individuals reliefs and shuttle service are to be worked out by Ghormley, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, the United States General ¹ designate (who accompanies the first echelon to **Fiji**, arriving approximately 9 June) and Mead. Your point about individual reliefs is agreed with in principle. The ship *Coolidge* ² detailed for the shuttle [service] is capable of carrying 3250 troops, 10,000 tons of cargo, cruising speed 17 knots. The United States Staff estimate that the **United States** division will be complete in **Fiji** sixty days after the first troops arrive in **Fiji**.

The United States Staff request that **RNZAF** units remain in **Fiji** until the changeover is completed, the date to be determined by local commanders.

¹ Maj-Gen R. S. Beightler; GOC 37 US Div; Commanding General, **United States Forces in Fiji**, 1942.

² *President Coolidge*, US liner, 21,936 tons; troop transport; sunk at **Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides**, on 25 Oct 1942.

292

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

16 May 1942

Your telegram No. 72 of 15 May. ³

We have just received advice from His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** that they concur in the proposed transfer to the **United States** of responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** and have ourselves advised the **United States** authorities of our own concurrence. The comments that you have made as to the strength required in **Fiji** are fully appreciated and, for our part, we have done our utmost not only to stress the case for greater strength but also to ensure that there will be no weakening of the defences during the changeover. We understand that, as now proposed, the changeover, which should commence next month, will lead to an immediate increase of over 4000 in the troops available in **Fiji**, which will be maintained throughout, and there is every prospect of increased forces when they can be made available.

³ Not published. Requested information whether any decision had been reached regarding the change of responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**.

293

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

18 May 1942

The following is personal for the Prime Minister from the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

Since the outbreak of war with **Japan** I have often had occasion to feel gratitude for the generous and unselfish manner in which your Government has balanced the defence needs of **Fiji** and the High Commission territories in the Western Pacific, for which I am ultimately and in part responsible to His Majesty, against the urgent calls for the defence of New Zealand herself.

I do hope you will never feel that we are taking your constant care and helpfulness for granted. Your sympathetic understanding is a powerful aid in ensuring that all resources are disposed in defence to the best advantage. It will hasten the day when we shall start to throw the invader out of the South Pacific.

With respect I express my thanks and admiration for your generosity and judgment.

294

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

21 May 1942

Your telegram of 18 May.

The following is personal for the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Prime Minister:

Thank you so much for your very kind message. I am glad to know that what we have tried to do for **Fiji** has been so fully appreciated—we have done our best and, as you know, to this end, have taken real risks

in New Zealand.

For very many reasons it is a matter of regret to us that on grounds of broader strategy our direct responsibility for **Fiji** will shortly cease.

Believe me, we in our turn have much appreciated the very full and complete co-operation which has been extended to us throughout by the **United Kingdom** and **Fijian** authorities, who have done everything possible to facilitate our task.

295

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ¹

26 May 1942

On the urgent representations of Admiral Ghormley ² as to the necessity of strengthening the defences of **Fiji**, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are willing to leave their troops in **Fiji** in the meantime in addition to the American division shortly to arrive there. The New Zealand Government fully realise that this will add appreciably to the risks to be taken by this Dominion, which they regard already as great, but in the circumstances they feel that they must accept these risks. While their decision is quite unconditional, the situation has been explained to Admiral Ghormley who will, it is understood, represent the position to the American authorities with a view to obtaining American troops in substitution at the earliest moment circumstances will allow.

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister in **Washington**.

² Admiral Ghormley arrived in New Zealand on 21 May.

296

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of

New Zealand

2 June 1942

Following from Prime Minister to Prime Minister:

Your telegram [No. 295] is yet another example of the consistently helpful and generous attitude which your Government never fail to adopt however difficult the circumstances. Your selflessness is a source of comfort and strength to us all and we are deeply grateful. All best wishes.

297

*The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington
[Extract]*

9 June 1942

Will you please see Admiral King and give him the following personal message from me:

‘We wonder whether there has been some misunderstanding of our attitude in connection with the proposed retention in **Fiji in the meantime of the New Zealand troops now stationed there. ¹ We felt that they would be an additional insurance in circumstances of considerable risk, with comparatively little to resist it, of an attack in force by the Japanese. Despite the risk which we apprehended and still do apprehend to New Zealand itself, we had felt that these troops would be of greater value in **Fiji** than in New Zealand, and our decision to leave them there, if this was considered desirable, was one**

¹ Mr Nash had reported on 30 May to Mr Fraser, ‘exclusively for your personal information’, an interview with Admiral King ‘at which I discussed Ghormley's proposal re leaving our men at **Fiji**. I think Ghormley's proposal good and your response to the suggestion excellent, and I told King so. His feeling, however, is that Ghormley should not have made the suggestion, which might affect the **United States'** promise to send a division to New Zealand and their plans for disposition in the Islands. I still

think that your decision on Ghormley's suggestion was correct and reiterated this to King.'

which we hoped would be welcomed in **Washington**. We wonder whether in arriving at what we believe to be your decision on this matter you might perhaps have felt that our agreement to leave our men in **Fiji** might lead to a request, which might be embarrassing to you, for additional **United States** troops for New Zealand in substitution. If this thought did in fact influence you, I hasten to assure you that this is not the case and that our offer was and remains completely unconditional. We still feel that it is undoubtedly the right course to take, and we hope that it is still perhaps not too late for you to reconsider the matter. A substantial reason, not previously referred to, for considering it essential to augment the forces in **Fiji** is the necessity for supplementing the facilities for operating air forces by building new airfields. These new airfields should not we think be constructed without disposing forces for their defence, which under the establishment contemplated would not be available. I should make it clear in case of misunderstanding that this message is from the **New Zealand Government** and not from Admiral Ghormley, whom we have not in the circumstances again consulted.'

2. If it is not possible in your opinion to alter Admiral King's views on the retention in **Fiji** of the New Zealand troops, we will ask you in due course to endeavour to ensure that our suggestion as to individual reliefs, which you have told us in your telegram [**No. 291**] was agreed to in principle, will actually be applied in practice.... ¹

¹ A reference to morale in the **United States** plan for the relief of **Fiji** has been omitted.

8 June 1942 ²

... Your telegram [**No. 297**] to hand subsequent to my return from an interview with King, during which I again strongly emphasised that his decision re **Fiji** was completely wrong and that our offer in every way was unconditional.

²The apparent incongruity in the date of this telegram and that to which it replies is explained by the international date-line. **No. 297** was despatched at 1.30 a.m. on 9 June.

I am to see him again tomorrow morning at 11.30, when I will give him your message.... ³

³ In the text omitted Mr Nash reported on other matters discussed in a recent interview with Admiral King.

299

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

9 June 1942

I have just returned from Admiral King after delivering the message in your telegram [**No. 297**].

Without waiting to draft a written reply he asked me to convey to you his personal thanks and appreciation of the co-operative spirit of yourself and the Government. The message was particularly helpful, so he said, in that it unmistakably conveyed to him the fact that the **New Zealand Government** had a complete understanding of the importance of his strategic plans for holding **Fiji** and other strong points to the north of New Zealand.

I emphasised that you would at all times co-operate in any plans that would achieve our mutual objective and asked if any action of the **New Zealand Government** or anything in the directives were in any way limiting him in his plans. He said 'No' but, reiterating his suggestion of

yesterday, he felt that New Zealand should train an amphibious force to take part with **America** when the time for offensive action came. ¹ I mentioned that your exclusive desire, in addition to providing for the security of the Dominion, was to use the whole of the Dominion's resources—air, naval and army—in the way that he considered would most effectively assist in defeating [group omitted—the Axis?] powers.

King said he would consult with the United States Chiefs of Staff and would then communicate with me.

As soon as I hear from him I will advise you.

¹ See

No previous reference to this suggestion by Admiral King can be found in any of Mr Nash's telegrams during the preceding few days.

300

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

10 June 1942

In case of any possible misunderstanding of the attitude of the **New Zealand Government** in respect of the defence of **Fiji**, I think you should know for your private information that the **New Zealand Government** some little time ago offered to leave their troops in **Fiji** in the meantime in addition to the Americans. Admiral King, it is understood, was not favourable to the suggestion but we repeated the offer yesterday. No conditions at all were attached to the offer.

301

The Governor of Fiji to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

10 June 1942

Your telegram [**No. 300**] in fact answers my telegram to you of yesterday No. 89 ¹ which it must have crossed. I greatly appreciate the generous attitude of your Government and earnestly trust the renewed offer will now be accepted.

¹ Not published. The Governor of **Fiji** asked whether the prospect of increased forces envisaged in the last paragraph of No. 292 of 16 May was likely to be realised.

302

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

11 June 1942

The following message has been received from Admiral King, which he has asked me to transmit to you in reply to your personal message contained in cable [No. 297]:

‘Your personal message to me conveyed through the Minister for New Zealand is most welcome and encouraging in that it indicates recognition and confirmation of the basic strategic concept that the defence of New Zealand is most likely to be effectively done by the holding of **Fiji, together with **New Caledonia** and **Samoa**, as strong points which the enemy will hesitate to pass by.**

‘Moreover it conveys the cheering assurance that you and your Government intend full and cordial co-operation in military developments that will in time lead us to victory, for which all of us are working together.

‘I will take up with General Marshall your generous and understanding proposal to strengthen **Fiji by retaining some, if not all, of the New Zealand Forces.’**

303

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific ² to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

16 June 1942

The following telegram has been received from the Agent and Consul, **Tonga:**

‘The General Officer Commanding has received a telegram from New Zealand indicating the likelihood of the withdrawal of New Zealand army personnel, arms and equipment. The local Defence Force has a definite part in and is essential to the defence of **Tonga. The Government of **Tonga** and I most strongly urge that the Defence Force, including the artillery unit, should be maintained at the highest level of efficiency and equipment, particularly in view of the likelihood of the **United States Forces** being transferred when the actual theatre of war becomes more**

restricted. The withdrawal of New Zealand personnel would mean the dissolution of the Defence Force and would be strongly resented by all Tongans. The most serious aspect is that such a withdrawal would create the impression that Dominion Government political control of the Kingdom might be abandoned to the **United States**. Rumours to this effect are already current, though definitely quashed by the General Officer Commanding and myself.'

While I fully realise that the recent arrangements for the defence of the **Pacific** area may involve the withdrawal from **Tonga** of New Zealand forces, I should be grateful for any action that might be possible to avoid disturbance of the organisation and equipment of the local Defence Force, and offer the suggestion that the question be discussed by the New Zealand Commanding Officer in **Tonga** with the Agent and Consul with a view to devising some mutually satisfactory arrangement.

² On 16 June Maj-Gen Sir Philip Mitchell, KCMG, MC, succeeded Sir Harry Luke as Governor of **Fiji** and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

304

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

24 June 1942

The following message, dated 23 June, was received today from Admiral King:

'With reference to my letter of 10 June, ¹ will you be good enough to transmit to the Prime Minister the following:

'General Marshall and I have given further consideration to your proposal that the New Zealand troops in **Fiji** should remain there. After discussing the pros and cons, we are of the opinion that a greater service to our combined effort in the **Pacific** would be served by carrying out the present plan for their relief. The New Zealand

troops thus relieved we hope can be made available for amphibious training with our **1st Marine Division** in anticipation of joint offensive action to the north-west.

‘It is our intention, as you know, to further reinforce the Fijis, building up by September to a total of about 23,000 troops (ground and air). Pending the arrival of these reinforcements, it will probably be desirable to supply some New Zealand troops

¹ See **No. 302**.

in **Fiji**. This matter we believe should be decided locally by General Beightler, United States Army, after consultation with General Mead. In this connection it will not be possible to delay the **United States** transport *Coolidge* longer than required to transfer the **United States** troops at present in **Auckland** to **Fiji**. ¹ Other arrangements can be made for [group mutilated—tanks?] and General Beightler and Admiral Ghormley will be so informed.’

I will see Admiral King later, but will hold up the visit until I receive your comment and instructions on this message.

¹ Part of 37 US Division; the rest had arrived in **Fiji**, direct from the **United States**, on 10 June.

305

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

26 June 1942

Your telegram of 24 June.

Please inform Admiral King that, in accordance with the decision of the United States Chiefs of Staff, instructions have been given to General Mead to arrange with General Beightler all details concerning

the transfer of New Zealand troops to New Zealand and the retention in **Fiji** of those required there until the arrival of the full American garrison.

At the same time please inform Admiral King that, while we accept this decision and are acting upon it, we must emphasise our view that 23,000 troops (ground and air) are inadequate to defend the Fiji Islands. It was because of our apprehension that the force proposed for the defence of **Fiji** would be inadequate to the task it might have to face that we made the offer to allow our troops to remain in **Fiji** in addition to the American garrison. We realise that **Fiji** is now solely an American responsibility, but we feel that we should be failing in our duty if we did not again at this juncture call to the attention of those who are now responsible our conviction—unanimously endorsed by all our Service advisers—that a minimum of two divisions in **Fiji** is required to achieve a reasonable degree of safety. ²

² At 6 a.m on 18 July Maj-Gen Beightler took over operational command in **Fiji** from Maj-Gen Mead.

306

The Prime Minister to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific

29 June 1942

Your telegram of 16 June [**No. 303**] and telegram from the Agent and Consul, **Tonga**. It has been decided that the two 18-pounder guns, the personnel to man them, and the engineer personnel at **Tonga** are to be withdrawn. This will leave in **Tonga** New Zealand personnel, (*a*) to man the 4-inch coastal guns, and (*b*) all New Zealand personnel at present serving with native troops. This action is in accordance with the wishes of the War Department, **Washington**, with which this Government agrees. This information will remove the concern which you and the Agent in **Tonga** feel. General Mead has been instructed accordingly.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

281 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

281

*The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

6 May 1942

During our discussion this morning Admiral King suggested that the United States Government should accept full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**.

The proposal as submitted in rough form would mean the transfer to New Zealand of the troops at present in **Fiji**, and the despatch to **Fiji** of the United States Army division promised to New Zealand.

I am to see Admiral King at noon tomorrow, **Washington** time, and it would be helpful if I could have your first reaction prior to the meeting.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

282 — THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

282

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

7 May 1942

Your telegram of 6 May. Our first reactions are generally favourable to Admiral's King's suggestion, but if in the interests of strategy or efficiency it is considered better that New Zealand troops should remain in **Fiji, we should like it made clear that we are entirely willing that they should do so. We should be glad of further details as they become available.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

283 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

283

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

7 May 1942

1. Admiral King advises me that up to the present nothing has been done at **Funafuti**.

Action at Wallis is apparently held up by discussions with the Free French.

3. I stressed the need for Futuna to be protected.

4. I advised the Admiral that New Zealand would favourably consider the proposal for the transfer of the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** to the **United States Forces** and would be pleased to examine details of the transfer. He advised me that the President also had approved the change. I have to discuss the subject further at 11 a.m. tomorrow, Friday morning, and would be pleased if you would communicate with the **United Kingdom** with a view to if possible obtaining their reaction tonight. In any case, the islands are in the area for which the **United States** have strategic responsibility, and Admiral King's decisions, if approved by the President, must be carried out. I will cable you again after the discussion tomorrow.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

284 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF
FIJI

284

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

8 May 1942

We have recently been negotiating with the **United States** authorities with reference to an increase in the strength of the forces available for the defence of **Fiji**.¹ Yesterday we were advised by Mr Nash of a suggestion made by Admiral King that the **United States** should assume full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**, and that the New Zealand forces at present in **Fiji** should return to New Zealand on the early arrival in **Fiji** of an American Army division. Our immediate reactions were requested and we replied that they were generally favourable and asked for further details. Today Mr Nash has informed us that the proposal has already been approved by the President. We are surprised at this rapid development of events, and we are immediately advising you and His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** and will be grateful for your very early comments. For our part we are prepared to concur.

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 280.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

285 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

285

The High Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington) to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

8 May 1942

The Prime Minister saw me today with reference to a suggestion made by Admiral King that the full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** should be assumed by the **United States**, that the American Army division intended for New Zealand should proceed to **Fiji**, and that the New Zealand forces there should then return to New Zealand.

This suggestion was conveyed to the **New Zealand Government** by the New Zealand Minister in **Washington** yesterday for the first time, with a request for their immediate reactions. The New Zealand Government, who had been negotiating with the **United States** authorities with reference to an increase in the force available for the defence of **Fiji**, replied last night that their first reactions were generally favourable and asked to be supplied with further details. They have this morning been informed by Mr Nash that the suggestion has already been approved by the President, and that as the islands are in the area for which the **United States** have strategic responsibility, Admiral King's suggestion, as approved by the President, must be carried out. This appears to be the case. The New Zealand Government, who intended, of course, to consult His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, the Governor of **Fiji**, and His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** as soon as it appeared possible that the proposal would receive the serious consideration of the American authorities, are surprised at the rapidity with which the situation has developed and regret that time has not permitted of fuller consultation. They would be grateful for a

very early indication of the British Government's views. The New Zealand Government for their part are proposing to concur.

The New Zealand Government are today informing the Governor of [Fiji](#) and asking for his comments.

The High Commissioner for New Zealand in [London](#) has been supplied by Mr Nash with copies of the relevant telegrams.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

286 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

286

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

8 May 1942

At my interview with Admiral King yesterday, I objected strongly to the rather precipitate method followed in connection with the proposal to alter the command at **Fiji**. In spite of this method of doing the job I am satisfied the weight of evidence supports the proposal and that it is the best procedure to follow.

This morning I discussed the matter again with the Admiral and he stated that the need for strengthening **Fiji** at once was discussed with Admiral Nimitz when King visited the west coast last week, and they both felt that the necessary urgent strengthening of the islands could be accomplished more quickly if they took over the defence of **Fiji**, and it was the fact that some troops were on the way which caused them to hurry; he agreed that the preliminaries were carried out rather precipitately.

Yesterday he advised Sir John Dill and Admiral Stark, so the question will be raised in **London** from several sources.

The discussion this morning was in every way helpful. I stressed the imperative need of six divisions being available fully trained in New Zealand if it was to be adequately defended, and urged that further amphibious divisions should be trained in the Dominion. The trouble at present is mainly that troops are limited in number and there are pulls for them from all sources, particularly **Australia** and **Britain**. I stressed again the fact that training in New Zealand would serve a double purpose

—defence of the Dominion and readiness for the offensive when the time is ripe. I also suggested that we would train some of our men for amphibious work if essential equipment was provided and then they could take their part with Americans in the offensive. The position looked much better when I left.

When the proposed transfer of **Fiji** has been considered by the **United Kingdom** and yourself, and if approved, we can go into details, which will require much thought.

King said the proposal to take over would provide for **United States** forces on the way to get off at **Fiji**, and the ships to come on to New Zealand with our men.

I have arranged to discuss the Dominion position and the **Fiji** proposals with General Marshall at 11 a.m. Monday morning.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

287 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC (SUVA) TO THE PRIME MINISTER¹

287

*The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (Suva) to the Prime Minister*¹

9 May 1942

Your most secret telegram [**No. 284**] inviting my early comments on the proposal as approved by the President that the **United States** should assume full responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**, and that the New Zealand forces now in **Fiji** should return to New Zealand on the arrival of an American Army division. I have, subject to the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**, no objection in principle to the assumption of responsibility by the **United States** for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** if this is considered necessary on the grounds of higher policy by all concerned. But, as I represented in my personal letter to you of 21 April,² one division is not sufficient to hold **Fiji** and I had hoped for one **United States** division in addition, not in substitution for, the New Zealand forces at present here. If the New Zealand forces cannot remain, I consider that two **United States** divisions would afford the minimum margin of safety.

On practical as well as political grounds it would be necessary to preserve the identity of the **Fiji** and Tongan Defence Forces within the framework of the **United States** command, which has presented no difficulty hitherto with regard to the New Zealand command, and I imagine would be entirely acceptable to the United States Army authorities.

¹ Repeated to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

² See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 272.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

288 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

288

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

10 May 1942

Further to my cable of 8 May [**No. 286**], the following is the text of a memorandum just received from Admiral King, dated 9 May:

‘ As previously indicated, in the interest of homogeneity of the **New a) Caledonia- Fiji- Samoa** area, the **United States** division scheduled for New Zealand will be diverted to **Fiji**, thus ultimately relieving New Zealand troops and making **Fiji** a **United States** responsibility. With reference to troops on the way (cable [**No. 286**]), King now says that all troops are ready to embark on 17 May.

‘ The suggested method is that two ships carrying the balance of **b) the force** (infantry, artillery) totalling 4500 men will be despatched direct to **Fiji** from the **United States** on approximately 17 May. The remainder of the division will be despatched direct to New Zealand on the same date.

‘ Method. One of the two ships for **Fiji** will remain at **Fiji** and **c) embark** New Zealand troops to New Zealand. This ship is to run a shuttle service between **Auckland** and **Fiji** with **United States** troops from New Zealand and New Zealand troops from **Fiji** with comparable units. This arrangement is made necessary by comparison of the port facilities **Auckland - Fiji**. Owing to the shipping situation the New Zealand port must be **Auckland**.

‘ The **United States** division now allocated to **Fiji** will eventually be **d) increased** by additional anti-aircraft and special service troops when shipping becomes available—estimated leaving the **United States** in July or August. In the meantime, anti-aircraft, etc., must remain in **Fiji**.

‘ The **United States** intend to take over all the defence of **Fiji**, **e) including** naval, as soon as personnel, etc., becomes available. In the meantime New Zealand is to continue the responsibility for planned

construction of all works and to operate port facilities until naval personnel are relieved by United States forces, when they will be returned to New Zealand.

**(The United States generally will eventually assume command of
f) all Army, Navy, and Air forces in the Fiji Islands.**

(All plans are held up pending your approval.'

g)

I am to see Marshall tomorrow in this connection, but before I further discuss with King and Williams sees Planners, could I have your reactions at the earliest moment?

Time has not permitted a full study of this suggested plan. My present view is that it does not meet the requirement of urgency. In your reply please include remarks on the capability of Fiji ports to handle more ships. July-August may be too late [group mutilated—unless?] urgency has passed.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

289 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON – [EXTRACT]

289

*The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington
[Extract]*

12 May 1942

Your telegram of 10 May.

We agree generally with the proposals. Details of the relief will of course require to be worked out in consultation between **USA**, New Zealand and **Fiji** authorities. In the meantime we suggest that it is imperative that the first **United States** flight arriving in **Fiji** should go into a reserve camp until reconnaissances are completed, equipment assembled and reserves of ammunition suitably disposed, and that the first New Zealand troops relieved should remain in reserve in **Fiji** until the first flight of **United States** troops from New Zealand reaches **Fiji**. The ship proposed for the shuttle service would therefore proceed empty from **Fiji** to New Zealand except for such workmen and sick whom it is convenient to return to New Zealand. The shuttle system suggested in your cable could then commence. This system would result in an immediate increase in strength in **Fiji** during the somewhat dangerous initial period of the relief.

We recognise that economical use of shipping and the escort problem demand close attention and will affect the detailed planning. It may be possible to supplement from New Zealand resources the shipping required to transport **United States** troops from New Zealand to **Fiji**.

Action has already been taken to prepare for the accommodation of **United States** troops in the vicinity of **Auckland**.

Anti-aircraft, coast defence, and any other units and services required and now in **Fiji will, as suggested, remain there till relieved by **United States** units.**

New Zealand will continue works and the operation of port facilities until relieved.

We assume that the **United States troops will bring vehicles with them and that, dependent upon the capacity of ships, either the New Zealand vehicles now in **Fiji** will be exchanged for vehicles brought to New Zealand with **United States** troops or the New Zealand vehicles returned to New Zealand. It is of course essential that all troops during all stages of the relief should have their vehicles available....¹**

It is desirable to effect the transfer of forces expeditiously but deliberately. To effect a too hasty transfer would endanger the defence of **Fiji at what may well be the most dangerous time.**

¹ **Text omitted gave details of the capacity of **Suva** and **Lautoka** ports.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

290 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

290

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)*

13 May 1942

Your telegram of 8 May [**No. 285**].

Please thank the Prime Minister for his message. The United States proposals have now been considered by our military advisers, and in all the circumstances we also for our part see no objection to them.

We have been given to understand informally that the United States authorities also propose to station in New Zealand a United States amphibian force, starting shortly with the elements of one Marine division and rising by the end of 1942 to two Marine divisions and several Marine battalions with Corps troops.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

291 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

291

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

13 May 1942

The United States plan for the relief of **Fiji** was issued this afternoon. A copy is being forwarded to you by air, leaving tomorrow, also a copy to GOC Fiji. In the main it is the same as indicated in my telegram of 10 May [**No. 288**]. Details of individuals reliefs and shuttle service are to be worked out by Ghormley, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, the United States General ¹ designate (who accompanies the first echelon to **Fiji**, arriving approximately 9 June) and Mead. Your point about individual reliefs is agreed with in principle. The ship *Coolidge* ² detailed for the shuttle [service] is capable of carrying 3250 troops, 10,000 tons of cargo, cruising speed 17 knots. The United States Staff estimate that the **United States** division will be complete in **Fiji** sixty days after the first troops arrive in **Fiji**.

The United States Staff request that **RNZAF** units remain in **Fiji** until the changeover is completed, the date to be determined by local commanders.

¹ Maj-Gen R. S. Beightler; GOC 37 US Div; Commanding General, **United States Forces in Fiji**, 1942.

² *President Coolidge*, US liner, 21,936 tons; troop transport; sunk at **Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides**, on 25 Oct 1942.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

292 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF
FIJI

292

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

16 May 1942

Your telegram No. 72 of 15 May. ³

We have just received advice from His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** that they concur in the proposed transfer to the **United States** of responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga** and have ourselves advised the **United States** authorities of our own concurrence. The comments that you have made as to the strength required in **Fiji** are fully appreciated and, for our part, we have done our utmost not only to stress the case for greater strength but also to ensure that there will be no weakening of the defences during the changeover. We understand that, as now proposed, the changeover, which should commence next month, will lead to an immediate increase of over 4000 in the troops available in **Fiji**, which will be maintained throughout, and there is every prospect of increased forces when they can be made available.

³ Not published. Requested information whether any decision had been reached regarding the change of responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and **Tonga**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

293 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

293

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

18 May 1942

**The following is personal for the Prime Minister from the Secretary
of State for the Colonies:**

**Since the outbreak of war with Japan I have often had occasion to
feel gratitude for the generous and unselfish manner in which your
Government has balanced the defence needs of Fiji and the High
Commission territories in the Western Pacific, for which I am ultimately
and in part responsible to His Majesty, against the urgent calls for the
defence of New Zealand herself.**

**I do hope you will never feel that we are taking your constant care
and helpfulness for granted. Your sympathetic understanding is a
powerful aid in ensuring that all resources are disposed in defence to the
best advantage. It will hasten the day when we shall start to throw the
invader out of the South Pacific.**

**With respect I express my thanks and admiration for your generosity
and judgment.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

294 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

294

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

21 May 1942

Your telegram of 18 May.

The following is personal for the Secretary of State for the Colonies
from the Prime Minister:

Thank you so much for your very kind message. I am glad to know
that what we have tried to do for **Fiji** has been so fully appreciated—we
have done our best and, as you know, to this end, have taken real risks
in New Zealand.

For very many reasons it is a matter of regret to us that on grounds
of broader strategy our direct responsibility for **Fiji** will shortly cease.

Believe me, we in our turn have much appreciated the very full and
complete co-operation which has been extended to us throughout by the
United Kingdom and Fijian authorities, who have done everything
possible to facilitate our task.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

295 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

295

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

26 May 1942

On the urgent representations of Admiral Ghormley² as to the necessity of strengthening the defences of **Fiji**, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are willing to leave their troops in **Fiji** in the meantime in addition to the American division shortly to arrive there. The New Zealand Government fully realise that this will add appreciably to the risks to be taken by this Dominion, which they regard already as great, but in the circumstances they feel that they must accept these risks. While their decision is quite unconditional, the situation has been explained to Admiral Ghormley who will, it is understood, represent the position to the American authorities with a view to obtaining American troops in substitution at the earliest moment circumstances will allow.

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Minister in **Washington**.

² Admiral Ghormley arrived in New Zealand on 21 May.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

296 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

296

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

2 June 1942

Following from Prime Minister to Prime Minister:

Your telegram [[No. 295](#)] is yet another example of the consistently helpful and generous attitude which your Government never fail to adopt however difficult the circumstances. Your selflessness is a source of comfort and strength to us all and we are deeply grateful. All best wishes.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

297 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON – [EXTRACT]

297

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington
[Extract]

9 June 1942

Will you please see Admiral King and give him the following personal message from me:

‘We wonder whether there has been some misunderstanding of our attitude in connection with the proposed retention in **Fiji** in the meantime of the New Zealand troops now stationed there. ¹ We felt that they would be an additional insurance in circumstances of considerable risk, with comparatively little to resist it, of an attack in force by the Japanese. Despite the risk which we apprehended and still do apprehend to New Zealand itself, we had felt that these troops would be of greater value in **Fiji** than in New Zealand, and our decision to leave them there, if this was considered desirable, was one

¹ Mr Nash had reported on 30 May to Mr Fraser, ‘exclusively for your personal information’, an interview with Admiral King ‘at which I discussed Ghormley's proposal re leaving our men at **Fiji**. I think Ghormley's proposal good and your response to the suggestion excellent, and I told King so. His feeling, however, is that Ghormley should not have made the suggestion, which might affect the **United States**' promise to send a division to New Zealand and their plans for disposition in the Islands. I still think that your decision on Ghormley's suggestion was correct and reiterated this to King.’

which we hoped would be welcomed in **Washington**. We wonder

whether in arriving at what we believe to be your decision on this matter you might perhaps have felt that our agreement to leave our men in **Fiji** might lead to a request, which might be embarrassing to you, for additional **United States** troops for New Zealand in substitution. If this thought did in fact influence you, I hasten to assure you that this is not the case and that our offer was and remains completely unconditional. We still feel that it is undoubtedly the right course to take, and we hope that it is still perhaps not too late for you to reconsider the matter. A substantial reason, not previously referred to, for considering it essential to augment the forces in **Fiji** is the necessity for supplementing the facilities for operating air forces by building new airfields. These new airfields should not we think be constructed without disposing forces for their defence, which under the establishment contemplated would not be available. I should make it clear in case of misunderstanding that this message is from the **New Zealand Government** and not from Admiral Ghormley, whom we have not in the circumstances again consulted.'

2. If it is not possible in your opinion to alter Admiral King's views on the retention in **Fiji** of the New Zealand troops, we will ask you in due course to endeavour to ensure that our suggestion as to individual reliefs, which you have told us in your telegram [**No. 291**] was agreed to in principle, will actually be applied in practice.... ¹

¹ A reference to morale in the **United States** plan for the relief of **Fiji** has been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

298 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER – [EXTRACT]

298

*The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister
[Extract]*

8 June 1942 ²

... Your telegram [**No. 297**] to hand subsequent to my return from an interview with King, during which I again strongly emphasised that his decision re **Fiji** was completely wrong and that our offer in every way was unconditional.

²The apparent incongruity in the date of this telegram and that to which it replies is explained by the international date-line. **No. 297** was despatched at 1.30 a.m. on 9 June.

I am to see him again tomorrow morning at 11.30, when I will give him your message.... ³

³ In the text omitted Mr Nash reported on other matters discussed in a recent interview with Admiral King.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

299 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

299

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

9 June 1942

I have just returned from Admiral King after delivering the message in your telegram [[No. 297](#)].

Without waiting to draft a written reply he asked me to convey to you his personal thanks and appreciation of the co-operative spirit of yourself and the Government. The message was particularly helpful, so he said, in that it unmistakably conveyed to him the fact that the **New Zealand Government** had a complete understanding of the importance of his strategic plans for holding **Fiji** and other strong points to the north of New Zealand.

I emphasised that you would at all times co-operate in any plans that would achieve our mutual objective and asked if any action of the **New Zealand Government** or anything in the directives were in any way limiting him in his plans. He said 'No' but, reiterating his suggestion of yesterday, he felt that New Zealand should train an amphibious force to take part with **America** when the time for offensive action came. ¹ I mentioned that your exclusive desire, in addition to providing for the security of the Dominion, was to use the whole of the Dominion's resources—air, naval and army—in the way that he considered would most effectively assist in defeating [group omitted—the Axis?] powers.

King said he would consult with the United States Chiefs of Staff and would then communicate with me.

As soon as I hear from him I will advise you.

¹ See

No previous reference to this suggestion by Admiral King can be found in any of Mr Nash's telegrams during the preceding few days.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

300 — THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF
FIJI

300

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

10 June 1942

In case of any possible misunderstanding of the attitude of the **New Zealand Government** in respect of the defence of **Fiji**, I think you should know for your private information that the **New Zealand Government** some little time ago offered to leave their troops in **Fiji** in the meantime in addition to the Americans. Admiral King, it is understood, was not favourable to the suggestion but we repeated the offer yesterday. No conditions at all were attached to the offer.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

301 – THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW
ZEALAND

301

The Governor of Fiji to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

10 June 1942

Your telegram [**No. 300**] in fact answers my telegram to you of yesterday No. 89 ¹ which it must have crossed. I greatly appreciate the generous attitude of your Government and earnestly trust the renewed offer will now be accepted.

¹ Not published. The Governor of **Fiji** asked whether the prospect of increased forces envisaged in the last paragraph of No. 292 of 16 May was likely to be realised.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

302 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

302

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

11 June 1942

The following message has been received from Admiral King, which he has asked me to transmit to you in reply to your personal message contained in cable [No. 297]:

‘Your personal message to me conveyed through the Minister for New Zealand is most welcome and encouraging in that it indicates recognition and confirmation of the basic strategic concept that the defence of New Zealand is most likely to be effectively done by the holding of **Fiji, together with **New Caledonia** and **Samoa**, as strong points which the enemy will hesitate to pass by.**

‘Moreover it conveys the cheering assurance that you and your Government intend full and cordial co-operation in military developments that will in time lead us to victory, for which all of us are working together.

‘I will take up with General Marshall your generous and understanding proposal to strengthen **Fiji by retaining some, if not all, of the New Zealand Forces.’**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

303 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC² TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

303

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific² to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

16 June 1942

The following telegram has been received from the Agent and
Consul, **Tonga**:

‘The General Officer Commanding has received a telegram from New Zealand indicating the likelihood of the withdrawal of New Zealand army personnel, arms and equipment. The local Defence Force has a definite part in and is essential to the defence of **Tonga**. The Government of **Tonga** and I most strongly urge that the Defence Force, including the artillery unit, should be maintained at the highest level of efficiency and equipment, particularly in view of the likelihood of the **United States Forces** being transferred when the actual theatre of war becomes more restricted. The withdrawal of New Zealand personnel would mean the dissolution of the Defence Force and would be strongly resented by all Tongans. The most serious aspect is that such a withdrawal would create the impression that Dominion Government political control of the Kingdom might be abandoned to the **United States**. Rumours to this effect are already current, though definitely quashed by the General Officer Commanding and myself.’

While I fully realise that the recent arrangements for the defence of the **Pacific** area may involve the withdrawal from **Tonga** of New Zealand forces, I should be grateful for any action that might be possible to avoid disturbance of the organisation and equipment of the local Defence Force, and offer the suggestion that the question be discussed by the

New Zealand Commanding Officer in [Tonga](#) with the Agent and Consul with a view to devising some mutually satisfactory arrangement.

² On 16 June Maj-Gen Sir Philip Mitchell, KCMG, MC, succeeded Sir Harry Luke as Governor of [Fiji](#) and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

304 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

304

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

24 June 1942

The following message, dated 23 June, was received today from
Admiral King:

‘With reference to my letter of 10 June, ¹ will you be good enough to
transmit to the Prime Minister the following:

‘General Marshall and I have given further consideration to your
proposal that the New Zealand troops in **Fiji** should remain there.
After discussing the pros and cons, we are of the opinion that a
greater service to our combined effort in the **Pacific** would be served
by carrying out the present plan for their relief. The New Zealand
troops thus relieved we hope can be made available for amphibious
training with our **1st Marine Division** in anticipation of joint
offensive action to the north-west.

‘It is our intention, as you know, to further reinforce the Fijis, building
up by September to a total of about 23,000 troops (ground and air).
Pending the arrival of these reinforcements, it will probably be
desirable to supply some New Zealand troops

¹ See **No. 302**.

in **Fiji**. This matter we believe should be decided locally by General
Beightler, United States Army, after consultation with General Mead.
In this connection it will not be possible to delay the **United States**

transport *Coolidge* longer than required to transfer the **United States** troops at present in **Auckland** to **Fiji**.¹ Other arrangements can be made for [group mutilated—tanks?] and General Beightler and Admiral Ghormley will be so informed.'

I will see Admiral King later, but will hold up the visit until I receive your comment and instructions on this message.

¹ Part of 37 US Division; the rest had arrived in **Fiji**, direct from the **United States**, on 10 June.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

305 — THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

305

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

26 June 1942

Your telegram of 24 June.

Please inform Admiral King that, in accordance with the decision of the United States Chiefs of Staff, instructions have been given to General Mead to arrange with General Beightler all details concerning the transfer of New Zealand troops to New Zealand and the retention in **Fiji** of those required there until the arrival of the full American garrison.

At the same time please inform Admiral King that, while we accept this decision and are acting upon it, we must emphasise our view that 23,000 troops (ground and air) are inadequate to defend the Fiji Islands. It was because of our apprehension that the force proposed for the defence of **Fiji** would be inadequate to the task it might have to face that we made the offer to allow our troops to remain in **Fiji** in addition to the American garrison. We realise that **Fiji** is now solely an American responsibility, but we feel that we should be failing in our duty if we did not again at this juncture call to the attention of those who are now responsible our conviction—unanimously endorsed by all our Service advisers—that a minimum of two divisions in **Fiji** is required to achieve a reasonable degree of safety. ²

² At 6 a.m on 18 July Maj-Gen Beightler took over operational command in **Fiji** from Maj-Gen Mead.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

306 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

306

The Prime Minister to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific

29 June 1942

Your telegram of 16 June [No. 303] and telegram from the Agent and Consul, **Tonga**. It has been decided that the two 18-pounder guns, the personnel to man them, and the engineer personnel at **Tonga** are to be withdrawn. This will leave in **Tonga** New Zealand personnel, (*a*) to man the 4-inch coastal guns, and (*b*) all New Zealand personnel at present serving with native troops. This action is in accordance with the wishes of the War Department, **Washington**, with which this Government agrees. This information will remove the concern which you and the Agent in **Tonga** feel. General Mead has been instructed accordingly.

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III**

FANNING ISLAND

307

Despatch from the Governor-General of New Zealand ¹ to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ²

4 November 1937

Sir

With reference to Lord Passfield's ³ secret despatch, No. 342, of 5 November 1929, ⁴ and to my predecessor's secret despatch of 22 August 1930, ⁵ I have the honour to inform you, at the instance of my Prime Minister, ⁶ that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have recently had under consideration the commitment entered into in August 1930, ⁷ to despatch to **Fanning Island** a garrison of two platoons (60 men) with two machine guns, when requested to do so by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.

In view of the length of time the garrison might have to stay on the island, and the possible wastage through sickness, it has been suggested that the force should be increased to one company of infantry, consisting of two platoons of machine guns and two rifle platoons—a total of 150 men as against the present 60.

It has also been suggested that to tide over the period before such a force could arrive, the Fanning Island Defence Force ⁸ should now be revived in a form and in numbers sufficient to man two machine guns which, with adequate supplies of ammunition, should be kept

¹ Viscount Galway.

² Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, PC; Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1935–38, 1938 – Jan 1939.

³ Lord Passfield, PC, OM; Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1929–30; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1929–31.

⁴ Not published.

⁵ Not published.

⁶ Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage.

⁷ As a result of a recommendation in 1929 by the Oversea Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on local forces in the **Pacific**, the **New Zealand Government** in August 1930 had agreed to despatch to **Fanning Island** for the protection of the cable station a garrison of two platoons, with two machine guns, 'when requested to do so by His Majesty's Government in Great Britain.' This commitment was reviewed in 1937 by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Committee and, on this committee's recommendation, Cabinet approved an increase in the size of the force to a company of 150 men.

⁸ Available for the force were nine Europeans employed by Cable and Wireless Ltd., two Europeans employed by Fanning Island Plantations Ltd., and the Administrative Officer. The New Zealand Government arranged to give a short course of military training to employees of the company detailed in New Zealand for employment on **Fanning Island**.

on the island in peace. It might be possible for His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to arrange for members of the cable staff to receive instruction in machine-gun work.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful for the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on the above points.

A copy of this despatch is being forwarded to the High Commissioner

for the Western Pacific, ¹ for his information.

I have, &c.,

GALWAY

Governor-General

¹ Sir Arthur Richards, Governor of **Fiji** and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1936–38.

308

Despatch from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

25 February 1938

No. 54

MY LORD

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's secret despatch of 4 November on the subject of the force which is to be sent to **Fanning Island** by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand on the request of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** in the event of an emergency.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** wish to convey to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand an expression of their thanks for the offer to increase this force from two platoons to one company. His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** welcome this offer and gladly accept it in view of the great importance of the island.

As regards the question raised in the third paragraph of your

despatch, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** are at present in communication with the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and a further despatch will be sent when his reply is received.

I have, &c.,

MALCOLM MACDONALD

309

Despatch from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

24 August 1938

No. 257

MY LORD

,

With reference to the third paragraph of Mr MacDonald's secret despatch No. 54 of 25 February, I have the honour to state that the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific has now reported that Cable and Wireless, Limited, will co-operate in measures for the defence of **Fanning Island**. This co-operation will, it is understood, take the form of encouraging the Company's staff to volunteer for a short term of military training, mainly in the use and maintenance of automatic weapons. It is intended that the status of staff who volunteer should be regularised by their formation into a local defence force.

It has been ascertained that a member of the Company's staff will sail from **Sydney** for **Fanning Island** on 1 September and that two others will sail in April 1939. The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific ¹ will communicate with the Defence authorities of the Commonwealth of **Australia** with regard to their training.

I have, &c.,

²Duke of Devonshire, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for

,²

for the Secretary of State

¹ Sir Harry Luke succeeded Sir Arthur Richards in June 1938.

310

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³
[Extract]

3 February 1939

... His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have been considering certain aspects of the defence situation. They would be grateful for the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on the following points....

In view of the world situation and with particular reference to the importance of the trans- **Pacific** cable,¹ would it be desirable to despatch to **Fanning Island** immediately the force already agreed to? It appears to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand that it would be exceedingly dangerous, if not impossible, to despatch a force after the outbreak of a war in which **Japan** was involved, as no adequate escort can be made available and as enemy forces may reasonably be expected to be in position on the outbreak of war. On the other hand, it might be undesirable to take such open action in peace....²

³ Viscount Caldecote (at this date Sir Thomas Inskip).

¹ That the Germans appreciated the importance of the **Fanning Island** cable station in the 1914–18 war is shown by the

promptness with which the German cruiser *Nurnberg* proceeded to the island after the outbreak of war and severed the cable on 7 Sep 1914. On 8 December of the same year the *Nurnberg* was sunk by HMS *Kent* in the battle of the **Falkland Islands**.

² Text omitted discussed the defence of **Fiji** and the provision of ammunition, aircraft and air force equipment for local defence and training in New Zealand in the event of war.

311

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

[*Extract*]

5 March 1939

Your telegram of 3 February....

We agree that for the reasons indicated it would be undesirable to defer the despatch of the force to **Fanning Island** until after an outbreak of war. We feel, however, that having regard to the difficulties involved in placing a garrison on the island in peacetime (including lack of accommodation and supplies) it would not be advisable to despatch this force at the present time. In order to avoid delay if the necessity for its despatch should arise, we suggest that the best course would be for His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to make as complete a plan as possible for operation and to collect and earmark all stores, supplies, ammunition, etc., which would be required. It would then be possible, if at any time in the opinion of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** the occasion had arisen for the despatch of the force, for them to inform His Majesty's Government in New Zealand immediately. For this purpose would it be possible to let us have the length of time which might be expected to elapse between receipt by the **New Zealand Government** of such information and the sailing of the force? ... ³

³ Text omitted dealt with the proposed expansion of the **Fiji**

Defence Force, the installation of coast defence weapons and the establishment of air facilities.

312

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

5 April 1939

Your telegram of 5 March.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have given consideration to the question raised in the last sentence of the first paragraph of your telegram under reference. Under present conditions the length of time between receipt of information and the sailing of the **Fanning Island force would be three weeks. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are, however, now making arrangements by which, after a period of about two months from date, the length of time referred to will be reduced to three days.**

313

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

13 June 1939

My most secret telegram of 5 April. My Ministers advise me that it has not yet been found possible to make the arrangements indicated in the last sentence of my telegram under reference, and that in the meantime the length of time between receipt of information and sailing of the **Fanning Island force will remain at three weeks. ¹ They add that special attention is being given to the measures necessary to shorten this period.**

¹ By 7 Jun 1939 only 37 enlistments had been received for the force of 150.

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*
[Extract]

20 June 1939

My Prime Minister wishes me to inform you as follows:

With reference to the report of the Pacific Defence Conference, Part
I.... ²

3. Paragraph 49—His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have been considering the question of stationing a platoon at **Fanning Island** in peace. They would point out that there is a certain amount of preliminary work such as construction of section posts, improvement of water supply, which could usefully be performed by a platoon in peace, and for that reason they are considering the advisability of sending such a force to the island as a temporary measure, pending a decision regarding its permanent location there. They would be glad of the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on the question of both the temporary and permanent stationing of the platoon at **Fanning Island**.

4. The substance of this telegram is being repeated to His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia**.

² Two paragraphs dealing with the defence of **Fiji** and the equipment of the Tongan Defence Force have been omitted.

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand* ¹
[Extract]

14 July 1939

Your telegram of 20 June.... ²

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 permanent or for the 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 costs of the necessary arrangements for reception of the force and its subsequent maintenance....

¹ Repeated to the Commonwealth of **Australia**.

² Paragraphs 1 and 2 are omitted. The first dealt with the defence of **Fiji** and the expansion and training of the **Fiji Defence Force**; the second with the formation of an infantry company for the defence of **Tonga**.

316

The Assistant High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (Suva) ³ to the Governor-General of New Zealand

18 July 1939

Reference Defence Conference Report, Part I, page 22 (d) (1), **Fanning Island**, ⁴ I should be glad to know whether a decision has been reached.

³ Mr **C. J. J. T. Barton**, CMG, OBE.

⁴ This reference read: 'Garrison of one platoon from New Zealand to be stationed there [**Fanning Island**] in peace.'

317

*The Deputy of the Governor-General of New Zealand*¹ to the
Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

16 August 1939

Your telegram of 14 July [**No. 315**].

I am advised that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to despatch to **Fanning Island** a detachment of two officers and thirty other ranks. The detachment will leave New Zealand by HMS *Leith*² on or about 4 September, and will carry out the preliminary work referred to in my telegram of 20 June [**No. 314**]. On completion of the preliminary work, the question of stationing the detachment at **Fanning Island** permanently in peace will be considered by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific is being communicated with, and His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** are being advised of the action to be taken.

¹ Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Myers, PC, GCMG, KC; then Chief Justice of New Zealand.

² HMS *Leith*, sloop, 990 tons, two 4·7-inch guns; at this time attached to the New Zealand Division of the **Royal Navy**.

318

*The Deputy of the Governor-General of New Zealand to the High
Commissioner for the Western Pacific*

16 August 1939

Your secret telegram of 18 July [**No. 316**].

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have decided to despatch to **Fanning Island** a detachment of two officers and thirty other ranks.

The detachment will leave New Zealand by HMS *Leith* on or about 4 September and will carry out certain preliminary work. The question of stationing it permanently at **Fanning Island** in peace will be further considered when the preliminary work is completed.

The New Zealand Government would be grateful if you would approach Messrs Burns Philp regarding supply of labour for the construction of native huts, landing of stores, and the use of launches and lighters, for which they will reimburse Messrs Burns Philp. Probably twenty natives and one foreman would be required.

It is requested that all negotiations and discussions regarding the despatch of this detachment be kept most secret; and that the need for secrecy be impressed on Messrs Burns Philp and on Cable and Wireless, Limited.

319

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific to the Governor-General of New Zealand

22 August 1939

The decision communicated in your telegram of 16 August is noted with satisfaction. All arrangements are in train.

320

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific

25 August 1939

My secret telegram of 16 August [**No. 318**]. FANNING ISLAND.

My Ministers state that the arrangements outlined in my telegram under reference are now subject to reconsideration in view of subsequent developments, and that a further communication will be sent to you in due course.

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

25 August 1939

My most secret telegram of 16 August [**No. 317**].

In view of the instructions now transmitted to the Chief of the Naval Staff ¹ in New Zealand by the Admiralty, with reference to the movements of HMS *Leith*, ² the arrangements proposed for the transport to **Fanning Island** of the preliminary force contemplated will no longer be feasible.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful for a very early intimation of the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** as to whether it would be advisable to arrange for this detachment or for the full establishment contemplated to be despatched by a special vessel, and, if so, at what date they would consider this most desirable. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be glad also of any views that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** might have to express as to the possibility of escort or the risk involved.

¹ Rear-Admiral H. E. Horan, DSC, RN (then Commodore); Chief of New Zealand Naval Staff, Jun 1938–Apr 1940.

² She was ordered to **Singapore**.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

28 August 1939

Your telegram of 25 August.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** would be grateful if the preliminary force could move at once to **Fanning Island**. It is considered that it would be advisable that the force should be escorted, and it is suggested that it might be transported in a cruiser of the New Zealand Naval Forces. In the present circumstances the despatch of the full establishment does not appear to be necessary.

323

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

29 August 1939

Your telegram of 28 August.

My acting Prime Minister informs me that a force of two officers and thirty men ¹ will leave New Zealand for **Fanning Island** direct at 5 p.m. tomorrow, 30 August, in HMS *Leander*. ²

His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** and the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific are being advised accordingly.

¹ No. 1 Platoon, A Company, New Zealand Regular Force.

² HMNZS *Leander*, 6-inch cruiser, 7270 tons, attached to the New Zealand Division of the **Royal Navy**.

324

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand

30 August 1939

Your telegram of 29 August. FANNING ISLAND.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** much appreciate

the action taken and, in particular, the speed with which it was executed.

325

The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ¹

7 September 1939

My telegram of 29 August [**No. 323**]. The force arrived at **Fanning Island** on the afternoon of 5 September, New Zealand time.

¹ Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden had taken over on 3 Sep 1939.

326

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ²

19 February 1941

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand consider in view of the deterioration of the position in the **Pacific** that the garrison at **Fanning Island**, which consists of one platoon, should be reinforced by another platoon consisting of approximately one officer and thirty-two other ranks. Unless His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** signify any objection, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to despatch this platoon by the first available vessel.

² Viscount Cranborne. This telegram was repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

327

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand ³

Your telegram of 19 February.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** welcome the proposal of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to send a second platoon to **Fanning Island** by the first available vessel.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** much appreciate the decision of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, conveyed in your telegram No. 59 of 18 February, ⁴ to mount and man the 6-inch gun which has been allocated to **Fanning Island**, and to provide all stores necessary for mounting and accommodation for personnel. Information as to the date when the gun will arrive at **Fanning Island** will be sent as soon as possible. The United Kingdom authorities are experiencing some difficulty in securing the range-finding gear required, and it would be most helpful if this gear could be provided from New Zealand. We should be glad to learn as soon as possible whether suitable gear is available in New Zealand and, if so, whether it could be released for **Fanning Island**.

³ Repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

⁴ Not published.

328

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

28 February 1941

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to send both the extra platoon and the battery personnel to **Fanning Island** on 24 March. The latter party of one officer and twenty-nine other ranks would be employed in preparing the site ready for the mounting of the gun when it arrives. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand much regret that it is not possible to supply range-finding equipment from New Zealand and

would much appreciate it if the necessary gear could accompany the gun.

329

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

[Extract]

7 March 1941

... 3. The decision of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to instal one 6-inch gun at **Fanning Island** is welcomed and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have already accepted responsibility for mounting and manning this gun. The recommendation of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff was, however, for a two-gun battery, and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful if consideration could be given to the question whether the one gun now proposed is adequate for the purpose.... ¹

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 248, for text omitted.

The United Kingdom Government replied on 31 March that demands for 6-inch guns were so heavy that it was not possible to make a second gun available.

330

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

[Extract]

19 February 1942

... 3. In regard to **Fanning Island**, the responsibility for the defence of this was assumed by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, and the garrison which was sent there has since been increased and now comprises 5 officers, 108 other ranks, with rifles, two MMGs, eight MGs, one 3-inch mortar, 250 grenades,

145,000 rounds SAA, one 6-inch QFC gun with 150 rounds. With the entry of **Japan** into the war and her initial successes, the scale of attack against which preparations must be made has increased considerably, and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are in no position to provide adequate forces or equipment for the defence of this island. As the only trans- **Pacific** cable now available passes through **Fanning Island**, it is a major concern of the **United Nations** that the island be adequately protected. Moreover, because of the distance of **Fanning Island** from New Zealand, it is extremely difficult to supply the forces on this island from New Zealand.

4. For the foregoing reasons, and as it seems essential that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand should, in view of their responsibilities in the Anzac area, contain their strength there so that it might be more effective, they would propose that the defence of **Fanning Island** be assumed by the United States Government, and they would be glad, provided His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** see no objection, if arrangements could be made for this proposal to be considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington**....¹

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 266, for text omitted.

331

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

2 April 1942

Your telegram No. 60 of 11 March.² Arrangements must be made very shortly for the relief and provisioning of the garrison on **Fanning Island**, but before doing so we would be glad to learn whether there is any prospect of the United States Government assuming, as we proposed, responsibility for the defence of this island.

² Not published. Reported a statement made by Sir John Dill that the Americans 'did not feel justified in extending their work

beyond Christmas Island', but that they might be agreeable to supplying the **Fanning Island** garrison with food and other essentials.

332

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

4 April 1942

Your telegram of 2 April. **FANNING ISLAND.**

I saw Admiral King this morning and he issued instructions for an American force to relieve the **Fanning Island** garrison.

I arranged to leave all help on the island which may be required by the **United States** force. Fanning is a **United Kingdom** possession and it may be necessary to obtain approval from the United Kingdom Government.

Will you please attend to this and advise me. In the meantime King's order will proceed and I will keep you advised of progress. The preliminary order will provide for the transfer of our men as well as replacement.

333

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ¹

8 April 1942

Your telegram [**No. 268**] of 5 April. ²

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel now, as they have felt on similar occasions in the past, that it would be inadvisable to raise, in connection with the proffered assistance from the **United States of America**, any matters which the Americans might regard as unnecessarily formal or might perhaps construe as obstructive. For that reason they would be inclined to deprecate the use of the phrase 'not

only for formal reasons but also' in the reply which His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** propose to make to the United States Government, and for their part they propose to take the line in such cases that **United States** assistance will be welcomed in all areas for which the **New Zealand Government** are responsible, that prior notification is of course always desirable in order that any necessary preparations may be made, but that where prior notification is not considered feasible by the **United States** authorities the position will be quite understood.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have already at various times and in general terms let it be known to the United States Government that they agree to the use by **United States** forces of New Zealand and territories administered by them, including the Cook

¹ Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee.

² See

Islands, **Western Samoa** and the **Kermadecs**, and, so far as they are concerned, of **Fiji**, **Tongatabu**, and other British administered islands in the **South Pacific**, for the defence of which they are responsible.

The **New Zealand Minister** at **Washington** has advised me of the agreement by the **United States** authorities to undertake the defence of **Fanning Island** as proposed in my telegram [**No. 330**], and the **New Zealand Government** take it that the general approval contemplated in your telegram under reply adequately covers the question of the **United Kingdom Government's** consent to this use of **Fanning Island** as well as of **Fiji**, other British administered islands in the **Pacific**, and of **Tongatabu**. So far as **Tongatabu** is concerned, the **New Zealand Government** take it that any necessary negotiations with the **Tongan Government** will be undertaken by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**. ¹

¹ On 17 April the **Dominions Secretary** replied that the **New Zealand Government's** assumptions in this paragraph were correct, and that the **Tongan Government** had given its approval.

334

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

8 April 1942

Your telegram of 4 April [**No. 332**].

We note and approve your arrangements for **Fanning Island** and greatly appreciate **United States** assistance. It may well be that the best means of relieving our force would be for them to leave the island on the vessel that brings the **American troops**, even if that vessel should be returning to **America**, and we assume that you will keep us advised of the possibilities in this respect.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs advises that Admiral King has asked the Joint Staff Mission in **Washington** for authority for the **United States** forces to use any **Pacific** islands under **United Kingdom** or Dominion control, and that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** propose to agree.

This will, of course, cover the case of **Fanning Island**, our proposals for which are in any case already known to the United Kingdom Government.

At the same time as the United Kingdom Government give this general consent to American use of the **Pacific Islands**, will you please inform the United States Government that the **New Zealand Government** will at all times welcome **United States** forces to this Dominion and to any islands administered by New Zealand. Prior notification is of course desirable in order that any necessary preparations may be made, but in any case where such prior notification is not considered feasible by the **United States** authorities, we will quite understand the position. As regards the British administered islands in the **Pacific** for which New Zealand has assumed defence responsibility, a similar position will arise so far as we are concerned, but the formal approval must come from His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.

335

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

16 April 1942

Your telegram of 8 April.

Admiral King advises me that the orders issued to Admiral Nimitz with regard to relieving the garrison at **Fanning Island** include instructions that he is to transport the relieved garrison to New Zealand in due course. I will advise you when further information is available.

336

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

16 April 1942

Admiral King now advises that relief and transportation for Fanning Island will leave Pearl Harbour about 19 April, arriving Fanning Island about 24 April. The relieved garrison should arrive at New Zealand approximately three weeks later.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

307 — DESPATCH FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND¹
TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

307

*Despatch from the Governor-General of New Zealand¹ to the
Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs²*

4 November 1937

Sir

,
With reference to Lord Passfield's³ secret despatch, No. 342, of 5 November 1929,⁴ and to my predecessor's secret despatch of 22 August 1930,⁵ I have the honour to inform you, at the instance of my Prime Minister,⁶ that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have recently had under consideration the commitment entered into in August 1930,⁷ to despatch to **Fanning Island** a garrison of two platoons (60 men) with two machine guns, when requested to do so by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.

In view of the length of time the garrison might have to stay on the island, and the possible wastage through sickness, it has been suggested that the force should be increased to one company of infantry, consisting of two platoons of machine guns and two rifle platoons—a total of 150 men as against the present 60.

It has also been suggested that to tide over the period before such a force could arrive, the **Fanning Island Defence Force**⁸ should now be revived in a form and in numbers sufficient to man two machine guns which, with adequate supplies of ammunition, should be kept

¹ Viscount Galway.

² Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, PC; Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1935–38, 1938 – Jan 1939.

³ Lord Passfield, PC, OM; Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1929–30; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1929–31.

⁴ Not published.

⁵ Not published.

⁶ Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage.

⁷ As a result of a recommendation in 1929 by the Oversea Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on local forces in the **Pacific**, the **New Zealand Government** in August 1930 had agreed to despatch to **Fanning Island** for the protection of the cable station a garrison of two platoons, with two machine guns, 'when requested to do so by His Majesty's Government in Great Britain.' This commitment was reviewed in 1937 by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Committee and, on this committee's recommendation, Cabinet approved an increase in the size of the force to a company of 150 men.

⁸ Available for the force were nine Europeans employed by Cable and Wireless Ltd., two Europeans employed by Fanning Island Plantations Ltd., and the Administrative Officer. The New Zealand Government arranged to give a short course of military training to employees of the company detailed in New Zealand for employment on **Fanning Island**.

on the island in peace. It might be possible for His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to arrange for members of the cable staff to receive instruction in machine-gun work.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful for the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on the above

points.

A copy of this despatch is being forwarded to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, ¹ for his information.

I have, &c.,

GALWAY

Governor-General

¹ Sir Arthur Richards, Governor of **Fiji** and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1936–38.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

308 – DESPATCH FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION
AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

308

*Despatch from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the
Governor-General of New Zealand*

25 February 1938

No. 54

MY LORD

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's secret despatch of 4 November on the subject of the force which is to be sent to **Fanning Island** by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand on the request of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** in the event of an emergency.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** wish to convey to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand an expression of their thanks for the offer to increase this force from two platoons to one company. His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** welcome this offer and gladly accept it in view of the great importance of the island.

As regards the question raised in the third paragraph of your despatch, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** are at present in communication with the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and a further despatch will be sent when his reply is received.

I have, &c.,

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

309 – DESPATCH FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION
AFFAIRS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

309

*Despatch from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the
Governor-General of New Zealand*

24 August 1938

No. 257

MY LORD

With reference to the third paragraph of Mr MacDonald's secret despatch No. 54 of 25 February, I have the honour to state that the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific has now reported that Cable and Wireless, Limited, will co-operate in measures for the defence of **Fanning Island**. This co-operation will, it is understood, take the form of encouraging the Company's staff to volunteer for a short term of military training, mainly in the use and maintenance of automatic weapons. It is intended that the status of staff who volunteer should be regularised by their formation into a local defence force.

It has been ascertained that a member of the Company's staff will sail from **Sydney** for **Fanning Island** on 1 September and that two others will sail in April 1939. The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific ¹ will communicate with the Defence authorities of the Commonwealth of **Australia** with regard to their training.

I have, &c.,

²Duke of Devonshire, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1936-40.

, 2

for the Secretary of State

¹ Sir Harry Luke succeeded Sir Arthur Richards in June 1938.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

310 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS³ – [EXTRACT]

310

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*³

[Extract]

3 February 1939

... His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have been considering certain aspects of the defence situation. They would be grateful for the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on the following points....

In view of the world situation and with particular reference to the importance of the trans- **Pacific** cable,¹ would it be desirable to despatch to **Fanning Island** immediately the force already agreed to? It appears to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand that it would be exceedingly dangerous, if not impossible, to despatch a force after the outbreak of a war in which **Japan** was involved, as no adequate escort can be made available and as enemy forces may reasonably be expected to be in position on the outbreak of war. On the other hand, it might be undesirable to take such open action in peace....²

³ Viscount Caldecote (at this date Sir Thomas Inskip).

¹ That the Germans appreciated the importance of the **Fanning Island** cable station in the 1914–18 war is shown by the promptness with which the German cruiser *Nurnberg* proceeded to the island after the outbreak of war and severed the cable on 7 Sep 1914. On 8 December of the same year the *Nurnberg* was sunk by HMS *Kent* in the battle of the **Falkland Islands**.

² Text omitted discussed the defence of **Fiji** and the provision of ammunition, aircraft and air force equipment for local defence and training in New Zealand in the event of war.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

311 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

311

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

[Extract]

5 March 1939

Your telegram of 3 February....

We agree that for the reasons indicated it would be undesirable to defer the despatch of the force to **Fanning Island** until after an outbreak of war. We feel, however, that having regard to the difficulties involved in placing a garrison on the island in peacetime (including lack of accommodation and supplies) it would not be advisable to despatch this force at the present time. In order to avoid delay if the necessity for its despatch should arise, we suggest that the best course would be for His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to make as complete a plan as possible for operation and to collect and earmark all stores, supplies, ammunition, etc., which would be required. It would then be possible, if at any time in the opinion of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** the occasion had arisen for the despatch of the force, for them to inform His Majesty's Government in New Zealand immediately. For this purpose would it be possible to let us have the length of time which might be expected to elapse between receipt by the **New Zealand Government** of such information and the sailing of the force? ... ³

³ Text omitted dealt with the proposed expansion of the **Fiji Defence Force**, the installation of coast defence weapons and the establishment of air facilities.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

312 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

312

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

5 April 1939

Your telegram of 5 March.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have given consideration to the question raised in the last sentence of the first paragraph of your telegram under reference. Under present conditions the length of time between receipt of information and the sailing of the **Fanning Island force would be three weeks. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are, however, now making arrangements by which, after a period of about two months from date, the length of time referred to will be reduced to three days.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

313 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

313

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

13 June 1939

My most secret telegram of 5 April. My Ministers advise me that it has not yet been found possible to make the arrangements indicated in the last sentence of my telegram under reference, and that in the meantime the length of time between receipt of information and sailing of the **Fanning Island force will remain at three weeks. ¹ They add that special attention is being given to the measures necessary to shorten this period.**

¹ **By 7 Jun 1939 only 37 enlistments had been received for the force of 150.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

314 — THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS — [EXTRACT]

314

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

[Extract]

20 June 1939

My Prime Minister wishes me to inform you as follows:

**With reference to the report of the Pacific Defence Conference, Part
I....²**

3. Paragraph 49—His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have been considering the question of stationing a platoon at **Fanning Island in peace. They would point out that there is a certain amount of preliminary work such as construction of section posts, improvement of water supply, which could usefully be performed by a platoon in peace, and for that reason they are considering the advisability of sending such a force to the island as a temporary measure, pending a decision regarding its permanent location there. They would be glad of the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** on the question of both the temporary and permanent stationing of the platoon at **Fanning Island**.**

4. The substance of this telegram is being repeated to His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia.**

² Two paragraphs dealing with the defence of **Fiji** and the equipment of the Tongan Defence Force have been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

315 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND¹ – [EXTRACT]

315

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*¹

[Extract]

14 July 1939

Your telegram of 20 June....²

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 permanent or for the 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 costs of the necessary arrangements for reception of the force and its subsequent maintenance....

¹ Repeated to the Commonwealth of Australia.

² Paragraphs 1 and 2 are omitted. The first dealt with the defence of Fiji and the expansion and training of the Fiji Defence Force; the second with the formation of an infantry company for the defence of Tonga.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

316 – THE ASSISTANT HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC
(SUVA)³ TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

316

*The Assistant High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (Suva) ³ to
the Governor-General of New Zealand*

18 July 1939

Reference Defence Conference Report, Part I, page 22 (d) (1),
Fanning Island, ⁴ I should be glad to know whether a decision has been
reached.

³ Mr C. J. J. T. Barton, CMG, OBE.

⁴ This reference read: 'Garrison of one platoon from New Zealand
to be stationed there [**Fanning Island**] in peace.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

317 – THE DEPUTY OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND¹
TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

317

*The Deputy of the Governor-General of New Zealand¹ to the
Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*

16 August 1939

Your telegram of 14 July [**No. 315**].

I am advised that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to despatch to **Fanning Island** a detachment of two officers and thirty other ranks. The detachment will leave New Zealand by HMS *Leith*² on or about 4 September, and will carry out the preliminary work referred to in my telegram of 20 June [**No. 314**]. On completion of the preliminary work, the question of stationing the detachment at **Fanning Island** permanently in peace will be considered by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific is being communicated with, and His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** are being advised of the action to be taken.

¹ Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Myers, PC, GCMG, KC; then Chief Justice of New Zealand.

² HMS *Leith*, sloop, 990 tons, two 4·7-inch guns; at this time attached to the New Zealand Division of the **Royal Navy**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

318 – THE DEPUTY OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

318

*The Deputy of the Governor-General of New Zealand to the High
Commissioner for the Western Pacific*

16 August 1939

Your secret telegram of 18 July [No. 316].

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have decided to despatch to **Fanning Island** a detachment of two officers and thirty other ranks. The detachment will leave New Zealand by HMS *Leith* on or about 4 September and will carry out certain preliminary work. The question of stationing it permanently at **Fanning Island** in peace will be further considered when the preliminary work is completed.

The New Zealand Government would be grateful if you would approach Messrs Burns Philp regarding supply of labour for the construction of native huts, landing of stores, and the use of launches and lighters, for which they will reimburse Messrs Burns Philp. Probably twenty natives and one foreman would be required.

It is requested that all negotiations and discussions regarding the despatch of this detachment be kept most secret; and that the need for secrecy be impressed on Messrs Burns Philp and on Cable and Wireless, Limited.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

319 – THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

319

*The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific to the Governor-
General of New Zealand*

22 August 1939

**The decision communicated in your telegram of 16 August is noted
with satisfaction. All arrangements are in train.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

320 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

320

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the High Commissioner for
the Western Pacific*

25 August 1939

My secret telegram of 16 August [No. 318]. FANNING ISLAND.

**My Ministers state that the arrangements outlined in my telegram
under reference are now subject to reconsideration in view of subsequent
developments, and that a further communication will be sent to you in
due course.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

321 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

321

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

25 August 1939

My most secret telegram of 16 August [**No. 317**].

In view of the instructions now transmitted to the Chief of the Naval Staff ¹ in New Zealand by the Admiralty, with reference to the movements of HMS *Leith*, ² the arrangements proposed for the transport to **Fanning Island** of the preliminary force contemplated will no longer be feasible.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful for a very early intimation of the views of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** as to whether it would be advisable to arrange for this detachment or for the full establishment contemplated to be despatched by a special vessel, and, if so, at what date they would consider this most desirable. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be glad also of any views that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** might have to express as to the possibility of escort or the risk involved.

¹ Rear-Admiral H. E. Horan, DSC, RN (then Commodore); Chief of New Zealand Naval Staff, Jun 1938–Apr 1940.

² She was ordered to **Singapore**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

322 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

322

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

28 August 1939

Your telegram of 25 August.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** would be grateful if the preliminary force could move at once to **Fanning Island**. It is considered that it would be advisable that the force should be escorted, and it is suggested that it might be transported in a cruiser of the New Zealand Naval Forces. In the present circumstances the despatch of the full establishment does not appear to be necessary.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

323 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

323

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

29 August 1939

Your telegram of 28 August.

My acting Prime Minister informs me that a force of two officers and
thirty men ¹ will leave New Zealand for **Fanning Island** direct at 5 p.m.
tomorrow, 30 August, in HMS *Leander*. ²

His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of **Australia** and the
High Commissioner for the Western Pacific are being advised
accordingly.

¹ No. 1 Platoon, A Company, New Zealand Regular Force.

² HMNZS *Leander*, 6-inch cruiser, 7270 tons, attached to the
New Zealand Division of the **Royal Navy**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

324 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND

324

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General
of New Zealand*

30 August 1939

Your telegram of 29 August. FANNING ISLAND.

**His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom much appreciate
the action taken and, in particular, the speed with which it was
executed.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

325 – THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

325

*The Governor-General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

7 September 1939

My telegram of 29 August [**No. 323**]. The force arrived at **Fanning
Island** on the afternoon of 5 September, New Zealand time.

¹ Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden had taken over on 3 Sep 1939.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

326 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

326

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*²

19 February 1941

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand consider in view of the deterioration of the position in the Pacific that the garrison at Fanning Island, which consists of one platoon, should be reinforced by another platoon consisting of approximately one officer and thirty-two other ranks. Unless His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom signify any objection, His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to despatch this platoon by the first available vessel.

² Viscount Cranborne. This telegram was repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

327 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND³

327

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*³

Your telegram of 19 February.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** welcome the proposal of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand to send a second platoon to **Fanning Island** by the first available vessel.

His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** much appreciate the decision of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand, conveyed in your telegram No. 59 of 18 February,⁴ to mount and man the 6-inch gun which has been allocated to **Fanning Island**, and to provide all stores necessary for mounting and accommodation for personnel. Information as to the date when the gun will arrive at **Fanning Island** will be sent as soon as possible. The United Kingdom authorities are experiencing some difficulty in securing the range-finding gear required, and it would be most helpful if this gear could be provided from New Zealand. We should be glad to learn as soon as possible whether suitable gear is available in New Zealand and, if so, whether it could be released for **Fanning Island**.

³ Repeated to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

⁴ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

328 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

328

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

28 February 1941

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand propose to send both the extra platoon and the battery personnel to **Fanning Island on 24 March. The latter party of one officer and twenty-nine other ranks would be employed in preparing the site ready for the mounting of the gun when it arrives. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand much regret that it is not possible to supply range-finding equipment from New Zealand and would much appreciate it if the necessary gear could accompany the gun.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

329 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS – [EXTRACT]

329

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

[Extract]

7 March 1941

... 3. The decision of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** to instal one 6-inch gun at **Fanning Island** is welcomed and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have already accepted responsibility for mounting and manning this gun. The recommendation of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff was, however, for a two-gun battery, and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be grateful if consideration could be given to the question whether the one gun now proposed is adequate for the purpose....¹

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific, No. 248*, for text omitted.

The United Kingdom Government replied on 31 March that demands for 6-inch guns were so heavy that it was not possible to make a second gun available.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

330 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS – [EXTRACT]

330

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

[Extract]

19 February 1942

... 3. In regard to **Fanning Island**, the responsibility for the defence of this was assumed by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, and the garrison which was sent there has since been increased and now comprises 5 officers, 108 other ranks, with rifles, two MMGs, eight MGs, one 3-inch mortar, 250 grenades, 145,000 rounds SAA, one 6-inch QFC gun with 150 rounds. With the entry of **Japan** into the war and her initial successes, the scale of attack against which preparations must be made has increased considerably, and His Majesty's Government in New Zealand are in no position to provide adequate forces or equipment for the defence of this island. As the only trans- **Pacific** cable now available passes through **Fanning Island**, it is a major concern of the **United Nations** that the island be adequately protected. Moreover, because of the distance of **Fanning Island** from New Zealand, it is extremely difficult to supply the forces on this island from New Zealand.

4. For the foregoing reasons, and as it seems essential that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand should, in view of their responsibilities in the Anzac area, contain their strength there so that it might be more effective, they would propose that the defence of **Fanning Island** be assumed by the United States Government, and they would be glad, provided His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** see no objection, if arrangements could be made for this proposal to be

considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in **Washington....** ¹

¹ See *Defence of the South Pacific*, No. 266, for text omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

331 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

331

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

2 April 1942

Your telegram No. 60 of 11 March. ² Arrangements must be made very shortly for the relief and provisioning of the garrison on **Fanning Island**, but before doing so we would be glad to learn whether there is any prospect of the United States Government assuming, as we proposed, responsibility for the defence of this island.

² Not published. Reported a statement made by Sir John Dill that the Americans 'did not feel justified in extending their work beyond Christmas Island', but that they might be agreeable to supplying the **Fanning Island** garrison with food and other essentials.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

332 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

332

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

4 April 1942

Your telegram of 2 April. FANNING ISLAND.

I saw Admiral King this morning and he issued instructions for an American force to relieve the **Fanning Island garrison.**

I arranged to leave all help on the island which may be required by the **United States force. Fanning is a **United Kingdom** possession and it may be necessary to obtain approval from the United Kingdom Government.**

Will you please attend to this and advise me. In the meantime King's order will proceed and I will keep you advised of progress. The preliminary order will provide for the transfer of our men as well as replacement.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

333 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

333

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

8 April 1942

Your telegram [No. 268] of 5 April.²

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel now, as they have felt on similar occasions in the past, that it would be inadvisable to raise, in connection with the proffered assistance from the **United States of America**, any matters which the Americans might regard as unnecessarily formal or might perhaps construe as obstructive. For that reason they would be inclined to deprecate the use of the phrase 'not only for formal reasons but also' in the reply which His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** propose to make to the United States Government, and for their part they propose to take the line in such cases that **United States** assistance will be welcomed in all areas for which the **New Zealand Government** are responsible, that prior notification is of course always desirable in order that any necessary preparations may be made, but that where prior notification is not considered feasible by the **United States** authorities the position will be quite understood.

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have already at various times and in general terms let it be known to the United States Government that they agree to the use by **United States** forces of New Zealand and territories administered by them, including the Cook

¹ Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee.

2 See

Islands, **Western Samoa** and the **Kermadecs**, and, so far as they are concerned, of **Fiji**, **Tongatabu**, and other British administered islands in the **South Pacific**, for the defence of which they are responsible.

The **New Zealand Minister** at **Washington** has advised me of the agreement by the **United States** authorities to undertake the defence of **Fanning Island** as proposed in my telegram [**No. 330**], and the **New Zealand Government** take it that the general approval contemplated in your telegram under reply adequately covers the question of the **United Kingdom Government's** consent to this use of **Fanning Island** as well as of **Fiji**, other British administered islands in the **Pacific**, and of **Tongatabu**. So far as **Tongatabu** is concerned, the **New Zealand Government** take it that any necessary negotiations with the **Tongan Government** will be undertaken by His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom**.¹

¹ On 17 April the **Dominions Secretary** replied that the **New Zealand Government's** assumptions in this paragraph were correct, and that the **Tongan Government** had given its approval.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

334 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

334

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

8 April 1942

Your telegram of 4 April [No. 332].

We note and approve your arrangements for **Fanning Island** and greatly appreciate **United States** assistance. It may well be that the best means of relieving our force would be for them to leave the island on the vessel that brings the American troops, even if that vessel should be returning to **America**, and we assume that you will keep us advised of the possibilities in this respect.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs advises that Admiral King has asked the Joint Staff Mission in **Washington** for authority for the **United States** forces to use any **Pacific** islands under **United Kingdom** or Dominion control, and that His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** propose to agree.

This will, of course, cover the case of **Fanning Island**, our proposals for which are in any case already known to the United Kingdom Government.

At the same time as the United Kingdom Government give this general consent to American use of the **Pacific Islands**, will you please inform the United States Government that the **New Zealand Government** will at all times welcome **United States** forces to this Dominion and to any islands administered by New Zealand. Prior notification is of course desirable in order that any necessary preparations may be made, but in any case where such prior notification is not considered feasible by the

United States authorities, we will quite understand the position. As regards the **British** administered islands in the **Pacific** for which **New Zealand** has assumed defence responsibility, a similar position will arise so far as we are concerned, but the formal approval must come from **His Majesty's Government** in the **United Kingdom**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

335 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

335

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

16 April 1942

Your telegram of 8 April.

Admiral King advises me that the orders issued to Admiral Nimitz with regard to relieving the garrison at **Fanning Island include instructions that he is to transport the relieved garrison to New Zealand in due course. I will advise you when further information is available.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

336 – THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER, WASHINGTON, TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

336

The New Zealand Minister, Washington, to the Prime Minister

16 April 1942

Admiral King now advises that relief and transportation for Fanning Island will leave Pearl Harbour about 19 April, arriving Fanning Island about 24 April. The relieved garrison should arrive at New Zealand approximately three weeks later.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

FORMATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

337 – NEW ZEALAND LEGATION (WASHINGTON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

337

*New Zealand Legation (Washington) to the Prime Minister of New
Zealand*

[Extract]

8 July 1942

To the Chief of the Naval Staff ¹ from the New Zealand Naval
Attaché.

Following is a summary of a conversation between [Commodore]
Parry and Rear-Admiral Cooke, ² who has relieved Turner ³:

Reference Minister's cable [**No. 304**] of 24 June. ⁴ COMINCH ⁵ considers
the naval situation is considerably improved as a result of the Midway
Island battle, thus reducing the probability of a Japanese attack in the
South Pacific.

2. COMINCH therefore proposed the removal of New Zealand troops from **Fiji**
and suggested that New Zealand might be willing to allow them to be
trained with a **United States** amphibian division with a view to eventual
participation in offensive operations. If New Zealand agrees, the **United
States** would provide equipment as it becomes available.

3. Owing to the shipping situation, the supply of landing craft would be
facilitated if these could be assembled in New Zealand. Navy Department
inquired whether the necessary plant was available, observing that
plates, etc., are welded and not riveted.... ⁶

5. When offensive operations start, COMINCH will also require garrison
troops to hold captured islands, thus allowing amphibian troops to carry

out a further step forward. There will therefore be a demand for troops other than those trained in amphibian operations.

6. Navy Department also inquired whether New Zealand can provide small vessels capable of carrying 100 to 300 tons of stores and sufficiently seaworthy to follow up the operations of amphibian troops. Endurance at least 1000 miles. Ships should use oil fuel, or preferably diesel, in order to facilitate refuelling.

¹ Commodore Sir Atwell Lake, Bt., CB, OBE, RN, succeeded Commodore Parry as Chief of the Naval Staff at the end of June 1942. He held the appointment until July 1945.

² Rear-Admiral C. M. Cooke, USN; Assistant Chief of Staff to Commander-in-Chief US Fleet, 1942–44; Chief of Staff to C-in-C US Fleet, Sep 1944–Oct 1945; Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, 1945.

³ Rear-Admiral R. K. Turner, USN; Director, War Plans Division, Navy Department, Oct 1940–Jun 1942; commanded amphibian forces in the [Pacific](#), 1943–45.

⁴ See

Relief of New Zealand Garrisons in Fiji and Tonga.

⁵ **Commander-in-Chief (Admiral E. J. King).**

⁶ **Paragraph 4 is omitted. It dealt with the channel of communication for requests for equipment.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

338 – THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF (WELLINGTON) TO THE NEW ZEALAND LIAISON OFFICER (LONDON)

338

*The Chief of the General Staff (Wellington) to the New Zealand
Liaison Officer (London)*

16 July 1942

Most secret and personal for Brigadier Park from General Puttick.
Your ML 2915 of 13 July. ¹

1. Have no definite information as to possible area of operations or time. Assume that at some future date offensive operations will be undertaken in the **Pacific** and that New Zealand will be asked to co-operate. There are three possible roles. First, amphibious. Second, island garrisons. Third, participation in large offensive operations from **Australia**. Assumption is confirmed by cables from **Washington** suggesting that the 3rd New Zealand Division on return from **Fiji** should train with the 1st United States Marine Division for amphibious operations.
 2. Would appreciate **War Office** advice on the organisation and equipment of forces for these operations. My preliminary view is that brigade groups on the present organisation, but with reduced equipment, would be suitable for amphibious and garrison operations. I do not visualise the **Army Tank Brigade** taking part as a brigade in the initial operations unless **Australia** was invaded in strength. 3·7-inch howitzers would be valuable and we should have an additional twenty-four to be able to equip one battery in each of three field regiments with these weapons.
 3. Cannot state requirements in landing craft. **America** has offered to provide and has inquired if craft can be assembled locally.
-

¹ Not published. Requested General Puttick's views on the likely divisional organisation for amphibious operations in the Pacific, the area in which the force would be employed and its requirements in landing craft.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

339 — MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE¹ — OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

339

Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Minister of Defence¹

31 July 1942

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

1. In response to a request from the Commander South Pacific—Admiral Ghormley, USN—I called on him on Tuesday, 28 July.

2. His views on the employment of New Zealand troops in any forthcoming operations are as follows:²

(To provide forces of all arms to follow up **United States**

a) amphibious troops and hold captured areas, in order to release the **United States** troops for further amphibious operations, for which they have been specially trained and equipped.

(The size of the New Zealand forces necessary for operations would

b) naturally depend upon the scope of the operations and the actual locality or localities involved. He suggested that New Zealand should prepare at once to provide the following alternative forces so as to be able to meet any contingency at short notice: *Force 'A'*—

One infantry brigade (three battalions) with anti-tank battery attached.³

One battery plus one troop (12 25-pounders) field artillery.

One heavy anti-aircraft battery plus two troops (12 3·7-inch anti-aircraft guns).

Two light anti-aircraft batteries plus two troops (32 Bofors guns).

One heavy battery (four 155-millimetre or 6-inch guns) (for Harbour Defence).

Proportion Signal, Engineer, Army Service Corps, Medical Services.

Force 'B'—

Force 'A' plus two heavy batteries (for Harbour Defence).

Force 'C'—

Two infantry brigades (each three battalions).

Two anti-tank batteries (24 2-pounders).

One field regiment (24 25-pounders).

One medium battery, plus one troop (8 6-inch howitzers, four 60-pounders).

Three heavy anti-aircraft batteries (24 3·7-inch anti-aircraft guns).

Five light anti-aircraft batteries, plus one troop (64 40-millimetre guns).

Three heavy batteries (12 155-millimetre or 6-inch guns) (for Harbour Defence).

Proportion Signal, Engineer, Army Service Corps, Medical Services.

Force 'D'—

Three infantry brigades (each three battalions).

Three anti-tank batteries (36 2-pounders).

One and one-half field regiments (36 25-pounders).

One medium battery, plus one troop (8 6-inch howitzers, four 60-pounders).

Four heavy anti-aircraft batteries, plus two troops (36 3·7-inch guns).

Eight light anti-aircraft batteries (96 40-millimetre guns).

Six heavy batteries (24 155-millimetre or 6-inch guns) (for Harbour Defence).

Proportion Signal, Engineer, Army Service Corps, Medical Services.

**(New Zealand Forces should be prepared to embark at any time
c) after 25 August.**

**(Regarding amphibious training, Admiral Ghormley informed me
d) that sufficient troops trained in this type of operation were available
but that the special equipment required was in short supply, though
of course the 1st Marine Division was fully equipped. He therefore
regarded the role proposed in paragraph 2 (a) as the one New Zealand
should prepare for.**

**3. On the assumption that it is the wish of War Cabinet that New
Zealand troops should take part in offensive operations against the
Japanese, I propose that the following preparations be put in hand
forthwith:**

(Adopt Force 'D' as our target for planning.

a)

**(Use the 3rd Division (ex Fiji) as the basis of the force, and add the
b) necessary units and services from existing New Zealand formations.**

**(Appoint at once a divisional commander to command the 3rd
c) Division so that in the event of War Cabinet deciding to send Force
'D', the Commander will have taken part in its organisation,
equipping, and training, or in the event of a smaller force being
required, an experienced Commander is charged with its preparation.**

**4. The proposals in paragraph 3 involve considerable work and there is
no time to spare. The additions required to the 3rd Division will have to
be found from all over New Zealand so as to interfere as little as possible
with the plans for defence of the country. The bulk of the additional
forces required will have to be found from the Army Reserve Brigade
Group, and from existing anti-aircraft and coast defence units.**

**5. These measures will naturally reduce the strength of the forces
available for Home Defence. On the other hand, the greatly increased**

power of the **Army Tank Brigade**, the improvement in the efficiency of the **Home Guard**, and the improved equipment situation plus the additional training that has taken place in the interim will leave the forces relatively more powerful than they were three months ago.

Further, the **Pacific** situation has improved somewhat though admittedly Japanese plans cannot be foreseen with certainty. It can, I think, be claimed that the position in the **Pacific** is definitely more secure because of the increased all-round **United States** strength in the **Pacific** and **Australia**, apart from any increase in our own efficiency.

There must always be some danger to be accepted in war, but if every possible danger is to be guarded against to the fullest possible extent, forces which should, in order to win the war, be used offensively or in support of offensive action, will be tied down to defensive action or in other words contained by the possibility of enemy attack, and this can only lead to the creation of the very dangers which it is desired to avoid.

6. I have therefore to recommend for consideration of **War Cabinet** that New Zealand should assist in the direction indicated by Admiral Ghormley to the maximum possible extent.

In the meantime I am proceeding with the reorganisation of the 3rd Division, and have already given some preference to the Army Reserve Brigade Group in the posting of men of categories suitable for overseas service. In this latter connection I recommend that the age for such service be reduced to 20 years to reduce the reorganisation that will be necessary.

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK

Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

¹ **Hon. F. Jones, Minister of Defence, 1935–49.**

² **On 24 July War Cabinet gave General Puttick authority to discuss with United States naval authorities in New Zealand the amphibious training to be undertaken by New Zealand troops and the equipment necessary, and instructed him to submit recommendations ‘on the employment of New Zealand forces in amphibian operations’.**

³ **For clarity, the abbreviations in the original text have been spelt in full.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

340 — MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE — [EXTRACT]

340

*Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Minister of
Defence*

[Extract]

3 August 1942

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

1. With reference to my memorandum S. 25/18 of 31 July, from a preliminary study of the problem I have the following observations to submit.
2. From the outset, it was clear that in view of the present state of the forces, the problem was a major one requiring very considerable energy and concentration in order to have the proposed force ready at the date suggested. Among the major difficulties involved are the following:
 - (*Distribution of manpower within the Army.* As has been previously a) reported to **War Cabinet**, all formations and units in New Zealand—with the exception of the Tank Brigade and 3rd Division—include many men under or over age and of medical categories below NZEF requirements. Any of these formations or units chosen for overseas must have such men replaced. Measures have already been taken in this direction under the scheme providing for all men of Grade I, 20–41 years of age, being concentrated in divisions and the remainder in garrison units. This action has just been commenced and will take probably two months to complete.
 - (*NZEF Reinforcements.* The 3rd Division was built up almost entirely b) from NZEF reinforcements. The 9th Reinforcements after training were posted to various units throughout New Zealand but care has been taken to keep a record of them so that they could be assembled

if necessary. If it is decided to send reinforcements to **Middle East** the withdrawal of 9th Reinforcements will further reduce the present under-strength units of the New Zealand Army. Any withdrawal of NZEF reinforcements from 3rd Division would naturally disorganise that Division and is not recommended. Any number required in excess of 9th Reinforcements should be obtained more or less equally from the other divisions and the garrison troops.... ¹

¹ Several paragraphs have been omitted. They dealt with inoculation arrangements, appeal procedure, final leave, age limits for 2nd NZEF, equipment, secrecy, unit strengths, and with a proposed rearrangement of Home Defence forces in the **Auckland** province after the departure of the force.

- (*Return of 3rd Division from **Fiji***. Some 2000 men of all arms will not e) have returned until about 9 August. This means that they will not complete their leave till about 30 August. If the force is to be ready by 25 August, these men will not be available but they will replace units and sub-units that will have to be taken from the other divisions....
- (*Training*. It is clear from the circumstances outlined in the preceding k) paragraphs that there will be little time available for additional training. Until the various units are made up to strength with men of the proper category I will not be able to form an opinion as to the efficiency of the units. As however the men will come from various sources, there will not be such cohesion as I would desire and I would expect that the training of some of the men will be found deficient in certain respects. This situation illustrates firstly the necessity for completing with all speed the measures already in train to have our divisions made up solely of men suitable for overseas in all respects, secondly the importance of avoiding as far as possible any interference with their personnel once they are so made up, and thirdly the urgency involved in all matters relating to the force now under consideration. As regards possible deficiencies in training, the units likely to be most affected are the artillery (of all natures) though it is expected that in this arm and all others there will be a considerable proportion of men who have had a good deal of training. Whether or not deficiencies in training should be accepted depends upon the nature of the task for which the troops are required initially, and the urgency that may be involved in effecting a relief of **United States** troops for further offensive operations. I estimate that the urgency is likely to be great and that this may be one of those

occasions where the scope and nature of the operations justifies the acceptance of such risks as are involved in the employment of incompletely trained troops. Our observations of the **United States** troops in **Fiji** suggest that these troops were not particularly well-trained and that probably they were regarded as suitable, in their present state, only for garrison duties. It is dangerous to assume that troops will be used only for the restricted operations for which they have been despatched, such as garrison duties, as the course of operations may require their employment otherwise. An example of this is the British garrison units sent to Egypt in 1915, who had to be employed in active operations against the **Senussi**, for which they were unsuitable. Nevertheless, circumstances may require the acceptance of this risk, but every effort should be made by all concerned, both before and after the despatch of the troops, to fit them for all operations of war.

3. Effect of the despatch of Force 'D' on defence of New Zealand

Omitting any consideration of the effect the operations may have in increasing the security of New Zealand, I now submit some observations on the effect the despatch of Force 'D' will have on the forces available for Home Defence:

(On the return of the 3rd Division from **Fiji**, the state of the forces a) in New Zealand, provided establishments are filled, will be approximately as under:

Approved establishment	75,000
Tank Brigade	4,000
	79,000
3rd Division	10,000
	89,000
Deduct 'D' Force	20,000
Remaining in New Zealand	69,000

On present strengths, i.e., without deducting men absent from units for leave, sickness, and industry, the position is:

Strength	66,000
Tank Brigade	4,000
	70,000
3rd Division	10,000
	80,000
Deduct 'D' Force	20,000

With units in New Zealand 60,000

If men absent from units are deducted (12,000) the strength actually with units would be approximately 48,000, but the effect of the draw-off for industry is not yet fully known and may reduce this figure by another 4000 to 44,000. In emergency the men absent from units (less 4500 sick) would rejoin, increasing the above totals of men with units to 55,000. Men from the last ballot are not included in the strengths and these, together with men from future ballots, would of course improve the position.

**(The principal effect of the despatch of 'D' Force, however, would
b) be the disappearance of the Army Reserve Brigade Group, and a weakening of the forces in the immediate vicinity of Auckland through the absorption of the 3rd Division in 'D' Force. A somewhat similar situation at Auckland was created on the despatch of the 37th United States Division to Fiji and it was met to some extent by the transfer of an Army Tank battalion from Waiouru to Papakura area. If 'D' Force proceeds, I tentatively propose to strengthen the position near Auckland by the following measures, or some such re-arrangement of the forces: ... ¹**

¹ Details omitted.

GENERAL STRATEGIC SITUATION

4. War Cabinet will wish, amongst other considerations, to assess the risks to New Zealand that may be involved through the despatch of forces overseas. While this is not easy and there can be no certainty in any conclusions that may be reached in the matter, the general appreciation in the following paragraphs may be of some assistance in forming an opinion on the problem.

5. War Cabinet will recall that the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, on the outbreak of war with Japan, expressed the opinion that until Singapore fell and until the United States naval forces suffered a major defeat, invasion of New Zealand was most improbable, and they stated that in their opinion six months must elapse before there could be any danger of invasion of New Zealand. On 30 December, the unexpectedly

rapid progress of the Japanese attack in **Malaya** caused the Chiefs of Staff to reduce the period to three months from 30 December. They still regarded invasion of New Zealand as improbable and still held that a major defeat of the **United States** fleet was an essential condition. But as such a defeat could conceivably occur in a matter of hours, it then became a question as to how long it would take **Japan** to capture **Singapore** and also to prepare an expedition of the size required for invasion of New Zealand, and the estimate of three months was arrived at.

6. I see no reason to alter the opinion as outlined in paragraph 5. On 30 December last, no useful opinion could be given as to the efficiency of the **United States** forces nor could it be seen whether **United States** strategy in the **Pacific** would be offensive or defensive. This situation has been clarified considerably and both by actions and words the **United States** have given very definite indications that their strategy is offensive. This has led to considerable **United States** land and air forces being concentrated in **Australia** and the **Pacific Islands**, to strong naval concentrations in the **Pacific**, and to operations in the Coral Sea, and at Midway Island and the Aleutians, which have weakened the Japanese forces *vis-à-vis* the Allies. The Allied concentrations in the **Pacific** and the improved preparations of **Australia** and New Zealand have also made it possible for the various forces mutually to support each other in case of attack.

7. In other respects the situation has improved in favour of the Allies. There is no doubt that **Japan** was thoroughly prepared for the war while the **United States**, **Australia** and New Zealand were far from ready. The period of preparation since 7 December has resulted in a vast improvement in the strength of the Allied forces—in training, equipment, and preparation of overseas and home bases including aerodromes, coast and other defences, and naval facilities. It is true that during that period **Japan** has also strengthened her forces somewhat, while strategically it may be said that by her conquests she has placed herself in favourable positions to imperil **China**, **India**, **Australia**, New

Zealand and the Pacific Islands. This is only true to the extent that **Japan** is able not only to hold her conquests but also to develop strong offensives from them. The former depends upon her ability to maintain at least parity with Allied naval and air forces, especially, so far as we primarily are concerned, in the southern and eastern limits of her southward advance. The latter—development of strong offensive—also depends upon naval and air strength but for offensives she requires not parity but considerable superiority. Her ability to stage an offensive against New Zealand will also depend, and perhaps primarily, upon her strategical intentions elsewhere—such as operations against **Russia, China, India, and/or Australia**—and upon her estimate of the danger of attack on **Japan** itself, and also upon the necessity in her own interests of doing all she can to prevent the defeat of Axis powers, an event which would be catastrophic to her.

8. Japan must consider that while she is in a position to imperil the Allies, the Allies are in a favourable position to imperil much that she has conquered. From morale and economic points of view she cannot view without concern the prospect of losing any of her conquests and she must make every effort to retain them. While she will do this to some extent by strengthening her defences everywhere, her history, temperament, and the inherent disadvantages of defensive strategy all make it highly probable that she will meet the situation by a vigorous offensive at the earliest possible date. Until United States naval power is seriously diminished it is difficult to see how she could attempt operations which would give Allied naval and air forces a favourable opportunity of dealing what might well be a decisive blow.

9. It therefore seems highly probable that **Japan** will confine her operations to those areas where she can hope to attain air superiority by the assistance of shore-based aircraft. These operations would be designed to secure the safety of her conquered territories and also to tempt the Allies into naval operations in areas where **Japan** would have every possible advantage.

10. Areas which fulfil these conditions are **New Guinea**, and the chain of

islands leading east and south-east towards **New Caledonia**. Operations further afield and beyond the cover of shore-based aircraft are not I think precluded, provided they do not involve large and vulnerable forces nor take so much time as would enable strong Allied forces to interfere before they are completed. Thus if the Japanese were firmly established in the **New Hebrides**, **New Caledonia** might well be attempted, but I doubt whether **Fiji** is now in much danger of invasion. The tip of York Peninsula and Port Darwin are distinct possibilities, the former after **Port Moresby** is taken and the latter perhaps coinciding with an attack on **Port Moresby**.

11. I cannot conceive any probability of an invasion of New Zealand at this stage. The major defeat of Allied naval forces and the capture of **New Caledonia**, and I think **Fiji** also, are in my opinion necessary before the invasion danger becomes real. In the meantime I would expect submarine attacks on our shipping both off the coast and in our harbours, submarine shelling of our coastal towns, and possible reconnaissance aircraft accompanied by perhaps a little bombing, for the purpose of destroying ships and of causing such alarm as to prevent our forces leaving New Zealand. I am surprised that such enterprises have not already been attempted.

12. Allied interests would appear to be best served by strongly holding **New Guinea** and clearing the enemy therefrom and developing a powerful and rapid offensive against the enemy occupied islands to the east and south-east. This latter operation is of particular interest to New Zealand as if successful it would considerably increase the security of **New Caledonia** and **Fiji** and in consequence the security of New Zealand.

13. I therefore come to the conclusion that the best course to pursue in furthering the security of New Zealand is to participate to the fullest extent in offensive operations against the Japanese, and at the same time leave nothing undone to strengthen the forces for home defence. This latter remains of prime importance because (i) as has already been suggested, our principal protection against invasion—the Allied naval

forces—could conceivably be removed in a matter of hours, thus creating a most urgent Home Defence problem and (ii) the stronger our Home Defence forces the better the position we will be in to go to the support of our forward forces should that prove to be necessary. The strengthening of the New Zealand air forces and the completion of naval defences remain as always of very great importance.

14. Provided therefore that urgent measures be taken to bring our forces up to establishment and that the operations proposed by the **United States** are deemed reasonable in character and are on a scale and in a direction which it is anticipated will, if successful, reduce the danger to New Zealand (as discussed in paragraph 10) I am of opinion that **War Cabinet** would be justified in accepting such risks to New Zealand as may be involved in the despatch of Force 'D'. ¹

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK,
Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

¹ On 6 August **War Cabinet** decided 'that a Division be established and trained in New Zealand for offensive purposes—the basis of the Division to be the Fijian Force and the 7th Brigade Group.' On 11 August it approved the appointment of Maj-Gen H. E. Barrowclough, DSO, MC, as its commander. In November the designation of the force was changed from 3rd NZ Division to 2nd NZEF in **Pacific** and General Barrowclough's appointment changed from Commander 3rd NZ Division to GOC 2nd NZEF in **Pacific**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

1. With reference to my memorandum S. 25/18 of 31 July, from a preliminary study of the problem I have the following observations to submit.
2. From the outset, it was clear that in view of the present state of the forces, the problem was a major one requiring very considerable energy and concentration in order to have the proposed force ready at the date suggested. Among the major difficulties involved are the following:
 - (*Distribution of manpower within the Army.* As has been previously a) reported to **War Cabinet**, all formations and units in New Zealand—with the exception of the Tank Brigade and 3rd Division—include many men under or over age and of medical categories below NZEF requirements. Any of these formations or units chosen for overseas must have such men replaced. Measures have already been taken in this direction under the scheme providing for all men of Grade I, 20–41 years of age, being concentrated in divisions and the remainder in garrison units. This action has just been commenced and will take probably two months to complete.
 - (*NZEF Reinforcements.* The 3rd Division was built up almost entirely b) from NZEF reinforcements. The 9th Reinforcements after training were posted to various units throughout New Zealand but care has been taken to keep a record of them so that they could be assembled if necessary. If it is decided to send reinforcements to **Middle East** the withdrawal of 9th Reinforcements will further reduce the present under-strength units of the New Zealand Army. Any withdrawal of NZEF reinforcements from 3rd Division would naturally disorganise that Division and is not recommended. Any number required in excess of 9th Reinforcements should be obtained more or less equally from the other divisions and the garrison troops.... ¹

¹ Several paragraphs have been omitted. They dealt with

inoculation arrangements, appeal procedure, final leave, age limits for 2nd NZEF, equipment, secrecy, unit strengths, and with a proposed rearrangement of Home Defence forces in the **Auckland** province after the departure of the force.

(*Return of 3rd Division from **Fiji***. Some 2000 men of all arms will not e) have returned until about 9 August. This means that they will not complete their leave till about 30 August. If the force is to be ready by 25 August, these men will not be available but they will replace units and sub-units that will have to be taken from the other divisions....

(*Training*. It is clear from the circumstances outlined in the preceding k) paragraphs that there will be little time available for additional training. Until the various units are made up to strength with men of the proper category I will not be able to form an opinion as to the efficiency of the units. As however the men will come from various sources, there will not be such cohesion as I would desire and I would expect that the training of some of the men will be found deficient in certain respects. This situation illustrates firstly the necessity for completing with all speed the measures already in train to have our divisions made up solely of men suitable for overseas in all respects, secondly the importance of avoiding as far as possible any interference with their personnel once they are so made up, and thirdly the urgency involved in all matters relating to the force now under consideration. As regards possible deficiencies in training, the units likely to be most affected are the artillery (of all natures) though it is expected that in this arm and all others there will be a considerable proportion of men who have had a good deal of training. Whether or not deficiencies in training should be accepted depends upon the nature of the task for which the troops are required initially, and the urgency that may be involved in effecting a relief of **United States** troops for further offensive operations. I estimate that the urgency is likely to be great and that this may be one of those occasions where the scope and nature of the operations justifies the acceptance of such risks as are involved in the employment of incompletely trained troops. Our observations of the **United States** troops in **Fiji** suggest that these troops were not particularly well-trained and that probably they were regarded as suitable, in their present state, only for garrison duties. It is dangerous to assume that troops will be used only for the restricted operations for which they have been despatched, such as garrison duties, as the course of operations may require their employment otherwise. An example of this is the British garrison units sent to Egypt in 1915, who had to be

employed in active operations against the **Senussi**, for which they were unsuitable. Nevertheless, circumstances may require the acceptance of this risk, but every effort should be made by all concerned, both before and after the despatch of the troops, to fit them for all operations of war.

3. *Effect of the despatch of Force 'D' on defence of New Zealand*

Omitting any consideration of the effect the operations may have in increasing the security of New Zealand, I now submit some observations on the effect the despatch of Force 'D' will have on the forces available for Home Defence:

(On the return of the 3rd Division from **Fiji**, the state of the forces a) in New Zealand, provided establishments are filled, will be approximately as under:

Approved establishment	75,000
Tank Brigade	4,000
	79,000
3rd Division	10,000
	89,000
Deduct 'D' Force	20,000
Remaining in New Zealand	69,000

On present strengths, i.e., without deducting men absent from units for leave, sickness, and industry, the position is:

Strength	66,000
Tank Brigade	4,000
	70,000
3rd Division	10,000
	80,000
Deduct 'D' Force	20,000
With units in New Zealand	60,000

If men absent from units are deducted (12,000) the strength actually with units would be approximately 48,000, but the effect of the draw-off for industry is not yet fully known and may reduce this figure by another 4000 to 44,000. In emergency the men absent from units (less 4500 sick) would rejoin, increasing the above totals of men with units to 55,000. Men from the last ballot are not included in the strengths and these, together with men from future ballots, would of course improve the position.

(The principal effect of the despatch of 'D' Force, however, would

b) be the disappearance of the Army Reserve Brigade Group, and a weakening of the forces in the immediate vicinity of **Auckland through the absorption of the 3rd Division in 'D' Force. A somewhat similar situation at **Auckland** was created on the despatch of the 37th United States Division to **Fiji** and it was met to some extent by the transfer of an Army Tank battalion from **Waiouru** to **Papakura** area. If 'D' Force proceeds, I tentatively propose to strengthen the position near **Auckland** by the following measures, or some such re-arrangement of the forces: ... ¹**

¹ Details omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

GENERAL STRATEGIC SITUATION

GENERAL STRATEGIC SITUATION

4. War Cabinet will wish, amongst other considerations, to assess the risks to New Zealand that may be involved through the despatch of forces overseas. While this is not easy and there can be no certainty in any conclusions that may be reached in the matter, the general appreciation in the following paragraphs may be of some assistance in forming an opinion on the problem.

5. War Cabinet will recall that the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, on the outbreak of war with **Japan**, expressed the opinion that until **Singapore** fell and until the **United States** naval forces suffered a major defeat, invasion of New Zealand was most improbable, and they stated that in their opinion six months must elapse before there could be any danger of invasion of New Zealand. On 30 December, the unexpectedly rapid progress of the Japanese attack in **Malaya** caused the Chiefs of Staff to reduce the period to three months from 30 December. They still regarded invasion of New Zealand as improbable and still held that a major defeat of the **United States** fleet was an essential condition. But as such a defeat could conceivably occur in a matter of hours, it then became a question as to how long it would take **Japan** to capture **Singapore** and also to prepare an expedition of the size required for invasion of New Zealand, and the estimate of three months was arrived at.

6. I see no reason to alter the opinion as outlined in paragraph 5. On 30 December last, no useful opinion could be given as to the efficiency of the **United States** forces nor could it be seen whether **United States** strategy in the **Pacific** would be offensive or defensive. This situation has been clarified considerably and both by actions and words the **United**

States have given very definite indications that their strategy is offensive. This has led to considerable **United States** land and air forces being concentrated in **Australia** and the **Pacific Islands**, to strong naval concentrations in the **Pacific**, and to operations in the Coral Sea, and at Midway Island and the Aleutians, which have weakened the Japanese forces *vis-à-vis* the Allies. The Allied concentrations in the **Pacific** and the improved preparations of **Australia** and New Zealand have also made it possible for the various forces mutually to support each other in case of attack.

7. In other respects the situation has improved in favour of the Allies. There is no doubt that **Japan** was thoroughly prepared for the war while the **United States**, **Australia** and New Zealand were far from ready. The period of preparation since 7 December has resulted in a vast improvement in the strength of the Allied forces—in training, equipment, and preparation of overseas and home bases including aerodromes, coast and other defences, and naval facilities. It is true that during that period **Japan** has also strengthened her forces somewhat, while strategically it may be said that by her conquests she has placed herself in favourable positions to imperil **China**, **India**, **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Pacific Islands**. This is only true to the extent that **Japan** is able not only to hold her conquests but also to develop strong offensives from them. The former depends upon her ability to maintain at least parity with Allied naval and air forces, especially, so far as we primarily are concerned, in the southern and eastern limits of her southward advance. The latter—development of strong offensive—also depends upon naval and air strength but for offensives she requires not parity but considerable superiority. Her ability to stage an offensive against New Zealand will also depend, and perhaps primarily, upon her strategical intentions elsewhere—such as operations against **Russia**, **China**, **India**, and/or **Australia**—and upon her estimate of the danger of attack on **Japan** itself, and also upon the necessity in her own interests of doing all she can to prevent the defeat of Axis powers, an event which would be catastrophic to her.

8. Japan must consider that while she is in a position to imperil the Allies, the Allies are in a favourable position to imperil much that she has conquered. From morale and economic points of view she cannot view without concern the prospect of losing any of her conquests and she must make every effort to retain them. While she will do this to some extent by strengthening her defences everywhere, her history, temperament, and the inherent disadvantages of defensive strategy all make it highly probable that she will meet the situation by a vigorous offensive at the earliest possible date. Until United States naval power is seriously diminished it is difficult to see how she could attempt operations which would give Allied naval and air forces a favourable opportunity of dealing what might well be a decisive blow.

9. It therefore seems highly probable that **Japan** will confine her operations to those areas where she can hope to attain air superiority by the assistance of shore-based aircraft. These operations would be designed to secure the safety of her conquered territories and also to tempt the Allies into naval operations in areas where **Japan** would have every possible advantage.

10. Areas which fulfil these conditions are **New Guinea**, and the chain of islands leading east and south-east towards **New Caledonia**. Operations further afield and beyond the cover of shore-based aircraft are not I think precluded, provided they do not involve large and vulnerable forces nor take so much time as would enable strong Allied forces to interfere before they are completed. Thus if the Japanese were firmly established in the **New Hebrides**, **New Caledonia** might well be attempted, but I doubt whether **Fiji** is now in much danger of invasion. The tip of York Peninsula and Port Darwin are distinct possibilities, the former after **Port Moresby** is taken and the latter perhaps coinciding with an attack on **Port Moresby**.

11. I cannot conceive any probability of an invasion of New Zealand at this stage. The major defeat of Allied naval forces and the capture of **New Caledonia**, and I think **Fiji** also, are in my opinion necessary before

the invasion danger becomes real. In the meantime I would expect submarine attacks on our shipping both off the coast and in our harbours, submarine shelling of our coastal towns, and possible reconnaissance aircraft accompanied by perhaps a little bombing, for the purpose of destroying ships and of causing such alarm as to prevent our forces leaving New Zealand. I am surprised that such enterprises have not already been attempted.

12. Allied interests would appear to be best served by strongly holding **New Guinea** and clearing the enemy therefrom and developing a powerful and rapid offensive against the enemy occupied islands to the east and south-east. This latter operation is of particular interest to New Zealand as if successful it would considerably increase the security of **New Caledonia** and **Fiji** and in consequence the security of New Zealand.

13. I therefore come to the conclusion that the best course to pursue in furthering the security of New Zealand is to participate to the fullest extent in offensive operations against the Japanese, and at the same time leave nothing undone to strengthen the forces for home defence. This latter remains of prime importance because (i) as has already been suggested, our principal protection against invasion—the Allied naval forces—could conceivably be removed in a matter of hours, thus creating a most urgent Home Defence problem and (ii) the stronger our Home Defence forces the better the position we will be in to go to the support of our forward forces should that prove to be necessary. The strengthening of the New Zealand air forces and the completion of naval defences remain as always of very great importance.

14. Provided therefore that urgent measures be taken to bring our forces up to establishment and that the operations proposed by the **United States** are deemed reasonable in character and are on a scale and in a direction which it is anticipated will, if successful, reduce the danger to New Zealand (as discussed in paragraph 10) I am of opinion that **War Cabinet** would be justified in accepting such risks to New Zealand as may be involved in the despatch of Force 'D'. ¹

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK,
Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

¹ On 6 August **War Cabinet** decided ‘that a Division be established and trained in New Zealand for offensive purposes—the basis of the Division to be the Fijian Force and the 7th Brigade Group.’ On 11 August it approved the appointment of Maj-Gen H. E. Barrowclough, DSO, MC, as its commander. In November the designation of the force was changed from 3rd NZ Division to 2nd NZEF in **Pacific** and General Barrowclough's appointment changed from Commander 3rd NZ Division to GOC 2nd NZEF in **Pacific**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

341 – MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE – OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

341

*Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Minister of
Defence*

3 September 1942

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

Further to paragraph 2 (*k*) of my memorandum S28/15/1G of 3 August with reference to the training of the 3rd Division, I wish to report for the information of **War Cabinet** that I consider **KIWI 'A'** (the smallest force) will not be sufficiently well trained to undertake an active role in the forward theatre of operations until it has had a period of at least six weeks' training from date.

Nevertheless, as I stated in the memorandum referred to above, the circumstances might be such, and the emergency so great, as to justify the despatch of the force overseas before the expiration of that period of training.

My views as expressed above are being communicated to Admiral Ghormley's staff, together with a reminder that the whole question of despatch of any force is subject to **War Cabinet** approval.

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK

Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

342 — MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE — REQUEST FROM COMMANDER, SOUTH PACIFIC
AREA, FOR TROOPS FOR DEFENCE OF NEW CALEDONIA

342

*Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Minister of
Defence*

16 October 1942

REQUEST FROM COMMANDER,

1. Attached is a copy of a signal from Commander, **South Pacific Area**, for additional troops to reinforce the defence of **New Caledonia**. ¹
2. As you know, the force being made ready for overseas duty in the **Pacific** and known as **KIWI 'C'** has been reduced by the provision of garrisons for **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga**. ²
3. I consider that the portion of **KIWI 'C'** remaining and available should be supplied as requested and that as soon as is possible further units to make this force up to the full scale of the contemplated **KIWI 'C'** should be sent.
4. I am having prepared and will forward today an Order of Battle showing the composition of **KIWI 'C'** *as at present* available for this duty.
5. It is recommended—
 - (That approval be given for the despatch in the first instance of a) that portion of **KIWI 'C'** force as is immediately available.
 - (That as soon as possible additional troops to make **KIWI 'C'** up to b) full strength also be approved for despatch.

(Sgd) E. PUTTICK,

¹ This signal, dated 15 October, read: 'Present following to New Zealand authorities. Request New Zealand Government release to COMSOPAC command a force equivalent to Kiwi C for duty to reinforce defences at **New Caledonia**. Movement to take place as soon as transportation is available....'

² The 36th Battalion, under Lt-Col J. W. Barry, landed in Norfolk in three groups between 26 September and 14 October, and the 34th Battalion, under Lt-Col R. J. Eyre, disembarked in **Tonga** on 27 October. Both battalions were relieved by Home Defence units from New Zealand and rejoined the 3rd Division in **New Caledonia** in March–April 1943.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

343 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTER,
WASHINGTON

343

The Prime Minister to the New Zealand Minister, Washington

17 October 1942

War Cabinet have agreed to Ghormley's ³ request for a New Zealand force of approximately two brigades to proceed to **New Caledonia** as soon as transport can be made available. The composition of this force is described as 'C' in Puttick's memorandum to the Minister of Defence dated 31 July.... ¹

³ On 18 October Admiral Ghormley was succeeded as Commander **South Pacific Area** by Admiral W. F. Halsey.

¹ No. 339.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

344 – MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE – REQUEST FROM COMMANDER SOUTH PACIFIC AREA FOR KIWI FORCES

344

Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Minister of Defence

20 October 1942

REQUEST FROM COMMANDER SOUTH PACIFIC AREA FOR KIWI FORCES

1. With reference to the recommendations contained in paragraph 5 of my memorandum of 16 October 1942, and which were approved by **War Cabinet**, I now wish to advise that I anticipate being able to despatch with the main body, or shortly afterwards, the following additional units:

- (a) One troop field artillery (four 25-pounders).
- (b) One section field engineers.
- (c) 1st Battalion New Zealand Scottish.
- (d) 1st Battalion Ruahine Regiment.
- (e) Workshops for—Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment.
Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment.
Heavy Regiment.
- (f) 10th Reserve Motor Transport Company.

2. Of the above, (a), (b), (c) and (d) are in replacement of units sent or being sent to **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga**. (e) and (f) were provided for in the original composition of **KIWI 'C'**, but have not yet been brought up to War Establishment.

3. The War Establishment of the complete force is approximately 13,500 all ranks. The War Cabinet approval for the despatch of the force was based on the War Establishment of **KIWI 'C'** less troops assigned to

Norfolk Island and Tonga, namely 11,073 all ranks.

4. May I have War Cabinet approval for the despatch of the force with a War Establishment of 13,500 all ranks?

5. I estimate the strength of the force on embarkation will be about 80 per cent of War Establishment. It is intended to make good the deficiencies as opportunity offers.

6. Provided approval is given for their despatch, there is a possibility of the troops mentioned in paragraph 1 (a) to (d) being disembarked at Norfolk Island and Tonga respectively. The New Zealand garrisons at those places thus relieved will be able to rejoin the 3rd Division in New Caledonia.

7. As shipping arrangements are now being made, I request that this matter be treated as urgent.

(Sgd) E. PUTTICK

Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

345 – WAR CABINET MINUTE

345

War Cabinet Minute

MINISTER OF DEFENCE:

Recommended:

- (**Despatch of Kiwi force 'C' to [New Caledonia](#)** ¹ as
a) recommended in paragraph (1) (2) (3) (4) and (5) of GOC's memorandum of 20 October 1942. Force to be built up to war establishment as soon as possible. The proposal contemplated in paragraph (6) is abandoned.
- (**United States** authorities to be requested to relieve as soon as
b) possible the New Zealand battalion now being despatched to **Tonga**.
- (**The New Zealand force in [Norfolk Island](#)** to be relieved when
c) practicable by New Zealand troops in medical category 2. In War Cabinet, 21 October 1942. Approved.

¹ The advance party left New Zealand on 29 October and was followed by the rest of the division at intervals during the next four months.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

346 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO COMMANDER, SOUTH PACIFIC AREA (ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS, AUCKLAND) – EMPLOYMENT OF NEW ZEALAND TROOPS IN THE PACIFIC

346

*Lieutenant-General Puttick to Commander, South Pacific Area
(Administrative Headquarters, Auckland)*

21 October 1942

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW ZEALAND TROOPS IN THE

- 1. As you have already been informed,² I have been compelled by the circumstances obtaining at the time to provide the garrison required for **Norfolk Island** and the battalion for **Tonga** from the 3rd Division, which has been preparing for overseas service in the **Pacific**.**
- 2. The major deficiencies in **Kiwi 'C'** caused by the above withdrawals from the Division are being made good by drawing on the **Home Defence Forces**. I anticipate that **Kiwi 'C'**, as constituted in the attached Order of Battle,³ will be ready to embark by the dates stated in your signal 170745.¹ There may be shortages in personnel and equipment, but these will be made good at the first available opportunity.**
- 3. I enclose herewith for your information copy of a memorandum to 3rd Division.² To assist you, I have inserted against artillery units the number and type of guns each will have.**
- 4. Obviously it is very desirable that the forces provided for **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga** should be relieved as soon as practicable, but I realise that some time may elapse before this can be done. I regard as impracticable and possibly dangerous the proposal to effect this relief now, with the troops mentioned in paragraph 2 above. My view is also**

that of the **War Cabinet**.

5. So far as **Norfolk Island** is concerned, I am making arrangements to provide suitable forces for relief but cannot say at the moment when they will be ready. Approval of **War Cabinet** would be necessary for any move of this nature and would be influenced by the circumstances obtaining at the time.

6. As regards **Tonga**, the request for a battalion to relieve a **United States** battalion there was recommended by me and approved by the New Zealand War Cabinet in view of the operations in the **Pacific** and because, presumably, the **United States** battalion was urgently required elsewhere. This move results in a New Zealand battalion forming part of an American combat team under American command, involves a mixture of arms, ammunition, etc., and leads to dispersal of New Zealand forces and increased administrative work. It appears to me to be inadvisable, except in cases of operational urgency, to mix our forces on this level and I suggest that the position should be rectified as soon as possible, by a **United States** battalion relieving the New Zealand battalion which could then rejoin its own infantry brigade, or return to New Zealand as **War Cabinet** might direct.

7. If you concur in this view, I would request that steps be taken to make the necessary re-adjustment as early as is practicable.

8. May I give my assurance of the earnest desire of the New Zealand Army to co-operate fully with **United States Forces**.

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK,
Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

² This signal is not published.

³ Not published.

¹ Not published. The date given for the main group was 7 November.

² Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

347 — MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE — OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC

347

Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Minister of Defence

2 November 1942

OPERATIONS IN THE

1. In view of the despatch of New Zealand forces to **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga**, the decision to assist **Fiji** in raising additional forces, and the impending despatch of 3rd Division, policy questions arise which require consideration and direction by **War Cabinet**.
2. The policy regarding **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga** has been decided. Troops at **Norfolk Island** are to be relieved when practicable by troops of lower than NZEF category, and the despatch of the battalion to **Tonga** is to be regarded as an emergency measure to assist the Americans, who have been requested to relieve the battalion. A definite decision is required as to the categories of men who may be included in the force to relieve **Norfolk Island**.
3. The decision to despatch 3rd Division raised various questions. As explained to **War Cabinet** the various **KIWI** forces originally asked for by Admiral Ghormley were designed—as far as they could be at that time—for taking over forward areas captured by the United States Marines and consequently are not necessarily suitable for the specific task now confronting 3rd Division, or what is really **KIWI** 'C'. The suitability of this force is primarily the concern of the United States Officer Commanding the island, but a considerable measure of responsibility still remains

with the **New Zealand Government** to ensure as far as it can that New Zealand forces are reasonably adequate to meet the situations which may arise. In this connection it should be borne in mind that when asking for K_{IWI} 'C' to be despatched, the United States Commander knew that K_{IWI} 'D' was not ready nor likely to be ready for some time, that the forces for **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga** had to be found from K_{IWI} 'C', and that K_{IWI} 'C' (reduced by the troops sent to **Norfolk Island** and **Tonga**, which were only partly replaced in K_{IWI} 'C') was the largest force the **New Zealand Government** was able to provide from the forces it had agreed to prepare for operations in the **Pacific**.

4. Before the **New Zealand Government** can discharge its responsibilities in connection with K_{IWI} 'C' it should know:

(What forces of all kinds, including naval and air, are likely to be
a) available for the defence of the island; the defensive arrangements including sea-mining; and the ability of the forces in the island mutually to support each other.

(The United States plan for reinforcing the island and for support—
b) Navy, Army and Air—from other areas in the **Pacific**.

(The general **United States** naval plan in sufficient detail to enable
c) a judgment to be made as to the cover afforded by **United States** main naval forces.

An appreciation by COMSOUPAC ¹ covering the above matters would be most useful.

5. Without information on the matters raised in paragraph 4, it is possible only to indicate what appear to be the main weaknesses in the composition of K_{IWI} 'C' These are:

(No tanks—one armoured regiment would be reasonable.
a)

(Field artillery is one field regiment (24 guns) below normal
b) establishment.

(Two of the six infantry battalions are below establishments.
c)

6. The duty of supporting the forces in operational areas lies with the Commander responsible for the operations, in this case COMSOUPAC, and

New Zealand could perhaps legitimately rely upon not being required to meet any such commitment in the absence of any warning that supporting forces might conceivably be required from New Zealand.

In my opinion, however, the nature of the campaign and the accidents of war make it advisable that New Zealand should at least make such preparations as would enable New Zealand troops to be moved at short notice to the support of its forward troops if the situation should make such a course necessary.

7. To be in a position to carry out possible requirements as set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 and to implement the policy already decided in respect of **Norfolk Island and **Tonga** (*vide* paragraph 2), (the latter only arising if the **United States** is unable to relieve the New Zealand battalion), we should be able to select existing sub-units, units, and formations from the New Zealand Home Defence forces now and get them ready as far as possible in case they should be required.**

The only other alternative—the raising of special units, etc.—can only be effected by withdrawing men from existing units. These units have already suffered heavily by withdrawals of men for other purposes and must still find further men for reinforcements either for 2nd or 3rd Divisions or both, and, apparently, also for industry. This destructive process must be reduced to an absolute minimum as otherwise the Home Defence forces will be so disorganised and weakened as to be ineffective against a powerful attack. If, however, complete sub-units, etc., are selected, this disorganisation need not occur, and the selection could be made in such a way as to interfere

¹ **Usually** COMSOPAC.

only to a minor degree with the proper distribution of forces for Home Defence.

8. Before the selection of units, etc., for the relief of the **Norfolk Island's**

force and for the possible role of going to the support of KIWI 'C' in an emergency can be proceeded with, a definite and early decision is necessary as to the categories of men who may be included. As War Cabinet is aware, our Home Forces include men of 18 years and upwards, and of lower medical categories. I need hardly point out that any categories of men which War Cabinet decide cannot proceed to Norfolk Island, or in an emergency to support 3rd Division, must be transferred from the selected units and their places taken by men of acceptable category from other units.

9. In view of the general manpower situation of the Army and the necessity of reducing to a minimum the transfer of men between units, I suggest the following categories for consideration by War Cabinet:

- (*Reinforcements for 2nd Division: All Grade I men, 20 years of age a) and up to 40 years.*
- (*Reinforcements for 3rd Division: As for 2nd Division, supplemented if b) necessary by selected Grade II men.*
- (*For Norfolk Island relief, also Tonga if necessary: Existing Home c) Defence units less men under 19 years of age, all 'A' grade men to be transferred to 2nd and 3rd Division reinforcement unit.*
- (*Supporting Force for 3rd New Zealand Division in emergency: d) Existing Home Defence units of approximately one brigade group in strength, all ages and categories, i.e., the balance of KIWI Force to make up KIWI 'D'.*

10. As regards paragraph 5, I consider War Cabinet should not await further information before deciding to despatch a tank unit to KIWI 'C', and recommend that an existing tank battalion with attached troops should be equipped as an armoured regiment and despatched at the first opportunity. ¹ The question of an additional field regiment and additional infantry could await further information and possibly the relief of Norfolk Island and Tonga respectively.

Until decisions on paragraphs 9 and 10 are made I am unable to take any action in these matters. ²

(Sgd) E. PUTTICK

Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

¹ On 5 November **War Cabinet** approved the despatch of an armoured regiment with the **K_{IWI} 'C'** force.

² A note dated 3 Feb 1943 by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff (Brig K. L. Stewart) on the Army Headquarters file copy of this memorandum reads: 'Considered in **War Cabinet** 3 Feb. All questions have been dealt with or are under action in connection with other matters.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

348 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH¹ TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK – COMPOSITION AND ORGANISATION OF 3RD DIVISION

348

*Letter from Major-General Barrowclough¹ to Lieutenant-General
Puttick*

17 January 1943

DEAR GENERAL

,

COMPOSITION AND ORGANISATION OF 3RD DIVISION

1. I have for a long time been giving consideration to the question of the composition of this Division, and I have read with a good deal of pleasure the information you have been able to give me regarding the plans which are now under consideration for making it a more balanced force than it was in its original conception. As you will remember the Force in its various forms—the Kiwi A, B, C, and D—was originally conceived as a Task Force to fulfil a particular role which Admiral Ghormley then had in mind. That particular task has probably long since ceased to be important, but the Force is still characterised on the one hand by the inclusion of Coast Defence and Heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery² which is not normally² part of a British division, and on the other hand by the exclusion of other elements which are an essential part of a divisional organisation.

2. I have not forgotten your own efforts to make up these shortcomings when the situation permits and I am confident that the War Cabinet realises the position and is as anxious as you are to see that the 3rd

Division is not endangered by the lack of any of those units which practice and experience have shown to be essential in a well balanced force. The difficulty—as I understand it—is the acute shortage of men to fill up the ranks and to keep them filled, and at the same time to ensure that the 2nd Division is not ‘let down’ for want of reinforcements. The purpose of this letter is to examine the position and to make certain proposals which may to some extent relieve the problem of finding men from the already seriously depleted resources of New Zealand.

3. I would draw your attention to the Coast Defence and Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiments. As you know, both these regiments have been assigned to tasks far removed from and quite unrelated to the tasks which have been allotted to 3rd Division. They are not under my tactical control and are an administrative burden without giving the Division any direct coverage as a counterpoise to the burden. I am not complaining of the way they have been disposed. On the contrary I concede that they have been quite properly so disposed

¹ Maj-Gen Rt. Hon. Sir Harold Barrowclough, PC, KCMG, CB, DSO and bar, MC, ED, MC (Gk), Legion of Merit (US), Croix de Guerre (Fr); commanded 7 NZ Inf Bde in **UK**, 1940; 6 Bde, May 1940–Feb 1942; GOC **2 NZEF** in **Pacific** and 3 NZ Div, Aug 1942–Oct 1944; Chief Justice of New Zealand.

² Abbreviations used in the original text have been spelt in full.

and I readily agreed to the proposals as soon as they were submitted to me. I merely point out that they have passed out of my tactical control and they afford no direct protection to my Division. If 3rd Division were ordered into another theatre of operations I imagine it would be extremely likely that the Coast Defence and Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiments would not go with us but would be left in their present roles in this island. My administrative difficulties would be increased by the mere fact that I would be further removed from them, and New Zealand detachments and responsibilities in the **Pacific would be still more**

scattered than they are at present.

4. In these circumstances I feel bound to suggest for your consideration and for that of the **War Cabinet** that steps might be taken to ask the **United States** authorities to take over these coast defence and heavy anti-aircraft guns and man them with their own personnel, thereby freeing New Zealand personnel who could be absorbed readily enough into our new field artillery units and thus facilitate the business of finding personnel for the additional field regiments that I ought to have in this force. If the Grade I personnel now manning the coast defence and anti-aircraft guns in **Norfolk Island** are being relieved by Grade II personnel (as is the case with the infantry) they too would constitute a reservoir to assist in making up my Division.

5. I am extremely anxious to get this Division concentrated in full over here as soon as possible. Naturally I have endeavoured to obtain from General Harmon ¹ such indications as he can give me of the probable date upon which he might wish to transfer us to a more active theatre. This information is highly desirable from my point of view so that I may know when my troops should be ready for such a move and so that I can give you some forecast of the plans in which we may be involved—especially as the **War Cabinet** must be consulted before we leave this station. So far, however, General Harmon has been unable to give me anything more than the general directive which he has issued to all troops under his command, i.e., a general instruction to fit ourselves for a move at short notice to any of the islands in the theatre of war. I am not surprised that USAFISPA ² is unable at present to give more precise information. There may be many good reasons for that.

6. There are, however, certain factors from which I can draw some pretty obvious conclusions. It seems to be generally accepted that the **1st Marine Division** which was on **Guadalcanal** for just over three months was there too long and that the conditions under which they lived were such as to necessitate possibly six months' recuperation in **Australia** before the division can be used elsewhere. Conditions

¹ Lt-Gen M. F. Harmon, **US Army**; Chief of **Air Force**, 1942–43; Commanding General, **US Army Forces in the South Pacific Area**, 1943–44; died 3 Mar 1945.

² **United States Army Forces in South Pacific Area**.

on **Guadalcanal** are no doubt improving, but it seems quite probable that
COMSOPAC

may adopt a policy of relieving divisions on **Guadalcanal** after a period of service there of from three to six months. If such were his policy he might well look to 3rd Division to effect one of these reliefs about April, May or June. This seems a by no means unlikely request. There are three divisions now in **Guadalcanal** and portions of them have already been there three months or nearly so. If they are to be relieved it would seem that 3rd Division will very likely be one of the relieving divisions. I could only be ready for such a task if two conditions are fulfilled:

(The first condition is that I should have a full division. I cannot
a) completely relieve an American division with two-thirds of a British division.

(The second condition is that the balance of 3rd Division should
b) be got over here with as little delay as possible so that it can be trained to work with the rest of us and understand our methods, and so that it can become acclimatised. I cannot over-emphasise this factor. There is an enormous difference between the troops who served in **Fiji** and those who were gathered together from all over the country to make up the new units of this force.

7. All this seems very elementary and is of course perfectly well understood by you as Chief of the General Staff. I refer to it only to lead logically to the conclusion which I now submit, namely, that we should get away from the Task Force idea with which we began and that we should make every endeavour to constitute ourselves as a normal division. The United States forces are organised as normal divisions and I think we should be too. General Patch's ¹ American Division came to NECAL ² as a Task Force, i.e., a division plus a number of units which would normally be regarded as Corps Troops. When he went to

Guadalcanal he left these 'extras' behind and took only a normal division.

I urgently commend to the consideration of the **War Cabinet** the suggestion that the 'extras' in this force (coast defence and heavy anti-aircraft artillery) be eliminated at the earliest opportunity and that first priority be given to building up a normal division. These 'extras' are of course very useful but I do not think I should have them until the Division is complete. I should be very glad to retain, say, the mobile 155-millimetre battery if I was assured I could take it with me and away from its present coast defence role and if I were also assured that its retention would not leave me understrength elsewhere.

¹ Lt-Gen A. M. Patch, **US Army**; appointed Commander US Forces on **Guadalcanal**, Dec 1942; commanded 14 US Corps 1943; commanded 7th Army, Southern **France** and **Germany**, 1944–45.

² **New Caledonia**. General Patch's division was the **Americal Division**.

The scarcity of men in New Zealand may make this impracticable and I would rather do without this unit than be deprived of units in the normal divisional set-up.

8. In elaborating this argument I would remind you of the extremely unsatisfactory results that would follow if **15th Brigade** is left with only two battalions. It can never fully relieve either of the other two brigades and within itself it is not big enough to protect satisfactorily its own defended area in an all-round system of defence. The Tank Battalion can never be a substitution for the missing infantry battalion. It may be said that a Tank Battalion is not, or at all events was not, a part of the normal British division. My reply to that is that some armour is now a necessity—that I have no reconnaissance regiment which is part of a normal division and that the Tank Battalion will have to accept the dual

responsibility of undertaking reconnaissance and the armoured support of my infantry brigades. I think a very clear case has been made out for a Tank Battalion and that the decision to include it in the Division was rightly made and should be adhered to; but it should not (unless manpower shortages absolutely compel that course) be regarded as being in the Division in lieu of the third battalion of the **15th Brigade**.

9. I concede that if I get my two additional field artillery units I cannot expect to retain the 3·7-inch light howitzer battery now in NECAL but as yet without its guns. Its personnel could no doubt be transferred to the light howitzer regiment that is being substituted for one 25-pounder regiment.

10. I should be greatly obliged if you would place these views before the **War Cabinet**, with of course your own comments on the points raised. I enclose an extra copy of this letter for that purpose. Whilst I realise that a definite answer may not immediately be available, I would welcome any statement indicating your and the **War Cabinet's** general approval of my aim to make 3rd Division as near as possible and as soon as possible a normal British division, and to eliminate those elements in my force which are essentially non-divisional and whose continued existence makes it more difficult (from a manpower point of view) to build up a normal division. I particularly invite your attention to the fact that the commanders and staffs of the Coast Defence Regiment and the Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment ought to be considered (if their guns are taken over by **United States** troops) when commanders and staffs of the new field artillery regiments are being selected.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

349 – MEMORANDUM FROM THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF¹ TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE – COMPOSITION AND ORGANISATION OF 3RD DIVISION

349

Memorandum from the Deputy Chief of the General Staff¹ to the Minister of Defence

27 January 1943

COMPOSITION AND ORGANISATION OF 3RD DIVISION

- 1. With reference to previous discussions in War Cabinet and to Army Headquarters' memorandum S28/1/15/1 of 2 November 1942 [No. 347] on the composition and organisation of the 3rd Division, I am directed by Lieutenant-General Puttick to forward the attached letter 1/1/G of 17 January 1943 from Major-General Barrowclough.**
- 2. I am to say that except for the suggestion that the Americans should be asked to take over the heavy anti-aircraft and heavy artillery regiments, General Puttick agrees with and supports General Barrowclough's proposals.**
- 3. With regard to the heavy anti-aircraft and heavy artillery regiments, General Puttick considers that any suggestion of those units going over completely to American command, or of being manned by Americans, should either come from the Americans themselves or be raised at a more opportune moment than the present.**
- 4. I do not think it is General Barrowclough's intention that his Division should be brought up to the same scale as the recently introduced British organisation. For operations in which he is likely to be engaged, a division based on the old organisation, modified to meet Pacific Islands**

conditions, would be more suitable.

5. The following additional units, shown in order of priority, would be required to bring his division up to such an organisation:

- (One field artillery regiment.
a)
 - (15th Infantry Brigade Headquarters, with its signal section,
b) defence platoon and light aid detachment, less the 'skeleton'
personnel already sent forward.
 - (One infantry battalion—assuming that when the 34th Battalion
c) from **Tonga** and 36th Battalion from **Norfolk Island** join the Division,
the 1st Battalion, Scottish Regiment, and 1st Battalion, Ruahine
Regiment, remain with the Division.
 - (One composite **Army Service Corps** company.
d)
 - (One field ambulance.
e)
 - (One field company engineers.
f)
 - (One anti-tank battery.
g)
-

¹ Maj-Gen Sir Keith Stewart, KBE, CB, DSO, MC (Gk), Legion of Merit (US); GSO I NZ Div 1940–41; Deputy Chief of General Staff Dec 1941-Jul 1943; comd 5 Bde Aug–Nov 1943, 4 Armd Bde Nov 1943–Mar 1944, 5 Bde Mar–Aug 1944; p.w. 1 Aug 1944; comd 9 Bde (**2 NZEF, Japan**) Nov 1945–Jul 1946; Chief of General Staff Apr 1949–Mar 1952.

(One light artillery regiment, less the 3·7-inch battery now with
h) the Division.

In certain circumstances, and if the 75-millimetre howitzers ordered from **America** arrive in time, the light artillery regiment might be required before any of the other additional units.

6. The relief of the **Norfolk Island** garrison has a direct bearing on the provision of personnel for these additional units.

Apart from the 36th Battalion and service detachments, the garrison

consists of:

- (a) One heavy artillery battery**
- (b) One composite anti-aircraft battery of—**
 - 4 heavy guns**
 - 8 light guns**
- (c) One troop field artillery**
- (d) One section field engineers**

Although these units were provided by 3rd Division, all except the heavy artillery and heavy anti-aircraft artillery have been replaced in the Division, and on relief the personnel will be available for the additional units enumerated in paragraph 5. If COMSOPAC will agree to not replacing the heavy artillery and heavy anti-aircraft artillery in 3rd Division, there will be an even greater accretion of personnel for the additional units.

7. The remaining personnel for the additional units would have to come from New Zealand Home Defence forces. If it is decided to send an infantry battalion, 1st Battalion, Otago Regiment, would be selected, as it could be spared more easily than any other field force infantry unit. The units of other arms would probably be found by withdrawal of individuals and sub-units from Home Defence forces throughout New Zealand.

8. A summary of the above proposals, together with the number of men involved, is given in the attached appendix. ¹

9. Although these proposals will entail an addition of approximately 3000 men to the manpower calculations submitted to the War Cabinet by the National Service Department, I would point out that the extra fire power and more balanced organisation in the 3rd Division might possibly result in less casualties, and in the long run a saving in the calls on manpower. Apart from manpower considerations, the experiences of this war, including that of the 2nd Division at Sidi Rezegh in 1941, have proved that a two-brigade division and two-battalion brigades are militarily unsound.

¹ Not published.

10. I suggest that if the **War Cabinet** approves in principle of these proposals, I be authorised to obtain COMSOPAC'S concurrence, and to ascertain if he will agree to the present deficiencies in heavy anti-aircraft and heavy artillery being left unfilled.

(*Sgd*) K. L. STEWART,
Brigadier,

DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

350 – WAR CABINET MINUTE – [EXTRACT]

350

War Cabinet Minute

[Extract]

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

1. That Mr Coates will raise with COMSOPAC the question of the replacement by American troops of the anti-aircraft units in **Fiji** and the coast defence and anti-aircraft units in **Noumea**, the general intention being that when released these troops should be attached to the 3rd Division.

2. That subject to final consideration at a later date, **War Cabinet** are generally disposed to agree with General Barrowclough's requests set out in his communication to General Puttick, 1/1/G of 17 January [**No. 348**]. If Mr Coates' conference with COMSOPAC is to take place early, **War Cabinet** will await its result before making a decision, but if the conference is delayed, they will make a decision at an early date irrespective of the conference.

3. That the battalion in **Norfolk Island** be replaced (either by Grade II men or otherwise as **War Cabinet** may subsequently determine) and then rejoin the 3rd Division. Total New Zealand establishment in **Norfolk Island** approximately 1500 all ranks.

4. (a) That New Zealand assume the responsibility for the defence of **Tonga**.... ¹

6. That the Scottish and the Ruahine Battalions in **New Caledonia** be retained there notwithstanding the arrival of the battalions from **Tonga** and **Norfolk**.

7. That the minimum age limit for troops for **Fiji, Tonga** and Norfolk be reduced to 20 years in the case of any soldier who volunteers for garrison duty with the written consent of his parents.

¹ Decisions on a number of points of detail relating to the defence of **Tonga** and **Fiji** have been omitted. Admiral Halsey had suggested, in a memorandum to General Puttick on 4 Dec 1942, that New Zealand should relieve the **United States** of the responsibility for the defence of **Tonga**.

8. That volunteers be accepted for **Fiji, Tonga** and Norfolk from men of Grade I or Grade II medical category who have passed their 41st birthday.

9. That the Maori Members of Parliament be consulted with reference to the use in the Islands of a **Maori Battalion**, and that the Army make unofficial enquiries on this matter from General Barrowclough and Colonel Barry. ¹

In War Cabinet, 4 February 1943. Approved.

¹ Lt-Col J. W. Barry, MBE; CO 36 Bn Dec 1941–Jun 1943; Commander N Force (**Norfolk Island**) Sep 1942–Apr 1943; Area Commander, **Wanganui**, Sep 1943–Apr 1947.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

351 – RT. HON. J. G. COATES (NOUMEA) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

351

Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates (Noumea) to the Prime Minister

24 February 1943

At a conference with Admiral Halsey today, 24 February, the following decisions were reached:

- (1) Halsey approves of the proposed adjustments in the New Zealand Army and agrees that we should proceed accordingly at once.
- (2) He wishes the 3rd Division to be completed to the war establishment of a full division as planned as soon as this can be done.
- (3) He considers the proposed allowance of 10,000 reinforcements per annum to be excessive and regards 40 per cent of establishment to be ample, based on the experience of the United States Marines.
- (4) He and all his staff discount entirely any possibility of discrimination against Maoris and consider the despatch of a Maori battalion to the 3rd Division would be suitable and desirable.²
- (5) He is investigating the possibility of relieving New Zealand anti-aircraft troops in **Fiji** and anti-aircraft and coast defence troops in **New Caledonia**; this is being discussed further.
- (6) He agrees that the **United States** medical unit in **Tonga** may remain there indefinitely.
- (7) He agrees generally with our proposal as to liaison, and we are preparing a suitable directive.

Party all well. We are preparing to go north to our Division either tomorrow or next day. This will take party approximately three days and we will then return, spending one day at **Norfolk Island** en route if possible.

² A proposal that a Maori battalion be formed to complete the 3rd Division was approved by **War Cabinet** on 21 April. The introduction of the furlough scheme for the 2nd Division in May

1943 necessitated the despatch to the Middle East, as reinforcements for the 28th (Maori) Battalion, of a number of men from the two Maori battalions being formed in New Zealand and the proposal to send a Maori unit to the Pacific was abandoned.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

352 – WAR CABINET MINUTE

352

War Cabinet Minute

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Recommended:

1. That the War Establishment of 2nd NZEF in **Pacific** (3rd Division) be increased from 14,400 all ranks (*vide War Cabinet* approvals of 13,500 on 21 October 1942 and 900 on 5 November 1942) to 17,637 all ranks. The details of the increase are shown on attached schedule. ¹

2. That Anti-Aircraft and Coast Artillery personnel now with 3rd Division and Anti-Aircraft personnel now in **Fiji** (not included in the new War Establishment in paragraph 1) totalling 2211 all ranks, when relieved by **United States Forces** be available as reinforcements for 3rd Division.

3. That the first reinforcements amounting to 1263 all ranks be despatched to 3rd Division and that early priority be given to the despatch of these troops.

4. That the following units be made available for temporary duty with 3rd Division:

Docks Unit	90
Construction Unit	300
	390

In War Cabinet, 6 March 1943. Approved.

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

353 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI²

353

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji ²

13 May 1943

It would be appreciated if you could advise me whether the **Fiji** authorities contemplate making any arrangements in respect of raising **Fiji** forces for service with the New Zealand 3rd Division. ³

² Maj-Gen Sir Philip Mitchell.

³ A proposal that the three battalions of the Fijian Brigade should form part of the 3rd NZ Division had been the subject of several telegrams and letters between General Puttick and General Barrowclough. Brigadier Stewart visited **Fiji** early in May to discuss the proposal with Sir Philip Mitchell and Brigadier J. G. C. Wales, Commandant of the **Fiji Military Forces**. The Governor's reply to No. 353 advised that his views were contained in a memorandum on the administration of the **Fiji Military Forces**, then on its way to New Zealand by mail. This memorandum stated that the Government of **Fiji** was prepared to place the **Fiji Military Forces** under the general military control of the New Zealand General Staff and to agree to their incorporation in a New Zealand division or other British formation; **Fiji** also asked that its Mobile Brigade Group should be employed on active operations against the enemy 'within or without the ' **Pacific**'. These proposals were approved by **War Cabinet** on 25 May.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

354 – LETTER FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO MAJOR-
GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH – [EXTRACT]

354

*Letter from Lieutenant-General Puttick to Major-General
Barrowclough
[Extract]*

18 May 1943

MY DEAR BARROWCLOUGH

Fijian Units. Your memo of 6 May (received 14 May).¹

1. There are likely to be fresh developments re above. Firstly, I hear Mitchell has offered New Zealand a brigade, and secondly, arrangements have been completed to bring back old hands from 2nd Division for furlough, involving on account of shipping the most urgent provision of reliefs for them, which *may* cause your reinforcements to be taken and which in any case creates an acute shortage of A grade men.

2. This shortage *may* make it impossible fully to complete your Division or, if completed, to maintain it. There are many factors and happenings involved, including the decision of Parliament re future of 2nd Division.

2

3. My views are—

(That 2nd and 3rd Divisions should be maintained to the last gasp,
a) even after reduction of war establishment becomes necessary.

(To achieve (a) I am prepared to go right back to pre-Japan
b) Territorial Force, plus certain additions and coast defence units in
our Home Defence forces.

(Rather than imperil either Division or delay completion of yours,

c) I would accept Fijian brigade at once in substitution for two of your New Zealand battalions, these two to go to Mid-East as reinforcements rather than be absorbed as your reinforcements. This would reduce heart-burning a bit.

(I would reduce Norfolk by half (manning only half the 155-mm d) and 25-pounders and reducing infantry still further), lower overseas age to 19 or 19½, convert **Home Guard** to voluntary basis and reduce permanent personnel now serving with it, further reduce Guards on Vital Points, try to reduce equipment here by making it available elsewhere and so save personnel, and stop any munitions industry not engaged on overseas production.

¹ Not published.

² See Vol. II, p. 214. The Government decided on 21 May to retain the 2nd Division in the **Middle East** 'with increasingly smaller establishments' and to reorganise the 3rd Division on a reduced scale. Neither division would receive reinforcements in 1943. The 2nd Division was to be made available for operations in **Europe** and a furlough scheme instituted for selected men from the first three echelons. It was also decided to complete negotiations for the incorporation of a Fijian mobile brigade in the 3rd Division 'subject to discussion with Halsey and Barrowclough'.

4. Those are about all the manpower saving devices I can think of. It is a case of first things first. The sudden necessity for providing about 6000 men to relieve 6000 in 2nd Division has, of course, created an emergency.

5. I am likely to be asked, almost at any moment today, to talk to the Prime Minister or **War Cabinet** re the offer of the Fijian brigade. I shall state your views as expressed to me in your letters, but shall urge that the offer be accepted forthwith (as otherwise we will in all probability lose them to the Americans and then may find it impossible to complete your division) and reserve for discussion with you and possibly for developments in the manpower situation the question as to whether they form part of or are to be additional to your division. I will emphasise

that you, being responsible for the division, must be consulted on this matter and that **War Cabinet** must give considerable weight to your opinion. But for my part, if I had the responsibility I would certainly accept the **Fijian brigade** in preference to having a division short of establishment or an early shortage of reinforcements. I would endeavour to have, I think, one **Fijian battalion** in each brigade, but if that proved a real obstacle so far as **Fiji** is concerned, I would give the **Fijian brigade** a trial.

6. There is a point about the relief of 6000 men in 2nd Division. Strong feeling has grown up in various quarters that this should be done while others think the whole division should return. The former if it avoids the latter is therefore justifiable on military grounds, despite the trouble it creates.

7. My proposals under 3 (b) would mean the abandonment of our present out-of-camp training and re-mobilization scheme, substituting compulsory training for 18-20 years men, volunteers to **Territorial Force** over that age, and relying on our previous experience and methods to re-create a **Home Defence Army** of 100,000, plus the **Home Guard**, in an emergency. The strategical situation justifies I consider the acceptance of any slight risk involved in those measures.

8. There are very real problems ahead in this manpower business. Higher authority abroad has not decided or advised whether New Zealand can best help with armed men or supplies, so we are trying to do our maximum in both, with increasing demands for the latter from **UK, USA,** and **Eastern Supply Council**.

I think our present military commitments are right for this stage of the war but it is evident that the pinch will be tighter as time goes on, and this **Fijian brigade** has therefore a very high importance and in fact may be a fairly complete answer to the difficulties for some time to come.

I will keep you advised of developments.... ¹

**Regards,
Yours sincerely**

(Sgd) E. PUTTICK

¹ **Personal material omitted.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

355 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK – FIJIAN UNITS AND 3RD NEW
ZEALAND DIVISION

355

*Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General
Puttick*

24 May 1943

MY DEAR GENERAL,

FIJIAN UNITS AND 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

Your letter of 18 May did not reach me till 10 o'clock yesterday (Sunday) evening, and I am replying to it at once. Fortunately I had my two senior Brigadiers ² with me for a conference on other matters and I discussed the situation, in confidence, with them.

I appreciate the extraordinary difficulties which confront the War Cabinet in meeting my demand for troops, and I hope I may be permitted to say how much I appreciate the efforts that are being made by War Cabinet and you personally to implement the policy of bringing this Division up to strength. Tactically and strategically it is unquestionably right to deploy such forces as New Zealand can deploy, in the islands that constitute the outer fringe of our defence. New Zealand cannot be invaded whilst we hold the line Hawaii, Fiji, Guadalcanal and New Guinea. On the other hand I fully recognise that whilst we need not mobilise anything but a small garrison for New Zealand we may have to mobilise a large army of workers to maintain supplies to troops in the island perimeter. It is that factor which causes the difficulty.

I ought to say at once that I should be very happy and proud to

accept a Fijian Brigade. **Fiji** recognises the military truism that its best defence is to engage the enemy as far as possible from its own shores. It is prepared to denude its own territory of its own defenders so that they may be sent forward. It is the more justified in that because there are always Allied troops there. It is a British Colony and its troops should be allowed to serve in a British formation. With all respect I heartily concur in your decision to advise **War Cabinet** to accept Mitchell's offer of a Brigade.

But I feel bound to renew my request that the Fijian Brigade be accepted in addition to and not in substitution for any part of 3rd New Zealand Division. I have not overlooked the manpower difficulties that stand in the way of my proposals. On the information before me it seems practically impossible to maintain both 2nd and 3rd Divisions, especially if the older members of 2nd Division are to be sent back to New Zealand and be relieved by reinforcements on the very much larger scale that such a policy involves. It seems to me that this raises the very vital question as to whether 3rd Division is always to be regarded as the Cinderella of the Forces and is perpetually to be called on to make, directly and indirectly, the contributions that are necessary for the maintenance of 2nd Division in the **Middle East** or **Europe**.

What I am about to say may touch on matters of policy, the decision of which rests with **War Cabinet** and not with me. I disclaim any intention of attempting to usurp the functions of **War Cabinet** in such matters of policy; but I think **War Cabinet** would wish me to state certain aspects of this matter as they appeal to the very large number of men whom I represent and for whom I am responsible. I therefore state these aspects in the belief that they may assist **War Cabinet** in coming to a decision on a matter which is admittedly their function and certainly not mine, though of course I and every man in my command are intensely affected by that decision.

1. The resolution to bring this Division up to full strength has had a very marked effect on the morale of this Force. The belief that we shall eventually be given an active role as distinct from a purely garrison job

has resulted in an unbelievable improvement in our state of training and readiness for war. I know that, but for the fact that we are still short of some of our units, we are an infinitely better division than any American division that I have seen—Marines included. Our physical standards, our tactical knowledge, our willingness and keenness to work, our staff and administrative work, far surpasses that of the American Forces. This is no vain or idle boast. It can be demonstrated to any observer and is virtually admitted by American officers who are astounded at the vigour of the exercises we are performing in the steep bush-clad mountains of this Island. There is now a fine unit, brigade and divisional spirit throughout the Force.

2. I am sure I am correct in saying that the men in this Force want to fight as the 3rd New Zealand Division or the **KIWI** Division. Whilst many of the men would like to go to the **Middle East** *if there was no prospect of our fighting here*, I am sure none of my units would wish to go if there was a prospect of our getting an active role. I am certain they would not wish to go as reinforcements whose unit organisation would be broken up on arrival in Egypt.

3. If any units are sent from this Division as reinforcements to the **Middle East** the whole Division would immediately assume that it was no longer regarded as a fighting formation but merely as a reinforcement pool for the more famous 2nd Division. And it would be a fact that the time when this Division would be ready for action would be inevitably postponed. The period of garrison duty, already overlong, would be prolonged and we should lose a very fine spirit which many of us have laboured night and day to create.

4. This conflict between the manpower demands of the 2nd Division and of this Division is not unknown to the troops. They have read the newspaper references to it. Now that the North African campaign is over I think the opinion of the average man in this Force is something to the following effect: 'The 2nd Division has had an opportunity of showing its worth. It has proved to be the best division in the **Middle East**. We feel

from seeing the American divisions out here—that we are at least as good as the best of them. We ought to be given a chance to demonstrate our worth and it is scarcely fair that we should continually be depleted in order to keep the 2nd Division at full strength.’ That, I think, is a fairly generally accepted view amongst my troops.

5. I am sure none of us have anything but pride and affection for the 2nd Division. All would recognise the fairness of bringing the whole Division back or, alternatively, of bringing back 5 or 6,000 at a time. But the troops here would feel that it was unfair that the relief of the 2nd Division should be carried out at the expense of the 3rd Division. Nor do the men fail to see that this war in the Pacific is New Zealand's peculiar interest. I think they feel that as a nation New Zealand would lose some prestige if its own troops were represented here only in a garrison role. I do earnestly submit for consideration the suggestion that if 2nd Division has earned a rest (and no doubt a rest has been well earned) it should be given that rest by reduction in its own strength. It may well be proper to give it—for a time—a garrison role. I think I can assure War Cabinet that if the 2nd Division were less actively employed and 3rd Division were permitted to assume out here its active role the reputation of the New Zealand soldier would not thereby suffer. It may be thought an advantage that New Zealand troops should come into some prominence in operations directly connected with the defence of their own country. Sentimentally it may seem harsh to suggest even a temporary reduction in the strength of the 2nd Division, and no one has a higher sentiment than I have towards that Division in which I had the privilege of serving in its darker days. But I have now a duty to express the sentiments of 3rd Division, which has for long endured all the hardships of rigorous training and absence from home and indeed all the rigours of warfare other than actual battle experience. I would be failing in my duty if I did not stress (what War Cabinet will no doubt already have considered) namely that it would be a very serious matter if the men who have served in this Force so loyally were, after the war, to be subject to some sort of stigma because they had served only in a second-rate Division.

6. I do not forget that the suggestion is that by the inclusion of the Fiji Brigade it may be possible to keep us at fighting strength and give us an active role; but I question very much whether that will really be possible. A Brigade represents only some 2500 men including its own signals, its Defence Platoon and its LAD, all of which I assume the Fijian Brigade would bring with it. This is a small part of the Division which, with Divisional troops and hospitals and Base organisation totals up to about 17,000 men. If the demands of 2nd Division proceed on the scale now indicated as possible it is obvious that we shall be called on to supply not only two battalions of infantry mentioned in your letter but also many other troops, including Artillery, Signals, **Army Service Corps** and other technical arms. Inevitably it must be the beginning of the complete disintegration of this Division. We shall never be able to attain complete preparedness for action and could probably never undertake more than a garrison role. At best we might be included as a Brigade Group in some composite American formation.

7. A few of us for years have regarded the bearing of arms in defence of the State as both the duty and the privilege of every citizen of the State. When the war broke out most people recognised it as a duty though they did not all see it as a privilege. Today, after long and arduous preparation most of my troops now regard it as a privilege as well as a duty. That privilege has been extended to the 2nd Division and has been richly and honourably enjoyed. I make a plea that the same privilege be extended to 3rd Division, every man of whom has worked hard to fit himself to enjoy it. If, as seems inevitable, the two Divisions cannot both be maintained in an active role then I submit that a decision must be taken on the vital question as to whether 2nd Division (already covered with honours) must always take precedence over 3rd Division which has not yet had one single opportunity of fulfilling its justifiable military ambitions.

In conclusion I wish to repeat that I have no intention of attempting to formulate the policy of **War Cabinet** on this matter. I regard myself as merely the advocate before Parliament of the troops which Parliament

has placed under my command. If the decision is against us we shall see broken and destroyed the work of many arduous months, but I know we shall all be willing to 'stoop and build it up with worn-out tools.' I ask that these views be placed before the Prime Minister and I enclose an extra copy of this letter for that purpose. ¹ If any question should arise which makes it desirable that I should visit **Wellington** I hope you will let me know and I shall make time somehow to undertake the journey. I am appreciative of the full information you are giving me on this subject.

With very kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

(*Sgd*) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

² Brigadiers L. Potter and R. A. Row.

¹ This letter was sent to the Prime Minister on 28 May.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

356 — MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK

356

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

28 May 1943

Most secret and personal for General Puttick only. Have reason to believe we may be asked to undertake an active mission involving the whole Division about the end of July. Think it would be disastrous if we were not then in a position to accept. We might never afterwards get such an opportunity. This information is for you only and cannot yet be communicated to War Cabinet, but I will advise you when it may be passed on. You will see the vital bearing of this information on the topics raised in my most secret and personal letter to you of 24 May.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

357 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

357

*Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General
Puttick*

30 May 1943

MY DEAR [GENERAL]

,
Bassett ² and another officer from General Harmon's Headquarters came up here on Friday and spent all Saturday with us. Bassett was able to give me confidentially a statement as to the plans that were in contemplation for the conduct of the War in the South Pacific area for the balance of this year and in the course of his conversation he told me that General Harmon was counting on the employment of this Division in the not very distant future. The tentative date set was the end of July but I think it probable that actual events will be behind the programme by as much as two or three weeks. General Harmon was apparently anxious that this Division should be completed as soon as possible so that it would be ready for that role. The General fully understands that the consent of the **New Zealand Government** would first be required and I understand he proposes shortly to discuss the proposed operation with me so that I can report thereon to you for the information of **War Cabinet**.

I asked Bassett whether this information could be passed on to New Zealand as it seemed to me that it should have a very great bearing on the questions which are now being considered, or possibly have been considered, in relation to the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. Bassett explained that it would be in order for me to apprise you of the situation but, in

the meantime, it must not go beyond you. General Harmon's plans have yet to be submitted to COMSOPAC and it is thought that unfavourable repercussions might arise if the proposals came back to COMSOPAC from **War Cabinet** before they had been finally approved by COMSOPAC.

I therefore immediately drafted a cable to give you such information as I could regarding the proposals so that you at least would appreciate this new aspect of the problem. I regret that at the moment my hands are tied and I have to stipulate that the information is for you only and not to be passed on to **War Cabinet**. I hope, however, that in the near future it may be possible to explain the situation to **War Cabinet**.

I am not able to say anything more about the contemplated operation, and, indeed, I am not further informed on the matter; but I understand the proposals for this Division would involve a complete Division of full strength. I cannot help feeling that it would be a serious setback to our prestige in this part of the world if, after some of us had been in **New Caledonia** for six months, we were compelled to decline the offer of a combat role at such a time as the present. I gather from Bassett that no other Division will be available to undertake this role if we cannot accept it and COMSOPAC'S plans would therefore be very seriously curtailed by our inability to participate. I cannot help feeling that this would put us considerably offside with the Americans and that we might thereby lose a good deal of the prestige that has been won for us in another part of the globe by the very great performances of the 2nd Division.

Once again I am compelled by circumstances to require that the contents of this letter should be communicated to no one other than yourself, in the meantime.

With kind regards,
Yours

(Sgd) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

² **Col W. Bassett, Legion of Merit (US); NZ Liaison Officer with Headquarters US Army Forces in South Pacific Area.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

358 – MEMORANDUM FROM COMMANDER, SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH – PLANS FOR MOVEMENT OF THE 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

358

*Memorandum from Commander, South Pacific Area, to Major-General
Barrowclough*

11 June 1943

PLANS FOR MOVEMENT OF THE 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

1. In effecting preliminary dispositions for future offensive operations in the **South Pacific Area**, it is tentatively planned to move the 3rd New Zealand Division into a concentration area in the **Solomons**, preparatory to active combat employment at a date later in the year. To meet the tentative schedule of other troop movements, the movement forward of the 3rd New Zealand Division should be initiated about 15 August 1943.

2. It is desired that you present this proposal to the General Officer Commanding, **New Zealand Military Forces**, and to the **War Cabinet**, with a view to determining whether or not these agencies are prepared to take the necessary action to support this plan. ¹

3. In the event of a favourable response to this query, this Headquarters will be in a position to establish a firm plan, which upon adoption will be communicated as a definite proposal to the New Zealand authorities.

(Sgd) H. R. THURBER, ² Acting Chief of Staff

¹ The file copy of this memorandum is minuted by General Puttick: 'Original handed to P.M. in **War Cabinet** 14 Jun 1943'.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

359 – MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE PRIME MINISTER – 3RD DIVISION—EMPLOYMENT OF FIJIAN UNITS

359

Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Prime Minister

16 June 1943

3RD DIVISION—EMPLOYMENT OF FIJIAN UNITS

- 1. If the Fijian units are to join 3rd Division, it is very important that they should do so with the least possible delay, so that they may carry out advanced training and be thoroughly incorporated in the Division. There is a great deal to do in this connection.**
- 2. In a personal note, ³ Rear-Admiral Wilkinson, United States Navy, ⁴ informs me that in accordance with my suggestion, he has informed Admiral Halsey, General Harmon, and General Peck ⁵ of the general situation in New Zealand and of the proposal to use Fijian troops. They are therefore informed on the matter and in accordance with my suggestion have expressed no opinion pending an official approach.**
- 3. So far as United States Command is concerned, there seem to be only two points for consideration:**
 - (Whether, having regard to the security of **Fiji**, the units can be a) released.**
 - (Assuming they can be released, whether employment with the 3rd b) New Zealand Division is the best role in the interests of the **Pacific** war.**
- 4. There is no difficulty in presenting this question to Admiral Halsey by telegram, more especially as Admiral Wilkinson, General Barrowclough, and Colonel **Salmon** ¹ are all familiar with the proposal.**

5. On approval being received, it is urgently necessary that General Barrowclough should visit **Fiji** and see the units, whose organisation may require some alteration to fit 3rd Division, and whose training pending transfer from **Fiji** should be in accordance with 3rd Division directives.

6. I suggest, therefore, that in accordance with the procedure proposed by the Governor of **Fiji**, Army Headquarters should approach Admiral Halsey forthwith and, if his approval is forthcoming, that the Governor be then informed. If it is still desired to despatch a mission to COMSOPAC Headquarters, that could quite appropriately follow at any convenient time.

7. Draft telegram is attached. ²

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK,
Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

³ Not published.

⁴ Vice-Admiral T. S. Wilkinson, USN; Deputy Commander, South Pacific, Jan–Jun 1943; commanded 3rd Amphibious Force, Jul 1943–Nov 1945. Admiral Wilkinson visited **Wellington** at the end of May for discussions with **War Cabinet**.

⁵ Maj-Gen De Witt Peck, US Marine Corps; served with South Pacific Force, 1942–43; commanded 1st Division, Northern China, 1945.

¹ **Col C. W. Salmon**, DCM, Legion of Merit (US); New Zealand Chiefs of Staff representative on **South Pacific Command** headquarters, **Noumea**, Apr 1943–Dec 1944.

² A memorandum from the Secretary to the **War Cabinet** (Mr A. D. McIntosh) on 17 June advised that Mr Fraser had approved

General Puttick's memorandum and the terms of the draft telegram to Admiral Halsey.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

360 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

360

Lieutenant-General Puttick to Admiral Halsey

16 June 1943

Fiji has offered, subject to your approval, a Fijian brigade and attached troops for service outside **Fiji**, and ask if we would accept [it] under command 3rd New Zealand Division. This includes a battalion and commando now in the combat zone. You will be aware of the manpower situation here which makes it impossible for New Zealand to maintain two divisions and an expanded air force overseas, and the proposal to use Fijian units would materially strengthen the 3rd Division, which in other respects will be completed by the despatch of troops from here. I consider the Fijians very valuable for jungle warfare, and my view, with which General Barrowclough concurs,¹ is that one battalion should be employed with each New Zealand brigade, thus making full use of their special qualities. Two New Zealand battalions now with the 3rd Division would be absorbed as reinforcements for that division. I would ask for an urgent decision as, if the proposal is approved, Barrowclough should visit the units at an early date to arrange any reorganisation and direct training in accordance with 3rd Division requirements pending the troops joining the Division. Practically all the equipment required for the Fijian battalions is available in **New Caledonia**.

¹ At this date General Barrowclough was in New Zealand for discussions with **War Cabinet**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

361 – ADMIRAL HALSEY TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

361

Admiral Halsey to Lieutenant-General Puttick

17 June 1943

Refer your telegram of 16 June. In conference and correspondence concerning the reduction of home defences in New Zealand it was our understanding that the 3rd Division would be brought to full strength, and that full strength would be such that the New Zealand Division could be used interchangeably with American divisions in combat. Therefore, we prefer for the latter reason, and because of the reduction of strength of the **Fiji garrison, that the expansion of the New Zealand 3rd Division be not accomplished by the use of **Fijian** troops.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

362 — THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF
FIJI

362

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

19 June 1943

The arrangements proposed in the memorandum ² which you sent to Brigadier Stewart recently with respect to the employment and administration of the **Fiji Military Forces** are fully acceptable to us. Army Headquarters will of course maintain the closest liaison with the Military Forces in **Fiji** and for our part we will do everything we can to help you. As you no doubt realise, the employment of the **Fiji Military Forces** will be subject to the approval of COMSOPAC.

² See p. 376, note 3.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

363 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

363

Lieutenant-General Puttick to Admiral Halsey

19 June 1943

Your reply of 18 [17] June [**No. 361**] correctly states the understanding that the 3rd New Zealand Division would be brought to full strength, and in fact this had been approved some time ago by **War Cabinet** and all the units required, with the exception of one battalion of Maoris, were and still are awaiting shipment to **New Caledonia**. Since War Cabinet approval, however, strong public feeling arose that the 2nd New Zealand Division should return from **Africa** or, alternatively, that long-service men of that division should be given furlough here. After Cabinet discussions in which the Chiefs of Staff strongly recommended that the 2nd Division should remain overseas, the matter was discussed by Parliament in secret session and a **War Cabinet** proposal to adopt a furlough scheme was agreed to. The great strain on manpower was emphasised in Parliament, and the Prime Minister stated we could not provide furlough replacements of 2nd Division and expand the **Air Force** and at the same time complete the 3rd Division, but would make adjustments between troops awaiting embarkation and troops actually with the division. The urgent request of **Fiji** to employ one brigade of its force in the combat zone seemed to offer a good opportunity of completing the 3rd Division without breaking the Prime Minister's pledge, subject of course to your approval of this reduction in forces for the defence of **Fiji**. There is no prospect of completing the division from our own resources. The best we can do is to send the required artillery and services to balance the forces in exchange for two battalions now there, which has the effect of reducing the division to a two-combat-team or two-brigade division, and absorbing the two battalions as reinforcements. I cannot see how the use of **Fiji** troops to complete the

3rd Division in any way affects the interchangeability of the 3rd Division with an American division, but I readily recognise of course your responsibility to determine the strength of the garrison required in Fiji. Would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the question with you at your headquarters if you still feel unable to approve the proposal.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

364 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

364

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

24 June 1943

General Harmon requested me to discuss the Fijian question with him and General Peck prior to their discussing the matter with Admiral Halsey. I made it clear I was not an emissary of the **New Zealand Government** or of Army Headquarters, but answered their questions to the best of my ability. They appear to doubt the wisdom of releasing two battalions now in **Fiji** from their local defence role as it might preclude them later from withdrawing **United States** troops from **Fiji** for use elsewhere. They also seemed reluctant to part with the **Fiji** battalion now in the **Solomons**, which they contemplate using in a general reconnaissance role rather than limiting its employment as an integral part of my Division. It was evident they desire to employ us in any event, whether on a two- or a three-brigade basis. I emphasised the desirability of having three full brigade groups. I pointed out that if we were on a two-brigade basis we might not require equipment of a third field regiment and other ancillary troops of a third brigade, but that I thought a third field company fully equipped would be useful in any event. They requested me to remain in **Noumea** to discuss this in the light of Admiral Halsey's decision, which is expected later this afternoon. Will signal you the proposals in this regard when they are known, requesting your concurrence. You will appreciate that even if the equipment of the third brigade ancillary units is not required the personnel should come here as reinforcements.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

365 – ADMIRAL HALSEY TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

365

Admiral Halsey to Lieutenant-General Puttick

24 June 1943

Refer your telegram of 16 June [**No. 360**] and despatch of the 19th. As the **Fiji** garrison must remain at certain strength, bringing the 3rd New Zealand Division to strength by employing the Fiji Brigade would in the end result in immobilising **United States** units in defence of **Fiji** in order to release Fijian units for offensive use. Such use would also deprive us of the free use of Fijian troops now employed as scouts and raiders in the **Solomons**, for if part of the New Zealand Division they would necessarily and properly be trained and employed as an organic part of the Division. For the above reasons I prefer a twin-brigade New Zealand Division to employing Fijian troops therein.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

366 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

366

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

24 June 1943

Have received copy of the signal from COMSOPAC to GOC New Zealand Military Forces dated 24 June.

While greatly regretting the decision I feel it essential we should accept the two-brigade basis rather than refuse the proposals for active employment of the Division. I am assured that the task allotted us will be proportionately reduced. Consider that an early reply should be made to COMSOPAC'S letter of 11 June [**No. 358**] to enable the plan to proceed and me to prepare. Please instruct whether I am to reorganise on a two-brigade basis. Request third Field Company fully equipped be included as a unit of this Division. General Harmon concurs. Request also all Divisional Signals with all equipment be sent as originally contemplated as no adequate provision has been made for Base Signals and I am faced with the additional problem of signals for MAINYARD. ¹ Request also as reinforcements personnel, but without equipment, of other units of this Division now in New Zealand. Request you advise USAFISPA of amended requirements of shipping to complete the Division on the new basis. Understand Captain Jupp ² controls only United States Navy shipping and USAFISPA can make available ships not under Captain Jupp's control.

¹ Guadalcanal.

² Commodore S. D. Jupp, USN; Commanding Officer and Port Director, US Naval Operating Base, **Auckland**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

367 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO MAJOR-GENERAL
BARROWCLOUGH

367

Lieutenant-General Puttick to Major-General Barrowclough

26 June 1943

If you agree, give the following message to Admiral Halsey from me:

‘Reference your message of 24 June [**No. 365**]. Fully appreciate your **Fiji** problem. Regret the necessity for the reduction of the 3rd Division and submit the following proposal. The Division would be materially strengthened if one **Fijian** battalion from **Fiji** could be added to it for scouting and raiding and **Fiji** would suffer less disappointment. I suggest that when the despatch of the present **United States** garrison from **Fiji** becomes possible, lower strength in **Tonga** could be accepted and our second-line New Zealand battalion now there could then reinforce **Fiji**. Would appreciate your early decision.’³

³ Admiral Halsey replied on 27 June that he approved the addition of one **Fijian** battalion to the 3rd Division provided it entailed no reduction in the number of **Fijian** troops then in the **Solomons**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

368 – WAR CABINET MINUTE – MINISTER OF DEFENCE (ARMY): – 3RD DIVISION

368

War Cabinet Minute

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (ARMY):

That authority be given for the organisation of the 3rd Division on a two-Brigade basis, together with the additional units requested by Major-General Barrowclough as follows:

Strength of two-Brigade Division including first reinforcements and base units	14,541
Additional units	1,296
Total establishment	15,837
Personnel additional to this establishment at present in New Caledonia to remain	2,115
Total number authorised for force in New Caledonia	17,952

That approval be given for the proposed movement of the 3rd Division and to its later employment in the combat zone, subject to a report from General Barrowclough that the Division is then suitably equipped and trained for the proposed operations. ¹

In War Cabinet, 27 June 1943. Approved.

¹ See No. 382.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

369 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO ADMIRAL HALSEY²

369

*Lieutenant-General Puttick to Admiral Halsey*²

27 June 1943

Reference your letter of 11 June [No. 358] from acting Chief of Staff to General Barrowclough, the New Zealand War Cabinet approves of the proposed movement of the 3rd Division and to its later employment in the combat zone, subject to a report from General Barrowclough that the Division is then suitably equipped and trained for the proposed operations.

² Repeated to General Barrowclough on 28 June.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

370 – ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON) TO HEADQUARTERS, FIJI MILITARY FORCES

370

Army Headquarters (Wellington) to Headquarters, Fiji Military Forces

28 June 1943

In accordance with the wishes of the Governor as contained in paragraph 4 (i) and (ii) of his memorandum on the administration of the **Fiji Military Forces**,¹ Army Headquarters took up with COMSOPAC the question of incorporating the Fiji Brigade in the 3rd New Zealand Division. For the reasons that the garrison of **Fiji** must 'remain at certain strength' and 'such use would deprive us of the free use of Fijian troops now employed as scouts and raiders in the **Solomons**', COMSOPAC refused. On further representation COMSOPAC agreed to one **Fiji** battalion now in **Fiji** joining the 3rd Division as a scouting and raiding unit. The 1st Fiji Battalion and the Commando now in the **Solomons** will remain under American command. Please submit to the Governor and obtain his approval to one battalion now in **Fiji** joining the 3rd Division at an early date and report his decision, including the name of the battalion selected, by immediate signal.

¹ Paragraph 4 read:

'Accordingly, subject to the agreement cited above, which vests the operational control of the local forces, whilst employed in **Fiji**, in the Commanding General, and to the authority given to the Governor by the Secretary of State for the raising and equipment of a Mobile Brigade Group and certain Base Units, the Government of **Fiji** records its views as follows:

(i) It is prepared to place the **Fiji Military Forces** under the

general military control of the New Zealand General Staff, and to agree to their incorporation in a New Zealand Division or other British formation, since by personnel, training and equipment they are well suited to such an arrangement.

(ii) It desires that the Mobile Brigade Group should be employed on active operations against the enemy anywhere, within or without the Pacific. It follows from (i) above that this is a military question for decision between the New Zealand General Staff and the U.S. Commander of the South Pacific.

(iii) It follows also from (i) above that the organisation, training and employment of the F.M.F. are technical military questions for decision between the Chief of the General Staff in New Zealand and the U.S. Commander, South Pacific.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

371 – HEADQUARTERS, FIJI MILITARY FORCES, TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON)2

371

Headquarters, Fiji Military Forces, to Army Headquarters (Wellington) ²

29 June 1943

Your telegram of 28 June. Have seen the Governor who says he would normally have replied that he views the break-up of the brigade with regret but regards the matter as being within the recently agreed decision to place the troops under the general direction of the New Zealand General Staff and therefore for decision as desired by the Chief of the General Staff.

2. But on 27 June an immediate most secret signal affecting the employment of the **Fiji** forces was received from **London**, where proposals for possible use in **Burma** (not yet disclosed to the Americans) is being considered. Also **Wales** ³ is absent in the **Solomons**. Accordingly the Governor asks you to wait for final reply for a few days. Battalion would be the 3rd (Voelcker). ¹

3. Meantime the Governor suggests you sell the idea to COMSOPAC that the brigade should be attached to 3rd Division NZEF at once, the Division being directed to detach one or more battalions as desired for the **Solomons, Fiji**, etc., that is to say the brigade becomes now part of the Division, which is itself under **United States** command. If the **London** proposals are pursued this will not affect them for the **Fiji** forces are now under your general direction and American command. But this would preserve at least on paper the identity of the brigade, which the Governor thinks has some importance.

² Repeated to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

³ Brig J. G. C. Wales, MC; GSO I B Force, Mar 1941–Jul 1942; Commandant, **Fiji Defence Force**, and Commander, Pacific Section, **2 NZEF**, Jul–Oct 1942; commanded **Fiji Military Forces**, Nov 1942–Sep 1943.

¹ Col **F. W. Voelcker**, CBE, DSO, MC, ED, Bronze Star (US); CO 34 Bn, **Fiji**, 1940 – 42; 3 Bn, Fiji Inf Regt, Dec 1943 – 1945; Administrator of **Western Samoa**, 1946, and High Commissioner, 1947–49; died **Auckland**, 22 May 1954.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

372 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI²

372

Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Governor of Fiji ²

30 June 1943

Reference your telegram of 29 June.

I appreciate your desire to maintain the identity of the Fijian Brigade but consider it very unlikely that Halsey would agree to the proposal to attach the Brigade to the 3rd Division, with one battalion detached to the **Solomons** and Brigade Headquarters and one battalion in **Fiji**. I feel it unwise to risk irritating Halsey by raising a third time a matter which he has already given a decision on. I could not justify the proposal on military grounds, and he would suspect some ulterior motive such as my ultimate intention to endeavour to secure the whole brigade or to deprive the United States Command of the **Solomons** battalion. In view of **United States** responsibility for the defence of **Fiji** and Halsey's comments that the move of the Fiji Brigade to the 3rd Division would ultimately mean tying down **United States** troops as the garrison in **Fiji**, I feel certain he would object to the **Burma** proposal also and might feel resentful if his hand were forced. I succeeded in obtaining his consent to the despatch of one **Fiji** battalion to the 3rd Division by suggesting that when **Fiji** was safe enough to move the **United States** garrison, **Tonga** could safely move the New Zealand battalion to **Fiji**, and also that the move of the **Fiji** battalion to the 3rd Division would ease disappointment in **Fiji** over the refusal to use the whole Brigade. I consider the move of the Fijian battalion is urgent and that the best course is to regard the Fijian troops remaining in **Fiji** as possible reliefs for **Fiji** battalions in the **Solomons** and in the 3rd Division, and recommend your approval to the present plan. **War Office** was informed of the proposal to employ the Fiji Brigade and of subsequent **COMSOPAC** approval of one battalion.

² Repeated to the **War Office** and to the **Secretary of State for the Colonies**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

373 – THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

373

*The Governor of Fiji to the Prime Minister of New Zealand*¹

1 July 1943

Reference telegram of 29 June [**No. 371**], Fiji Infantry Battalion as scouts for the 3rd New Zealand Division.

Have now given the matter full consideration and feel the greatest difficulty in agreeing to the proposal by Army Headquarters for the following reasons:

2. In the circumstances known to you at present it was decided last autumn to raise in **Fiji** a mobile brigade group. One of my reasons was to improve the morale of the Fijians. Accordingly every opportunity has been taken to emphasise in propaganda and by parades, etc., the creation of the **Fijian Brigade**. The Council of Chiefs unanimously expressed the wish in September that the **Fijian Force** should be sent abroad to assist in actual fighting in **Africa** or **Egypt**, and this was repeated to the Secretary of State, who gratefully acknowledged it and encouraged them. We have proceeded throughout on the assumption that our contribution for service abroad would be a **Fijian Mobile Brigade Group**, and the recent agreement come to with Stewart and approved in your telegram of 19 June [**No. 362**] was based on that. See especially paragraph 4. We have been to great pains and expense to raise and train the **Brigade Group** which is now ready for service, and have had extensive and expensive help from you in personnel and equipment. We have strained our manpower position to the limit, if not beyond it. When one **Commando** and the 1st Battalion was sent to the **Solomons** we regarded them as an advance party and hoped the rest of the **Brigade**

would follow. But Army Headquarters' proposals now amount to the breaking up of the Brigade Group except the infantry battalions and the despatch of a single battalion of fully trained regular infantry to the 3rd New Zealand Division as scouts and raiders. I have a life-long experience of native troops, including language and family difficulties and other matters, and I am sure it would be most unwise to subject Fijians to such treatment in a strange environment. Moreover, it would end in Fijian sick and [group mutilated—wounded ?], unable to speak any language but their own, being scattered all over the place with no one to look after them, and will create great difficulties of supply and reinforcement.

The Brigade is organised and trained as such and has a strong Brigade *esprit de corps*, besides being to the Fijian people what your 2nd Division is to the people of New Zealand. It would be heartbreaking now to abandon the project of participation in the fight as a Brigade, besides creating for me an exceedingly difficult position with public opinion here, especially Fijian.

3. Accordingly, while re-affirming the agreement made with Stewart and accepted by you, I feel obliged to say that I regard the proposal in Army Headquarters' telegram of 28 June [**No. 370**] as being excluded by the qualifying words in paragraph 4 of the text of the agreement, and must regretfully decline the request for detaching a single battalion for use as a scouting and raiding unit. But the Brigade remains at your disposal in accordance with the terms of the agreement for employment as such in any theatre of war as to which you may be able to come to agreement with COMSOPAC and, if you wish, as part of the New Zealand Division. My personal feeling is that the question of the garrison of **Fiji** will be settled shortly when the enemy is pushed back probably to **Rabaul**, if not further, since the United States Command intend to use this malaria-free island for some time to come as a recuperating station for a Division which, together with fixed defences, will at the next phase be more than sufficient a garrison for **Fiji**, thus releasing the Brigade for service abroad. I feel that when the present offensive is completed the

United States Command will readily accept this view.

4. I much regret the inability to agree with the present request by Army Headquarters, but I believe on reflection you will agree with me that for the reasons given above I cannot send the Fijians off in single battalions and abandon now the rest of the Brigade units.

5. Wales has returned and has seen the above and agrees with it. He adds that if the proposal to employ the Brigade in **Burma is pursued in **London** he considers that it would be admirably suited for that employment, and this could be borne in mind after the present operations are concluded. The Burma proposal is not yet known to the United States Command. If it would help you at all I should be happy to send Wales to New Zealand now to discuss all these matters with you and the New Zealand General Staff.**

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand High Commissioner in **London and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

374 – THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK¹

374

The Governor of Fiji to Lieutenant-General Puttick ¹

2 July 1943

Your telegram of 30 June [**No. 372**].

Please ask to see my telegram to the Prime Minister which gives in full my reason for being unwilling to break up the Brigade and despatch single battalions to different places out of the Colony. Native troops are most valuable, but account has to be taken that they are natives with language and domestic complications, and the more I consider the matter the more impracticable the proposal appears.

2. Moreover, the consequences will obviously be known to the public here and I shall have to explain to the Legislative Council why we have gone to great pains and expense to raise, train, and equip a brigade only to break it up unused and scrap the battery, engineers, etc. I can think of no reasonable explanation.

3. General Thompson ² in conversation told Wales yesterday he was confident the Brigade could soon be spared from here as **United States** troops who will be here anyhow to recuperate will amply suffice for all the garrison **Fiji** will need in future. If you like, I will ask him to confirm this to me officially and it can then be used with COMSOPAC.

4. If you see no objection please show this to the Prime Minister and repeat to the **War Office**. I am most anxious to fall in with your wishes but cannot go to the length of tearing up the project agreed between New Zealand, His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** and the Colony last September. ³

¹ Repeated to the **War Office** and the **Colonial Office**.

² Maj-Gen C. F. Thompson, **US Army**; Commanding General, **US Forces in Fiji**.

³ Sir Philip Mitchell and Colonel Wales had discussions early in October 1942 with Admiral Ghormley and with the **New Zealand Government** on the expansion and future role of the **Fiji and Tonga Defence Forces**. **War Cabinet** later approved the expansion of the **Fiji Defence Force** to a brigade group and agreed to supply some personnel and equipment.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

375 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI

375

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Governor of Fiji

5 July 1943

Your message of 1 July [No. 373].

The considerations which have influenced your decision are fully appreciated. We were, as you know, most willing and anxious to have the Fijian Brigade in the 3rd New Zealand Division, though both Generals Puttick and Barrowclough considered it preferable operationally to employ one battalion with each New Zealand brigade rather than the Brigade as a whole. When, to our very great regret, COMSOPAC declined to agree to the employment and transfer of the Fijian Brigade, we then represented the case for one battalion, which we considered would be of very great value to the 3rd New Zealand Division. We had also acted on the assumption that as one battalion had already been despatched to the **Solomons** you would prefer that the second battalion should be employed on active operations in that area rather than remain in **Fiji**. I should perhaps make it clear that, although it was stated that this battalion would be used as a scouting and raiding unit, there was no intention of breaking it up, but rather to keep it together as a divisional reconnaissance regiment and employ it on those duties as part of the operations of the whole Division. There was and is, I assure you, no desire on our part to attempt any disposal of Fijian troops against your wishes, but as COMSOPAC has in quite definite terms registered his objections to your Brigade leaving **Fiji** and, after our further representations, limited his approval to the one battalion, we feel we cannot, at any rate at the present moment, again reopen or press the matter with him, even though it leaves us now with no option but to

**abandon with regret the proposal to employ Fijian troops with the 3rd
New Zealand Division.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

376 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI¹

376

*Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Governor of Fiji*¹

6 July 1943

Your telegram of 2 July [**No. 374**].

I had discussed your telegram [**No. 373**] with the Prime Minister and advised him that there was no option but to abandon the proposal to employ Fijian troops with 3rd Division as COMSOPAC would not agree to more than one battalion leaving **Fiji** while you required the whole brigade to go. I appreciate your difficulties. You could I think justify the formation of the brigade on the grounds of local defence and preparedness for overseas operations, while the despatch of part of the brigade is explained by the fact that the balance is required in **Fiji** by COMSOPAC, who is responsible for the defence of **Fiji**. As regards the use of one battalion, it was intended to employ it as an integral part of 3rd Division, much like a divisional reconnaissance regiment for protection, scouting and raids as part of the operations of the division. Interpreters would be necessary at various points such as ambulances, hospital and base, but the unit would generally remain concentrated and work as a unit.

Our manpower situation here is so difficult that we have been compelled to reduce 3rd Division to a two-brigade division and would now be unable to complete the necessary services and other arms for the Fijian brigade even if it were available. We are also reducing very drastically here and probably in Norfolk and possibly in **Tonga**, and any economies in New Zealand personnel in **Fiji** would be appreciated. I regret we will not have the valuable services of Fijian troops with 3rd Division. I have shown your telegram to the Prime Minister and repeated

it to the **War Office** as requested.

¹ Repeated to the New Zealand Liaison Officer, **London**, for the **War Office** and the Colonial Office.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

377 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO MAJOR-GENERAL
BARROWCLOUGH

377

Lieutenant-General Puttick to Major-General Barrowclough

6 July 1943

The Governor of **Fiji** objects to breaking up the Brigade Group by the despatch of an individual battalion, leaving other arms in **Fiji**. He also refers to political and other difficulties if the Brigade is not sent overseas after the expense of raising and training. The Prime Minister is replying that there is no option but to abandon with regret the proposal to employ Fijian troops with 3rd Division. ¹ I presume the Governor will adhere to his decision. The manpower situation here is very difficult. The strength of your reinforcements is not yet decided. ²

¹ On 15 July General Puttick asked General Barrowclough to inform Admiral Halsey accordingly.

² A number of letters and telegrams on the provision of reinforcements for the 3rd Division have not been reproduced.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

378 – LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

378

Letter from the Governor of Fiji to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

8 July 1943

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

I am writing about the matter of the Fiji Brigade, only to say how very sorry I am that, so early after the arrangements made with your General Staff to act as Godfather to the Brigade, there should have been a difference of opinion. I will not go over the ground again, but I should like to say that had we not last Autumn, on the advice of the Commandant here and the American Commanding General, and with the concurrence of the **New Zealand Government**, embarked on the formation of a Brigade, and had we not been engaged ever since with the greatest activity in training and preparing it for foreign service, it would have been at any rate possible for me to agree to what your C.G.S. now wants. I say possible advisedly, for I still think it would have been most unwise; for however excellent people's intentions are, small detached native units inevitably tend to become fatigue and labour units; they get homesick and misunderstandings occur with European officers and other ranks of the units to which they are attached, and the thing usually ends in a miserable story of bickering and recrimination and with what is usually called by soldiers a mutiny. That is to say the native troops get mulish, sit down and say they must go home.

It must be remembered after all that, with few exceptions, none of them can speak English and that the vast majority are simple-minded folks from the interior of the larger Islands or from the small Islands of

the Group, who are very easily depressed in strange surroundings.

I had not myself ever thought that to break up the Brigade would be suggested now, especially as the question of the garrison of **Fiji is in fact solving itself for, as far as we can now foresee, at least an American Division will always be recuperating here from malarial areas further forward, and once the present operations clear the **Solomons** to **Bougainville** such a Division will be ample and more than ample for the garrison of **Fiji**.**

The matter must rest in abeyance at the moment, but when the offensive is a little further forward I will take it up myself with the American Commanders. There seems to be some misunderstanding in Puttick's mind, because the proposal that the Brigade complete should be attached to the New Zealand Forces has not, according to my information from **Noumea, reached American Headquarters there. Be that as it may, however, the matter must now remain in abeyance.**

With great good wishes and hopes for your success in the forthcoming election, together with grateful thanks for all you have done for us in the past,

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) P. E. MITCHELL

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

379 – ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON) TO MAJOR-GENERAL
BARROWCLOUGH

379

Army Headquarters (Wellington) to Major-General Barrowclough

17 July 1943

War Cabinet has approved 17,831 total personnel for your force, composition *vide* my A. 5270 of 10 July and details in letter posted 16 July. ¹

¹ Neither is reproduced here.

On 16 July **War Cabinet** reaffirmed its decision of 27 June (No. 368) that the 3rd Division should be reorganised on a two-brigade basis.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

380 – LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI

380

Letter from the Prime Minister to the Governor of Fiji

23 July 1943

MY DEAR SIR PHILIP,

I entirely appreciate and sympathize with the viewpoint you so clearly express in your personal letter to me dated 8 July.

The reasons you put forward against the splitting up of the Fijian Brigade are, I feel, from the point of view of the Native troops, thoroughly sound. I can assure you that we were just as disappointed as you were with Admiral Halsey's unwillingness to agree to the incorporation of your Brigade with our Division. We have now been forced by our manpower difficulties, as you are probably aware, to reduce our force in the Pacific to a two-Brigade Division, and we had counted on the Fijians to bring the Division up to its full strength.

In view, however, of Admiral Halsey's decision, which was expressed in very definite terms, we felt after our prolonged negotiations on the matter that we just could not press it further. General Puttick was still of the opinion, however, that it would be of the greatest advantage to our Division if we could have the assistance of at least one Fijian battalion—a course which, we considered, might have enabled us eventually to arrange for the transfer of the whole Fijian Brigade.

After the receipt of your message, members of War Cabinet and I myself on several occasions discussed the matter further with General Puttick, but we felt with him that it would be impolitic to press the matter further with Admiral Halsey at any rate for the time being.

The Hon. W. Perry,¹ who has taken Mr Coates's place in the **War Cabinet** as Minister in Charge of Armed Forces and War Co-ordination,² is leaving at the beginning of the week on a tour of the New Zealand Forces in the South Pacific, accompanied by General Puttick, and opportunity will no doubt be taken to refer to this matter in discussions with Admiral Halsey and perhaps they may be in a position to talk it over with you also when they arrive in **Fiji**.

The very kind personal wishes contained in the last paragraph of your letter are, I assure you, warmly appreciated. The happy association of my colleagues and myself with you and the Fijian Government are greatly valued and I trust that our mutual collaboration will continue to contribute in some measure towards the achievement of ultimate victory in the **Pacific**.

With kind regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely

(*Sgd*) P. FRASER

¹ Hon. Sir William Perry, Kt, MLC; Member of **War Cabinet** as Minister of Armed Forces and War Co-ordination, Jun 1943 – Aug 1945.

² Mr Coates died on 27 May 1943.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

381 – ADMIRAL HALSEY TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL HARMON,
COMMANDING GENERAL SOUTH PACIFIC AREA¹

381

*Admiral Halsey to Lieutenant-General Harmon, Commanding General
South Pacific Area*¹

26 July 1943

Upon confirmation by GOC 3rd New Zealand Division of readiness for combat of that Division, COMGENSOPAC [will] issue the necessary orders for the movement of 3rd New Zealand Division from **New Caledonia** to **Guadalcanal** prepared for further offensive operations. COMTRANSGROUP SOPAC furnish required transportation. This movement will be completed by 15 September 1943.

¹ Repeated to General Puttick, General Barrowclough and various **United States** addressees.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

382 — MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS
(WELLINGTON)

382

Major-General Barrowclough to Army Headquarters (Wellington)

31 July 1943

Reference COMSOPAC signal of 26 July and your G.4943 of 28 June. ² I am of the opinion that 3rd Division is equipped and trained for the proposed operations, subject to the arrival of the Tank Squadron Group, 26 Field Company and 24 Field Ambulance, and subject to the delivery of ammunition to Guadalcanal as per table accompanying my most secret letter of 13 July. ³ I understand these units and ammunition are ready for shipment and the provision of shipping rests with the United States. Does War Cabinet approve my certifying to this effect to COMSOPAC, who desires certificate before arranging forward transportation? Hon. Mr Perry and General Puttick have seen and approved the text of this message. COMSOPAC asking urgently for certificate.

² Not published. This telegram repeated to General Barrowclough the text of No. 369 to Admiral Halsey.

³ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

383 – ARMY HEADQUARTERS TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

383

Army Headquarters to Major-General Barrowclough

2 August 1943

Your telegram of 31 July. War Cabinet has approved your giving the required certificate to COMSOPAC.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

384 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

384

Major-General Barrowclough to Admiral Halsey

2 August 1943

Reference COMSOPAC signal of 26 July [**No. 381**].

I report that 3rd NZ Division is suitably equipped and trained for the proposed operations in the **Solomons** subject to the following conditions. First, that ammunition on the agreed scale is shipped to **Guadalcanal** so as to arrive not later than the date of arrival of the first Brigade Group. Second, that units of this Force still in New Zealand, viz. **Tank Squadron, 26 Field Company, and 24 Field Ambulance** and other small detachments are shipped from New Zealand. The fulfilment of these conditions is the **United States'** concern, not mine. I see no objection to commencing the movement as planned provided my troops are not left in **Guadalcanal** without ammunition. ¹

¹ The Division arrived in **Guadalcanal** in three echelons, on 27 August, 3 September and 14 September respectively.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

385 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE HON. W. PERRY,² C/O
HEADQUARTERS, NO. 1 ISLANDS GROUP (ESPIRITU SANTO)

385

*The Prime Minister to the Hon. W. Perry,² c/o Headquarters, No. 1
Islands Group (Espiritu Santo)*

2 August 1943

War Cabinet have agreed to the terms of Barrowclough's telegram and he has been advised accordingly. I trust that as a result of your conversations with Admiral Halsey our manpower difficulties are realised and it is understood in this connection that we will be unable to reinforce Barrowclough beyond the number he already has in his pool, and that further production in New Zealand for the South Pacific area can only be made possible henceforward by withdrawals from the armed services.

² Mr Perry had cabled the Prime Minister from Headquarters 3rd Division on 31 July as follows: 'Have discussed [**No. 382**] with Generals Puttick and Barrowclough and recommend Barrowclough be authorised to certify to COMSOPAC as he suggests.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

386 – THE HON. W. PERRY TO THE PRIME MINISTER³

386

*The Hon. W. Perry to the Prime Minister*³

5 August 1943

While I did not make any definite statement to Halsey that no reinforcements would be sent to the 3rd Division, I emphasised the fact that our manpower position was acute. I pointed out that if, as suggested, we were to provide supplies for 500,000 men, which you will remember was proposed, we could only do this by possibly withdrawing the force altogether. Halsey had no knowledge of this demand for supplies but did agree that the force should go into action. I had understood that you had explained our reinforcement capacity to Wilkinson, but in order to remove any possible doubt I now propose asking Salmon on his return to **Noumea** from here to make the position perfectly clear to Halsey.

³ Despatched through the Governor of **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

387 – LETTER FROM COLONEL C. W. SALMON, NEW ZEALAND CHIEFS
OF STAFF REPRESENTATIVE, TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

387

*Letter from Colonel C. W. Salmon, New Zealand Chiefs of Staff
Representative, to Admiral Halsey*

20 August 1943

MY DEAR ADMIRAL

The Hon. W. Perry has asked me to ensure that your notes of his conference with you make it clear regarding the New Zealand manpower as it affects the present campaigns.

For your present campaigns New Zealand has made provision for 2000 reinforcements to meet the requirements of the 3rd New Zealand Division, which is at present constituted in two brigades, plus tank squadron, ancillary and base units. This means that the New Zealand Army Force, including reinforcements, will total 17,831.

In view of New Zealand's **Air Force** and other manpower commitments no further provision can be made at present without altering such commitments.

Yours truly

(Sgd) C. W. SALMON,
Colonel,

NEW ZEALAND CHIEFS OF STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

388 – LETTER FROM ADMIRAL HALSEY TO THE PRIME MINISTER

388

Letter from Admiral Halsey to the Prime Minister

21 August 1943

MY DEAR MR FRASER

Your liaison officer, Colonel Salmon, who recently returned from a trip to the Fijis, advised my Deputy Commander ¹ that he had received word from you, and that you desired that I should clearly understand from the conference with Mr Perry that New Zealand could only furnish two brigades for the 3rd Division, and that replacements for those brigades could not be furnished in excess of the numbers for which New Zealand had made provision. Colonel Salmon stated that he did not know the exact numbers of such replacements but believed they were about 10 per cent.

It is needless for me to tell you that I have been greatly disappointed that New Zealand could not furnish a division with three full brigades, and accepted the decision on two brigades with great reluctance. I do feel that these two brigades should be maintained at full strength at all times.

I hope that their losses will not be such as to require more than the 10 per cent replacements for which you have provided, but should these unfortunately be insufficient, I am counting on you to furnish such additional replacements as may be necessary to maintain these two brigades at full strength.

Our operations in **New Georgia** progressed somewhat slower than we had hoped. There is a hard fight ahead of us, and we are relying upon

the New Zealand Division to bear its share of the effort.

With the assurances of my continued high esteem, I am,

Most sincerely

(Sgd) W. F. HALSEY,

**¹ Admiral R. B. Carney, USN; Chief of Staff to Admiral Halsey,
Jul 1943 – Nov 1945; Chief of Naval Operations 1953–55.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

389 – LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

389

Letter from the Prime Minister to Admiral Halsey

30 August 1943

DEAR ADMIRAL HALSEY

I have received your letter dated 21 August, in which you comment on my message concerning the position of the 3rd Division which was, I gather, conveyed to your Deputy Commander by Colonel Salmon.

The questions raised in the communication from me and in yours are of fundamental importance and it is most essential that your exact requirements and the extent of our commitments and resources should be mutually understood.

As you are no doubt aware, and as I explained to your former Deputy Commander, Admiral Wilkinson, the decision to retain our battle-trained Division in the **Mediterranean** theatre was made by Parliament upon the advice of Mr Churchill and Mr Roosevelt after we had pointed out to them and their Military Advisers that it was not possible, at this stage of the war, with its other commitments for New Zealand to continue to maintain two Divisions overseas. Unless there is a change of policy which would cause Parliament to vary its decision, the Division in the **Mediterranean** will, when the reinforcement pool in New Zealand has been exhausted, require to be maintained by drawing eventually upon New Zealand troops serving in the **Pacific**.

In so far as our **Pacific** commitments are concerned, we have continued to work on the lines laid down and accepted by Admiral Wilkinson and **War Cabinet** in June last, namely that Air came first,

Navy second, production third and Army fourth. We are making every effort to fulfil these military commitments and to increase to the maximum the production of foodstuffs, etc., for which there is a continually increasing demand from your forces. I must point out, however, that it is not possible for a small country like New Zealand, after four years of war, to do more than we are now doing; especially having regard to the fact that at the present time we have more than 68,000 men overseas, that our casualties in dead, wounded and missing have been extremely heavy and that our reserves of Grade A manpower are practically exhausted.

We have for some months been particularly concerned that there should be no collapse of our war effort in any of its several directions, and that is why I have taken steps to inform you that there must come a time when one particular activity or another must be tapered off.

It is and has always been our intention to maintain the two Brigades of the 3rd Division as long as circumstances permit and in this connection I would like to observe that, in addition to the first reinforcements of 10 per cent which it is our practice to send forward with a capital force, we have also made available a reinforcement pool of over 2000 men. It is considered that on the basis of these replacements the two Brigades can be maintained for some time to come.

At the end of any period of intense activity we would, of course, re-examine the position in the light of our remaining resources of manpower and of our several commitments, especially those relating to the production of foodstuffs.

We fully realise your desire that the Division should have been of normal establishment—three Brigades—but from the foregoing you will understand that this is not practicable. In this connection I would like to refer to the proposal which was advanced when we were faced with the situation of having to reduce the force from three to two Brigades, namely, the possibility of employing with our Division the other British force in your area—the Fijian Brigade—with the training and command

of which the New Zealand military authorities have been and are intimately concerned.

It was our understanding that Sir Philip Mitchell was willing, and indeed anxious, that this force should be so employed under Major-General Barrowclough and it was a matter of some disappointment both to the Fijian Government and to ourselves that this was not at the time thought practicable. I would be glad if, in the light of the changed circumstances in the strategic situation in the South Pacific, you would give this question favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) P. FRASER

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

390 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS
(WELLINGTON)

390

Major-General Barrowclough to Army Headquarters (Wellington)

9 September 1943

Have received instructions to undertake an operational role in *Vella Lavella*. To date the instructions are incomplete, but they envisage the move of *Divisional Headquarters* and one *Brigade Group* immediately. First troops move on 15 September. No information yet of proposed employment of the balance of the Division, but I have asked for full plans to enable me to judge the consequences likely to be involved and expect fuller information tomorrow. Will signal again when the position is more fully understood. Am proceeding to the Central Solomons on a personal reconnaissance.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

391 – COLONEL DOVE¹ TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

391

*Colonel Dove*¹ to *Lieutenant-General Puttick*

18 September 1943

Have returned to **New Caledonia**.² General Harmon authorises me to inform you that **Advanced Divisional Headquarters** and **14th Brigade Group** landed on **Vella Lavella** in the morning of 18 September without incident. The convoy of twenty ships consisting of LSTs, APDs and LCIs³ was not subjected to any bombing attack whilst en route, which he considers due to the heavy fighter cover provided and also to the incessant attacks over the past few days on aerodromes on **Bougainville**. General Barrowclough has been appointed COMGEN⁴ **Vella Lavella**.

¹ **Brig W. W. Dove**, CBE, MC, Legion of Merit (US); Officer i/c Administration and Base Commandant, 2 NZEF IP, 1942–44.

² A signal on 14 September (not published) advised that General Barrowclough was leaving 'permanently' for **Vella Lavella** on the 17th and that Colonel Dove was going to **Guadalcanal**, returning to **New Caledonia** about the 18th.

³ Landing Ships, Tanks; Assault Personnel, Destroyers; Landing Craft, Infantry.

⁴ Commanding General.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

392 – MEMORANDUM FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON) – 3 NZ DIVISION

392

Memorandum from Major-General Barrowclough to Army Headquarters (Wellington)

20 September 1943

3 NZ DIVISION

1. I arrived in **Vella Lavella** at 2230 hours on 17 September. The convoy bringing two Battalion Combat Teams of 14 Brigade arrived next morning and started disembarking at 0700 hours on the 18th. The convoy included a number of small craft carrying American personnel and equipment and was the largest convoy to have approached the Island since operations first began here. We were all somewhat apprehensive about the possibility of enemy air intervention during the unloading operations, especially as the narrowness and paucity of beaches necessitated a very considerable concentration of stores and equipment and personnel to handle it. There were a number of LSTs in the convoy and they were particularly obvious targets from the air as they lay on the beaches. Fortunately we do not appear to have been discovered until about 1215 hours on the 18th when a small enemy force came over the Island of **Vella Lavella**. It was engaged by our fighters and our anti-aircraft guns, including the newly landed Bofors which were brought by the two Combat Teams of 14 Brigade. The Bofors went into action with commendable promptitude and the enemy attack failed to cause any damage or casualties anywhere. All landing craft were unloaded with despatch, the troops making an excellent job of the long business of unloading the LSTs. All landing craft got away from the beaches early in the afternoon and it was a great relief to realise that

our disembarkation had been carried out without mishap.

2. A portion of **Divisional Headquarters** and **Divisional Troops**¹ came up with the convoy and at 2400 hours on the 18th I assumed command of the Island. My own staff was inadequate in numbers to relieve completely the existing Island staff and a number of their officers have been retained in the meantime until HQ 3 NZ Division have got completely into the picture.

3. The Island Command HQ is situated in a locality which was no doubt appropriate in the early stages but it is now in a totally unsuitable position. I propose to move it to an area in the vicinity of Gill's Plantation as soon as the necessary communications by road and signal have been completed. This will involve at least a fortnight and possibly three weeks as we are extremely short of the necessary road-making equipment.

¹ The abbreviations in the original text have been spelt in full.

4. At the present time the forces on this Island comprise:

(An American Infantry Regimental Combat Team plus one
a) Battalion.

(The 14th NZ Brigade Group less one Battalion Group which is
b) expected to arrive on 24 September.

(A Construction Battalion charged with the construction of an
c) airfield which is well under way.

(A Defence Regiment comprising heavy anti-aircraft guns, light
d) anti-aircraft guns, heavy coast defence guns and a number of heavy machine guns for coast defence.

(Miscellaneous Navy personnel and a pool of landing craft of
e) various natures.

(A detachment of Fijian Scouts which I am relieving and hope to
f) get permission to send back to **Guadalcanal** to rejoin the rest of their unit as they have done very good work and are now rather tired.

5. A considerable number of additional troops of the First Marine Amphibious Corps will arrive in various echelons at periodic intervals

and they will be concerned mainly with the preparation of a Base for 1 MAC and the 'set-up' of this Island will rapidly become a very extensive one. 3 NZ Division HQ is going to be hard-pressed to exercise the functions of Island Command as well as the command of the Division. I could not very well refuse to accept the commission but I am taking steps as early as possible to have a proper Island Command constituted as I want to keep myself and my staff unhampered by matters outside the tactical and administrative control of my own New Zealand troops.

6. We are immediately putting in hand active operations designed to clear the Japanese from the North West and North East coastal fringe. There appear to be no Japs in the interior. How long this operation will take I do not feel at liberty to estimate as I have little experience of the rate of progress that can be made through the jungle against hostile troops. The experience in **New Guinea** and of American troops in this theatre indicates that it is almost unbelievably slow but I feel sure that 14 Brigade will tackle the job with enthusiasm and do it as rapidly as it can be done, bearing in mind that this is the Brigade's first experience of actual combat.

7. I have been asked to undertake the elimination of the Japanese forces on Gizo Island but do not propose to start that operation until we are assured that the situation in **Vella Lavella** is thoroughly in hand.

8. The present indications are that the **8th Brigade Group** will be employed in the occupation of the **Treasury Islands**. They are not likely to meet with much ground opposition so far as present reports go but they are bound to be subjected to considerable air attack unless our Air Forces can neutralise **Kahili**, and no doubt it will be necessary to neutralise to some extent the airfields in the **Buka** and **Rabaul** areas. There will always be the potentiality of a Japanese attempt to invade that Island after our troops have landed there and the operation is attended with considerable risks. Whether these risks ought to be taken is a matter for consideration in the light of future developments and will depend very largely on the amount of air cover and naval protection that can be afforded. The full plan for this naval and air cover has not yet

been disclosed to me. Even if the naval and air cover entirely prevents any attempted invasion of the **Treasury Islands** we are bound to be subjected to considerable air attack. This is more likely to fall heavily on the construction units that will be charged with the building of an airfield there than on the Infantry troops of the **8th Brigade** who will be considerably dispersed and well camouflaged from air observation. The plans in regard to the occupation of the **Treasury Islands** are still in the tentative stage and may be subject to considerable modification.

9. I need hardly emphasise the need for the utmost secrecy in regard to this phase of the operations and I do not think the plan ought to be communicated to anyone outside Army HQ. I have no authority to report it to **War Cabinet**. Indeed I have no express authority to report it to Army HQ and I have not asked for it, but I feel that Army HQ should know how **8 Brigade** is likely to be employed as otherwise it cannot foresee possible requirements. I would therefore particularly ask that no reference to the **Treasury Islands** operation be passed on beyond Army HQ. I see no reason, however, why the information contained in the rest of this letter should not be conveyed to the **War Cabinet**.

10. I am sending copies of this letter to Colonel **Murphy**¹ and to Colonel Dove but I am instructing them that the information regarding the **Treasury Islands** operation is to be given the utmost secrecy. Brigadier **Row**,² of course, knows of it.

11. There is still in **Guadalcanal** a considerable portion of my Divisional Troops. Whether and when they can be brought up here I cannot foretell at present nor can I say whether it will be necessary to bring them all up here. Shipping difficulties are the main factor.

12. The health of New Zealand troops in this island so far is good and they are in good heart and looking forward to the opportunity of coming to grips with the enemy. I feel confident that they

¹ **Col W. Murphy**, CBE, MC; GSO I, 3 NZ Div, 1942; AA & QMG, Aug 1942 – May 1943; Commandant, Papakura Military Camp,

Jun 1944 – Jun 1946; Area Commander, Auckland, Jun 1946 – Mar 1948.

² Brig R. A. Row, DSO and bar, Legion of Merit (US); commanded 8 Bde, 2 NZEF IP, Mar 1942 – Dec 1943; died Lower Hutt, 7 Jan 1959.

will do well. Vella Lavella is at the moment extraordinarily free from mosquitoes and Malaria is not likely to worry us, at least for a time. The climate is trying and very humid. The noises in the jungle at night have to be heard to be believed. Every conceivable kind of bird, insect and frog joins in a chorus immediately after nightfall, which drowns every other sound except gunfire.

13. During the day we are seldom subject to air attack but every night has been considerably disturbed by the presence of hostile aircraft. American troops on the Island have adopted the policy of moving from their tents and bivouacs into fox-holes as soon as a 'condition red' is announced. They move back to their bivouacs after the 'all clear' is sounded. With as many as half a dozen raids in one night it is easy to see that the troops are not getting adequate rest. Our own troops have more or less adopted the American practice and it will be necessary for me to see that our troops sleep in suitably prepared splinter-proof shelters so that their rest is not disturbed by raids which may not result in bombs being dropped anywhere near their bivouac areas.

(Sgd) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

**Major-General,
GOC NZEF IP**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

393 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

393

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

26 September 1943

Balance of 14 Brigade Group and further details **Divisional Headquarters arrived **Vella Lavella** without incident and without casualties. 35 Battalion Combat Team is slightly north of Matu Soroto Bay and expect tomorrow to contact Japanese forces in the vicinity of Umomo Island. 37 Battalion Combat Team was established at Boro on Dovelu Cove and moving to the neighbourhood of Bango Island.**

Expect pincer movement to result in decisive action in a day or so. Difficulties of terrain and insufficiency of boats make progress slow. 14 Brigade Advanced Headquarters in the neighbourhood of Matu Soroto Bay. 30 Battalion Combat Team in reserve near Gill's Plantation. If 30 Battalion is not required in northern Vella I expect to employ it shortly in the capture of Gizo Island.

Our forward positions have been attacked from the air but so far without reported casualties. ¹

¹ Several later messages giving details of the operations on **Vella Lavella** have been omitted. General Barrowclough's report to the Prime Minister on 31 Dec 1943 (**No. 406**) gives a full account of the operations on **Vella Lavella** and in the Treasury Group.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

394 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

394

Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to the Prime Minister

6 October 1943

DEAR PRIME MINISTER

,
Colonel McKillop ¹ called on my headquarters in Vella [Lavella] today and handed me your letter of 27 August. ² I need hardly say how much I appreciate the opportunity of discussing our problems with him. On the whole our views as to the equipment we require have not altered as the result of our short experience of jungle warfare. The main result of that experience is a realisation of the rate of wastage and that I have discussed with Colonel McKillop.

One of the greatest difficulties confronting me is the uncertainty of the future use and employment of this Division. I can see about as far as the end of March next but after that I have little idea as to where we may be employed and how, and it is consequently very difficult to frame my requests without running the risk of over-demanding. The difficulties of shipping and supply may prevent equipment reaching me until shortly before the Division is due for withdrawal. Colonel McKillop is familiar with this aspect of the matter and will no doubt discuss it with you.

You will have learned from the despatches which I have been sending to Army Headquarters that portion of the Division has been engaged in operations against the Japanese in the north-western portion of **Vella Lavella**. The fighting there has been extremely difficult and the troops engaged have all endured hardship and privations with a

wonderful spirit. There have been some outstanding instances of courage and devotion to duty which I shall be reporting in due course. Although progress has been slow I have been more than proud of the record they have established and am confident that it will stand comparison with the record of any other troops in this theatre. I know you will be glad to have this report, although neither of us ever doubted that the Division would not give a good account of itself.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely

(Sgd) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

¹ Col E. R. McKillop, CMG, OBE; Staff Engineer, HQ B Force (**Fiji**), 1940–41; Deputy Commissioner, **Defence Construction Council**, 1941–44; Commissioner of Works, 1944–55.

² Not traced. This letter was possibly dated 27 September, the day on which Colonel McKillop embarked for a brief tour of duty in the **Pacific**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

395 – HEADQUARTERS 3RD DIVISION TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON)

395

Headquarters 3rd Division to Army Headquarters (Wellington)

9 October 1943

All Japanese resistance in *Vella Lavella* eliminated. Total casualties in these operations only are:

	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Other Ranks</i>
Killed in action	3	26
Wounded	2	30
Missing		1

The *14th Brigade* Group in its first engagement acquitted itself splendidly. ¹

¹ Later figures give the brigade's casualties as 3 officers, 28 other ranks killed, 1 officer died of wounds, 1 officer and 31 other ranks wounded.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

396 – LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO MAJOR-GENERAL
BARROWCLOUGH

396

Lieutenant-General Puttick to Major-General Barrowclough

10 October 1943

Warmest congratulations from Army Headquarters to all concerned in the successful conclusion of the initial operations against the Japanese. My personal congratulations to yourself, Brigadier Potter,² and all ranks of Advanced Divisional Headquarters and 14th Brigade Group on an excellent job.

² **Brig L. Potter, CBE, DSO; commanded 14 Bde 1942–44; Commander, Central Military District, Dec 1944 – Jun 1946; commanded 2 NZEF, Japan, 1946–48.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

397 – MEMORANDUM FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK TO THE
PRIME MINISTER

397

Memorandum from Lieutenant-General Puttick to the Prime Minister

13 October 1943

I have been informed by Brigadier Dove ³ that General Barrett, ⁴ commanding the United States Amphibious Corps, requests that I inform you that, for incorporation in his Corps for impending operations, he was given the choice of the 3rd New Zealand Division or any **United States** or Australian division, and that he has selected the 3rd New Zealand Division, of whose qualities he has the highest opinion.

You may also wish to know that Brigadier Dove was informed by senior **United States** commanders that in the recent operations the New Zealand troops exceeded the very high expectations of these officers.

(*Sgd*) E. PUTTICK

Lieutenant-General,

COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

³ Then on a visit to New Zealand on duty.

⁴ Maj-Gen C. D. Barrett, US Marine Corps; Commander 1st Marine Amphibious Corp in **Pacific**; accidentally killed, **Noumea**, 20 Oct 1943.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

398 – LETTER FROM THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER¹ TO MAJOR- GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

398

*Letter from the acting Prime Minister ¹ to Major-General
Barrowclough*

20 October 1943

MY DEAR GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

In the absence of the Prime Minister, who has been indisposed for some days, I am acknowledging your letter to him dated 6 October [**No. 394**] and conveyed by Colonel McKillop. I should add that Colonel McKillop saw me immediately on his return and gave me a full account of his visit.

I have also had the advantage of recent discussions with General **Lethbridge** ² who was most favourably impressed with what he saw and heard of your Division.

I note what you say concerning the uncertainty as to the future use of the 3rd Division. We are at present making another examination of the manpower problem which is becoming more and more acute. We are at the present moment experiencing some difficulty in providing men to make up the return furlough party to the **Middle East** and until we know the complete number of exemptions on appeal and of those rejected on medical grounds it will not be possible to assess how many Grade A men there are likely to be left in the pool at the end of the year. On present indications, and in view of the urgent needs of the **Air Force**, the number is likely to be very few. I can assure you that your needs are very much in our minds, but for the time being I cannot add to the

information you already have on this question.

May I take this opportunity of expressing on behalf of **War Cabinet** and the Government, and on my own behalf, sincere congratulations on the splendid performance of your troops in eliminating the Japanese from **Vella Lavella**, and of wishing you all success in the very difficult tasks which lie ahead of you.

Kind regards,
Yours sincerely

(*Sgd*) W. NASH

for the Prime Minister

¹ Hon. W. Nash. Mr Nash returned to New Zealand from **Washington** for the period April – December 1943.

² **Maj-Gen J. S. Lethbridge**, CB, CBE, MC, was in charge of a military mission despatched by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff to the **Pacific** and Indian theatres.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

399 – HEADQUARTERS 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON)

399

Headquarters 3rd New Zealand Division to Army Headquarters (Wellington)

27 October 1943

From 30 September to 12 October a **29th Battalion** patrol operated on **Choiseul**. The Divisional Field Security Section and the Defence and Employment Platoon operated on Ganongga from 19 to 22 October. No Japanese on Ganongga. On night 21–22 October **8th Brigade** Intelligence Sergeant ¹ and party landed on Treasury, returning the following night after a successful patrol. The same party landed again on Treasury on the night 25th–26th without incident. The **8th Brigade** Group moved as per schedule to Treasury. ² The only reports so far are from Air. Landing on **Stirling** observed and apparently without incident. View of landing at **Falamai** obscured by smoke of heavy bombardment from Navy, but landing craft were observed returning empty from the beaches and a landing appears to have been effected.

¹ **Sgt W. A. Cowan** was awarded the DCM for this action.

² **General Barrowclough** had advised **General Puttick** of the plans for the proposed landing in the **Treasury Islands** in a letter dated 11 October.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

400 — MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK

400

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

27 October 1943

Row reports situation at 10.52 a.m. local time. Landings on all beaches made, casualties light. Perimeter at **Falamai not yet established. No opposition at **Soanotalu** and on **Stirling Island**.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

401 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK – [EXTRACT]

401

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick
[Extract]

27 October 1943

At 2.53 p.m. on 27 October Row reported all perimeters established and situation quiet. Estimated casualties 75 all ranks. Not clear whether all New Zealand. May include some **United States casualties....** ³

³ **Further details have been omitted. A number of later messages giving progress reports on the operation have not been published.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

402 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK

402

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

3 November 1943

Have just completed a tour of the Treasury positions. Most of the enemy are now eliminated, but there have been some desperate assaults on our positions by enemy detachments in endeavours to get food or to capture boats to escape.

The **8th Brigade has done extremely well and the troops are in good heart despite very trying conditions.**

Total New Zealand casualties to date: 30 killed, 6 died of wounds, 108 wounded, 10 slightly wounded remaining with unit.

Do not anticipate many more casualties.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

403 – THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

403

The Deputy Prime Minister to Major-General Barrowclough

10 November 1943

Now that the forces under your command have so quickly and effectively completed the occupation of **Vella Lavella** and **Treasury Islands**, I would like on behalf of the Government and people to extend to you and to your officers and men heartfelt congratulations on the splendid achievements of the 3rd Division. It is a matter of profound satisfaction that the casualties were not unduly heavy, particularly as we realise how severe was the fighting and how gruelling the conditions under which all of you have been living. You have just cause for pride in the valuable contribution the 3rd Division is making towards the expulsion of the Japanese from the South Pacific area.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

404 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER

404

Major-General Barrowclough to the Deputy Prime Minister

12 November 1943

I greatly appreciate your very kind message, which is being published in Divisional Orders and will be a source of pride to all ranks of this force. This Division has waited long for its opportunity and I am indeed proud of the enterprise and fortitude of my Command in its first contact with a very implacable foe. Please convey my thanks to the Prime Minister and my hopes that he will shortly recover from his present indisposition.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

405 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

405

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

14 November 1943

Row reports definitely accounted for 203 Japanese dead and seven prisoners. Still finding odd dead in jungle. He considers only two or three Japanese left alive in Mono. The situation generally is quiet with little or no enemy air activity. ¹

¹ Total New Zealand casualties in the **Treasury Islands** operation were 40 killed and 145 wounded.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

406 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE PRIME
MINISTER – REPORT ON OPERATIONS—3 NZ DIVISION, AUGUST 1943-
DECEMBER 1943

406

Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to the Prime Minister

31 December 1943

REPORT ON OPERATIONS—3 NZ DIVISION, AUGUST 1943-DECEMBER 1943

Sir

I have the honour to submit for your information a report on the operations of my Division during the period August, 1943, to December, 1943. I select this period because it was in August that the Division began its move forward from **New Caledonia** and the month of December marked not only the end of the year but the end of our first campaign.

You will recollect that, as a result of the Dominion's commitments elsewhere, it was necessary to adopt some very radical changes in the composition and organisation of 3 NZ Division. One Brigade—the 15th—had to be disbanded and a similar fate befell the 33rd Heavy Regiment and the 28th Heavy AA Regiment. The troops released from these disbanded units were utilised to fill the somewhat depleted ranks of the remaining formations and to constitute a reserve of reinforcements for the whole Force. In addition we had to find out of the Division some 400 men for the **RNZAF**. It was unfortunate that these very drastic changes had to be effected just on the eve of our moving into an active theatre, but I am happy to report that they were adopted with commendable speed and with the greatest possible co-operation on the part of all

concerned. I wish to take this opportunity of placing on record my great indebtedness to officers and men who so cheerfully relinquished appointments for which they were fully qualified by their military experience and who continued to give the same loyal service in less influential spheres.

Early in August I had received orders to concentrate the Division in **Guadalcanal** in readiness for its active employment in the Solomons Islands. The Division moved in three echelons—the first was commanded by Brigadier Potter and comprised the 14th NZ Infantry Brigade and attached troops. It sailed from **Noumea** on 15 August and landed on **Guadalcanal** on 27 August. The second echelon consisted of miscellaneous Divisional troops and was commanded by Brigadier Goss. It sailed on 24 August and landed in **Guadalcanal** on 3 September. The third echelon was commanded by Brigadier Row, DSO, and consisted chiefly of his Brigade (**8 NZ Infantry Brigade**) and attached troops. Leaving **Noumea** on 2 September it arrived in **Guadalcanal** on 14 September. All three echelons called at **Efate** on the way and spent about a week there in practising amphibious operations. The landings at **Guadalcanal** were made by assault landing craft on open beaches in the same manner as landings are made on a hostile shore and were the culmination of our period of amphibious training. Immodest though it may appear I cannot help recording that in these landings 3 NZ Division established a record for speed and efficiency which exceeded the best performances of any other Division (US Marine Divisions not excluded) in the same operation.

Shortly afterwards the Division was joined by the **Tank Squadron**, 26th Field Company and 24th Field Ambulance. These last mentioned units had not served with the Division in **New Caledonia** and proceeded direct from New Zealand to **Guadalcanal**.

The **14th Brigade** had scarcely landed in **Guadalcanal** when I received word that it was desired to employ it in operations in **Vella Lavella** and that General Harmon wished me to proceed there with such staff as might be required and take over the command of that island,

including command of such **United States** troops as might then or thereafter be stationed there. I was also informed that at a somewhat later stage the **8th Brigade** would be required for an operation in the **Treasury Islands**. I could not accept any of these proposals with any degree of complacency for it meant that my small Division was immediately being split up into three separate groups—one in **Guadalcanal**, one in **Vella Lavella** and one in the **Treasury Islands**. I could see at once the burden this arrangement would place on my administrative machinery and the difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility, of exercising command over so dispersed a force with the staff and signals at my disposal. After very careful consideration, however, I came to the conclusion that the difficulties were not so insuperable as to justify my making any suggestion that the tasks should be entrusted to any other formation. Plans were accordingly made to enable the **14th Brigade** Group to embark on its first operational mission on 16 September 1943.

The tactical situation at that time can be briefly summarised as follows. **United States** troops were in possession of Munda Airfield and the whole of New Georgia Island but they were still in action against Japanese forces holding the two islands lying off the North West corner of **New Georgia**. The Japanese were in possession of Kolumbangara in strength—some estimates went as high as 10,000 men. The Japanese were also in possession of the northern and greater portion of **Vella Lavella** though **United States** troops had effected a landing on the southern narrow tip of that island. The Japs held the **Treasury Islands**, Choiseul Island and **Bougainville** Island.

It is necessary to give a more detailed description of the situation in **Vella Lavella**. Up till August the Japanese had occupied only the North Western portion of the Island and had used it as a barge station in their supply line to **New Georgia**. On 14 August a similar barge station was established at Horanui on the North Eastern coast of the Island. There were no enemy troops south of that position. On 15 August **United States** troops landed unopposed at Biloa on the southern tip of the Island.

These American forces established a perimeter defensive line within which they immediately began the construction of what later came to be known as the **Barakoma airfield. These operations were not hampered by any ground action on the part of the enemy though in the early stages there had been some bombing of the airfield site by enemy aircraft. **United States** troops then moved up the East coast and made their first contact with the enemy on 2 September but only patrol activity ensued. On 11 and 12 September US forces shelled the enemy positions, causing his force to withdraw. On 14 September US infantry found the positions deserted and they therefore occupied the area but lost all touch with the retiring enemy. The only reports we had as to his movements were those supplied by natives who furnished regular and most useful information through the coast watching organisation which had been on the island all through the Japanese occupation of it. About the same time US troops were advancing up the West coast of **Vella Lavella** and had reached Nyanga plantation without making any contact. The Japs were still in the Northern portion of the Island.**

This was the local situation in **Vella Lavella when the 14th NZ Infantry Brigade landed on 18 September accompanied by a skeleton Divisional staff. My instructions were to eliminate all Japanese forces on the Island so that we could proceed with the erection of Radars on the North East and North West coasts and the establishment of a motor torpedo-boat base on the North East coast in the vicinity of Horanui. The early installation of these Radars was of primary importance as they would become the most important air warning devices in the South Pacific area commanding the approaches from the enemy air bases in **New Britain** and **Bougainville**. Plans were accordingly made for the immediate employment of 14 NZ Brigade and its supporting arms in fulfilment of this task.**

Precise information as to the strength of the Japanese Force is not available but from captured documents disclosing the identity of the troops employed it is calculated that they numbered about 600 men. This calculation was confirmed by estimates made by 14 NZ Infantry

Brigade whilst they were in contact with the enemy. It was obvious from the US troops' experience that the enemy was anxious to avoid battle and native scouts reported that he was concentrating all his force in the extreme North and North Western fringe of the Island. It was obvious that an advance up one side of the island would result only in the enemy's steady withdrawal before our troops and a long and perhaps never ending chase. Brigadier Potter therefore decided to move one force up one coast and another up the other coast with the object of forcing the enemy to give battle when he was caught between the pincers of our converging movement. Each force comprised one infantry battalion with a battery of 25-pdr artillery and anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery, the latter being taken primarily to engage enemy barges in the event of his trying to reinforce his forces on the Island. Engineer and other supporting arms also accompanied each force.

This manoeuvre had one disadvantage. The enemy would be in a position to meet and engage each battalion in turn instead of meeting their joint attack. The infantry strength of one battalion was not very different from the infantry strength the enemy could muster. The presence of artillery with each battalion gave us, however, a superior strength in each arm of our pincer movement. The Brigadier very properly decided that he could afford to split his force and that such a measure was indeed essential if he was to force his enemy into battle.

The plan having been made it was speedily put into operation. Owing to the complete absence of roads and tracks and the paramount need for speed in the operation the 'advance to contact' was very largely an amphibious operation. Reconnoitring parties were landed well to the North of the areas occupied by the American troops and as they reported the area free from the enemy the remainder of the troops and their equipment and supplies were ferried up in the small barges and landing craft with which we had now become so familiar.

Patrols moved overland from one bay or cove to the next, and as each in turn was reported clear the balance of the force moved up by barge and landing craft. Enemy patrols were encountered and some

sharp, if minor, actions ensued. It soon became evident that the enemy was concentrating his force in the vicinity of Warambari, Marquana and Timbala Bays on the North West coast of the Island. It also became evident that in this area the Jap was prepared to offer a stubborn and determined resistance. He was hoping to be evacuated by sea and had reached the area to which he expected the evacuating boats to come. He could not afford to be driven out of that area and he was prepared to defend it 'to the death', to use the phrase which often appears in his orders.

The **35th Battalion** with its supporting arms was the first to make contact with the main forces of the enemy. There followed a bitterly contested struggle in which our troops had the disadvantage that as we were the attackers and necessarily on the move, the enemy could always see and open fire on us long before we could see and open fire on them. Of necessity we were always being subject to an ambush. This situation, though it slowed down, did not prevent our advance and we had the advantage of artillery which the enemy did not.

This is not the place to give in detail the progress of the battle. It is sufficient to say that with the closest possible co-operation of both artillery and infantry each enemy strong point and defended locality was located, heavily shelled, and then assaulted by our infantry. Position after position was eliminated and the garrisons were literally destroyed. Meanwhile the **37th Battalion** with its supporting arms had worked its way round the Northern coast of the Island. It had a greater distance to travel but eventually it began against enemy positions in the North an operation similar to that which the **35th Battalion** had been conducting from the South. The complete destruction of the enemy forces seemed inevitable but a convoy of enemy barges managed to elude our naval forces and to evacuate the survivors. It seems likely, however, that many of those who escaped us in Vella were subsequently destroyed by US Naval forces whilst at sea. By 9 October all enemy resistance had ceased and the island was entirely in our hands.

Whilst these operations were in progress in the Northern end of the island we were not altogether free from enemy interference on the South Eastern coast where the troops were engaged in various administrative tasks such as constructing roads and bridges and in unloading many thousands of tons of ammunition and supplies of all descriptions. These operations did not escape the attention of the **Japanese Air Force** and we suffered some casualties from enemy bombings, particularly in attacks on ships which were unloading on the various beaches.

The whole operation cost us 47 killed and 36 wounded. A conservative estimate of enemy casualties was 200 killed. We had no means of estimating the number of enemy wounded though they must have been considerable, and as stated above it is thought that some of the enemy troops who were evacuated were subsequently destroyed at sea. From mid-October onwards the troops in Vella found themselves performing merely a garrison role.

I was now free to devote attention to the pending operation by **8 Brigade** and attached troops, an operation in respect of which I had received some warning before I left **Guadalcanal**. I therefore flew back immediately to **Guadalcanal** to discuss the plans with Brigadier Row and Admirals Wilkinson and Fort.¹ The Treasury Islands operation was timed to begin on 27 October. The tactical situation had changed from what it was when the Vella campaign began. The enemy had been driven from Vella and the islands of the New Georgia Group. He had vacated Kolumbangara. On the other hand his troops in Choiseul Island had been increased by a number of refugees from Vella and Kolumbangara. There was evidence that he had slightly strengthened his garrison on **Treasury Islands** and of course he was in very considerable strength on **Southern Bougainville**.

The chief merit of the **Treasury Islands** operation lay in the fact

¹ Rear-Admiral G. H. Fort, USN.

that if successful it would provide a unique site for another Radar station and another airfield and also a good harbour for PT Boats ¹ and small craft en route for **Empress Augusta Bay**, where a further landing was in contemplation. It was timed to take place on 1 November, five days later, and was to be undertaken by the First Marine Amphibious Corps. The enemy strength on the **Treasury Islands** was not great and no one in **8 Brigade** doubted their ability to force their way ashore in the face of such land opposition as they were likely to meet. The real problems which confronted Brigadier Row were these:

(The administrative problem involved in planning and loading and
a) embarkation of troops, supplies and equipment and their unloading and disembarkation on very limited beaches and with the barest possible information of the hydrographic conditions prevailing there.

(The danger of counter-attack from the very strong garrison
b) stationed in South **Bougainville** and the islands lying off that coast.

The first problem caused me personally no concern at all. I was thoroughly confident of the ability of the Commander **8 Brigade** and his staff to deal with the great mass of detailed work involved in that phase of the operation. Nor was my confidence in any way misplaced as subsequent events will show. The planning of the operation was carried through in a manner that would have done credit to any staff. I was, however, very deeply concerned at the prospect of the enemy capabilities once the fact that we had landed became known to the Japanese Higher Command. Official estimates of the Japanese strength in Southern **Bougainville** and in the adjoining islands of Shortland and Ballale varied from 24,000 to 26,000. **Treasury Islands** were separated from Shortland Island by only 17 miles of sea. There were immediately available to the Japanese sufficient barges to transport in a single night as many as 3000 to 4000 lightly armed troops. Had those troops been landed on **Treasury Islands 8 Brigade** would have had a grim struggle. The only reserves at my disposal were the troops of the **14th Brigade** then in Vella some 75 miles away and the **Tank Squadron** and the 144th Independent Battery almost 350 miles away in **Guadalcanal**. It was true that once the US troops landed at **Empress Augusta Bay** that was likely to draw Japanese attention from the **Treasury Islands**, but that new threat would

not be apparent till at least five days later and much might happen in those five days.

The Treasury landing right under the noses of the strong Japanese forces on **Bougainville** was an audacious move and presented all the perplexities that confront a commander faced with such an operation. But audacity often wins in war and here was an opportunity where

¹ Patrol torpedo-boats.

such tactics could well be employed. The **8th Brigade** went on with their preparations quite undisturbed by any undue fears as to the consequences. We arranged with the US commanders for such air and naval support as could be made available.

The potentialities we envisaged proved to be no more than potentialities. They never materialised. The Japanese reaction to this further invasion of his territory was surprisingly supine. He completely abandoned his garrison to its fate and made no attempt either to reinforce or to evacuate it. His response in the air was equally weak and ineffective. In the events that happened the **8th Brigade** operation proved an easy and an inexpensive affair and was an unqualified success. There was of course some fighting and some of it was of a desperate nature; but in every case the troops exhibited a courage and devotion to duty that cast not the smallest shadow on the bright escutcheon of their country's military history. It is now my duty to give a brief summary of the nature of that fighting.

Shortly prior to the landing Sergeant Cowan, the Brigade Intelligence Sergeant, led two separate patrols on to the islands with the object of gaining information and of establishing contact with friendly natives there. These expeditions were as useful as they were hazardous and reflected the greatest credit on the Sergeant and those who accompanied him. I am glad to report that Sergeant Cowan has since received a well merited DCM for his leadership and gallant conduct.

The landing on 27 October was effected simultaneously on both the major islands of the Treasury Group. The largest island— **Mono Island**— is elliptical in shape, with major and minor axes of 6 and 5 miles respectively. Practically the whole enemy garrison was stationed there. The second largest island— **Stirling Island**—is situated just south of **Mono Island** and separated from it by a strait varying in width from 1 mile to 2 miles. It was not thought to be, and was not in fact, defended except for a small detachment which opened fire with a machine gun for a short period only. The advantage of landing on **Stirling Island** was that it provided good positions for Field and Anti-aircraft artillery and was moreover the site thought most suitable for the construction of an air strip. The main landing on **Mono Island** was effected at **Falamai** in the centre of the southern coast of that island. There was a good sandy beach there though it was very limited in extent. The remainder of the coast line of **Mono Island** consisted of steep coral cliffs some 30 ft high, with the exception of a small beach at Malsi and an infinitely smaller one at Soanatalu.

The beach at **Falamai** had been subjected to a preliminary shelling by naval guns and this fire caused elements of the enemy to withdraw into the jungle. Naval gun fire is never most effective against such a target and on this occasion there was no exception to the rule. The 29th and 36th Battalions met with some opposition from the beach, but this they quickly overran with minor casualties and unloading operations were commenced inside the hastily established perimeter. About an hour later the beach was shelled by enemy mortars and some mountain guns. Several direct hits on the larger landing craft caused casualties and the destruction of some stores and equipment. This fire was speedily ended by the action of 36 Battalion, which eventually captured a 90-mm mortar, two 37-mm dual purpose guns and two mountain guns. By nightfall unloading operations had been completed and the troops were established in defensive positions covering the beach. There were minor patrol clashes during the night.

Meanwhile the 34th Battalion less one company had effected an

unopposed landing on **Stirling Island** and Field and Anti-aircraft artillery and a number of other troops and a great quantity of stores and equipment had been landed there. At the same time a Company of the 34th Battalion was sent by barge to Soanatalu on the northern coast of **Mono Island** with the object of establishing a radar in that vicinity. This Company effected its landing without opposition. At the end of the first day every task that had been allotted to **8 Brigade** for that day was satisfactorily completed.

Subsequent operations in these islands were not less successful. The Jap garrison had shown a tendency to move across country to the northern shore of **Mono Island**. The going was exceedingly difficult, involving densely wooded country intersected by forbidding and precipitate ravines. The enemy was harassed and hurried on his way by a series of aggressive and vigorous patrols which hunted him with a remorseless resolution. We also landed at Malsi and established a position there. These tactics inevitably drove the enemy against the defended locality at Soanatalu, and caught between the hammer and the anvil the enemy showed the same desperate courage as he displayed in similar circumstances in **Vella Lavella**. Shortly after midnight on the night 1/2 November the Japanese made a terrific attack on our small garrison at Soanatalu. For five hours a desperate struggle took place in the black darkness of the jungle. It was essentially a soldiers' battle, each man fighting individually against his individual assailant. The men of the 34th Battalion acquitted themselves as courageously and as skilfully as their comrades of the 29th and 36th and when dawn broke they had beaten off the attack with very severe casualties to the enemy and relatively light casualties in their own ranks. That was the last major encounter in the island—though for weeks afterwards small isolated parties of Japanese were being rounded up and killed and a few were taken prisoner. As a result of these operations the whole Japanese force of some 300 men has been destroyed. With the exception of about half a dozen prisoners they have all been killed. Our casualties amounted to 39 killed and 146 wounded.

The 8th Brigade was accompanied in this venture by a number of American technical and service troops and by a large anti-aircraft artillery detachment. American motor torpedo-boats were also stationed at the islands and were available to assist in the event of any counter-invasion being attempted by the Japanese. An account of their activities is outside the scope of this report; but it is proper to say, and I have great pleasure in saying, that throughout the whole operation the greatest friendship and cordiality existed between the American troops and ourselves. The spirit of willing and complete co-operation was everywhere in evidence.

At the time of writing this report (late December, 1943) both Treasury and Vella have long ceased to be the scene of active operations. During the Christmas and New Year period both garrisons have been able to relax and indulge in a carnival of sporting and aquatic events which is so characteristic of the New Zealand soldier and which is so beneficial to his morale. It is a significant indication of Japanese impotence in this area that **8 Brigade** were able to stage an elaborate aquatic sports meeting only 17 miles distant from Japanese held Shortland Island and only 25 miles distant from his airfields at **Kahili** and Kara.

I do not wish, Mr Prime Minister, to overestimate the importance or the nature of these operations. They were relatively minor actions so far as this Division is concerned, and indeed a proportion of the Divisional troops were not engaged at all. But I know your personal interest in the fortunes of this Force which has for so long held a Cinderella and somewhat inglorious role. I have therefore been persuaded to describe this minor campaign in more detail and at greater length than would have been appropriate had I had other conquests to relate as having taken place during the period under review. I feel confident that your interest in our welfare will preclude any possibility of your being wearied by its length or of your patience being exhausted by some further references which I feel I ought to make.

No account of our activities in the forward area would be complete

without my paying grateful homage to the tremendous courtesy and consideration shown to me and to all of us by the United States Officers with whom our duties have brought us in contact. Without a single exception all our relations with them have been of the friendliest possible nature. On every occasion they have treated us in all respects as if we were one of their own Divisions. I very humbly hope that they have had occasion to find us equally helpful and equally co-operative. It seems invidious to mention any one of the numerous American Officers who have befriended us but I feel compelled to bring to your especial notice the outstanding and very valuable assistance we have always had from Major-General Breene ¹ of the Services of Supply in the **South Pacific Area**. If you thought fit to make representations which might result in this officer receiving some suitable British decoration, I think it would be a very appropriate recognition of his services.

I have already submitted through you certain recommendations for immediate awards which later were approved by His Excellency the Governor General on behalf of His Majesty the King. During his visit to the Division His Excellency was able to present the ribbons of these decorations to some of those to whom they had been awarded. I am forwarding in a separate document the names of certain officers and men whose conduct has been of exceptional merit and whose work I commend to you as entitling them to the distinction of a 'Mention in Dispatches'. I very gratefully record my deep indebtedness to the Brigadiers and other Commanders of all formations and units in the Force, to their Staffs, to my own Staff and the Heads of my various Services, and also to the Brigadier commanding the Base and all concerned in the extremely arduous tasks that have been performed by the various Base units. But especially do I wish to record my great admiration for and my unbounded pride in the work of the regimental officers and the rank and file of my command. It is they who bear the real heat and burden of the day—they who face the greatest hardships and the thousand hidden perils of this jungle warfare. Without them our victory could never have been achieved. They never failed me once. It is indeed an honour to be associated with the men whom you have placed

under my command.

I should like to conclude this, my first, report with a statement regarding the health of the Division. After continuous service of over a year in the tropics, nearly four months of which have been spent in combat areas, the health of the troops remains astonishingly good. The sickness rate is far below that which the previous experience of other formations had led us to expect. This very satisfactory state of affairs I attribute in no small measure to the strenuous training undertaken by all ranks in **New Caledonia** and the high standard of fitness attained there. I know of no better training ground for a Division contemplating tropical warfare. The malarial rate has been almost negligible. This is due to a number of factors; the fact that the malarial season is not yet at its height, the shortness of the period of actual contact with the enemy, the very high standard of malarial discipline attained by the Force and, finally, the very strenuous and conscientious work performed by the Malarial Control unit and the malarial control squads in each regiment, battalion and similar organisation. We cannot possibly expect a lengthy continuance of this almost complete

¹ Maj-Gen R. G. Breene, **US Army**; Commander, Services of Supply, **US Army Forces in South Pacific Area**.

immunity from malarious infection but the results so far achieved have effected an appreciable saving in man-power and will enable the Division to remain at effective strength for a much longer period than we had been led to anticipate. Finally I am tremendously relieved to be able to report that, up to date, the numbers of those who have been killed in action is much less than we had feared. Nevertheless we have lost some gallant comrades. Their graves are reverently cared for by those of us who remain. If we have deserved any praise or commendation for the results we have achieved we gladly yield it all to those who have so gallantly given their lives for the great cause in which we serve.

(*Sgd*) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

**Major-General,
GOC 3 NZ DIVISION**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

407 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK

407

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

1 February 1944

**My secret and personal letter to you of 6 January, paragraph 3. ¹
Commando raid successfully carried out. Re-embarked midnight 31
January-1 February and now on way home. Casualties one New Zealand
officer killed and four USA Navy personnel. Further reports later. Utmost
secrecy till after main landing on 15 February.**

¹ Not published. In this letter General Barrowclough discussed plans for a 24-hour reconnaissance in force of the Green Islands Group by 30 Battalion. The object of the operation, under the guise of a commando raid, was to find out whether the island was suitable for the construction of an airfield and to make hydrographic surveys as a preliminary to the selection of landing beaches, motor torpedo-boat base, etc.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

408 – HEADQUARTERS 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION TO LIEUTENANT-
GENERAL PUTTICK

408

*Headquarters 3rd New Zealand Division to Lieutenant-General
Puttick*

15 February 1944

The 3rd New Zealand Division less 8th Brigade Group successfully landed on Green Island this morning. Opposition practically negligible. Air attacks on convoys caused no damage or casualties. Two possible enemy planes shot down. No air attacks yet on landing. Natives report 70 Japanese in the south end of the island and two barges at Sirot Island. New Zealand troops are once again in the van in the South Pacific area.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

409 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

409

The Prime Minister to Major-General Barrowclough

16 February 1944

Warmest congratulations to you and your officers and men on the **Green Island** operation. I would be very glad to have a brief despatch suitable for press release as suggested in your letter of 8 February. ¹

¹ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

410 – HEADQUARTERS 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION TO LIEUTENANT-
GENERAL PUTTICK

410

*Headquarters 3rd New Zealand Division to Lieutenant-General
Puttick*

16 February 1944

The 3rd New Zealand Division is fully established ashore and in process of clearing up enemy elements on the island. Enemy aircraft were over three times during the night and dropped bombs but no damage or casualties resulted. The total New Zealand casualties since landing are one killed, three wounded. ²

² A number of later operational messages have been omitted.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

411 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE PRIME MINISTER

411

Major-General Barrowclough to the Prime Minister

29 February 1944

The seizure and occupation of the Green Islands Group is now complete and all enemy ground opposition has been eliminated with the exception of a few fugitive Japanese still hiding in the denser parts of the jungle. The forces involved comprised the greater part of 3rd New Zealand Division with, under command, a large number of **United States** troops, the latter consisting of combat units as well as administration, naval and construction organisations.

The initial landing was made at dawn on 15 February—there was a very great variety of ships and landing craft, escorted by the United States Navy and **United States** and New Zealand air squadrons. Air attacks on the convoy on the night 14–15 February resulted in no damage or casualties but cost the Japanese six planes which fell to our fighters and anti-aircraft guns. The first flight ashore met no opposition, but the subsequent flight received a considerable volume of fire from an enemy post 1500 yards south of the entrance to the lagoon. This post was quickly eliminated and our troops drove the enemy well clear of the landing areas. At 3 p.m. we shelled two barges and enemy positions on Barahun Island, causing casualties. There were no further ground contacts that day. On the night of 15–16 February an attack by ten to fifteen enemy aircraft resulted in no damage. There were no ground contacts on the 16th but our troops advancing saw signs of hastily evacuated positions. Some equipment was captured. On the night of 16–17 February further enemy air attacks resulted only in two Japanese aircraft being shot down by our night fighters.

On 17 February there was only occasional opposition to our advance on **Green Island**, but on Sirot Island an enemy detachment when cornered put up a desperate fight, twenty-one Japanese being killed. On 18 February our artillery engaged the enemy in the Mission area. On the 19th seven Japanese were killed and much booty captured, including automatics, anti-tank guns, radio sets, etc. On 20 February a strong enemy force was encountered and engaged in a fierce action in which tanks effectively co-operated with infantry. The result was sixty Japanese killed. This was the first occasion on which New Zealand tanks were in action in the jungle, and they did well.

Of three Japanese who escaped from this action by canoe, two were later killed and one taken prisoner. Between 21 and 23 February strong patrols on Pinipel Island located fourteen Japanese and killed them all. Subsequent operations involved active patrols which gradually eliminated all Japanese met. One other prisoner was taken. Our casualties throughout were relatively light.

Meanwhile the development of the island as a base for further operations proceeded with incredible speed, made possible only by the enormous variety and quantity of the equipment furnished by the **United States Forces**. I desire to pay tribute to the spirit of co-operation and harmony which existed throughout the operation between the staffs and troops of the **United States** and New Zealand forces. The amphibious operation was directed by Rear-Admiral Wilkinson, USN, under whom it was a privilege and a pleasure to serve. In all relations with him and with his staff we had the utmost help and consideration.

The success of the operation is not to be gauged by the extent of the fighting and the casualties, but by the smoothness with which large numbers of troops and great quantities of material were got ashore on open beaches into roadless jungle and put into immediate operation. From this standpoint the work of the planning staffs was excellent and the troops were splendid in carrying the plans into effect. ¹

¹ Total New Zealand casualties were 10 killed and 21 wounded.

See also *Withdrawal of 2nd NZEF IP, No. 429*, for a fuller report on the **Green Islands** operation.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

412 — MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK

412

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

7 March 1944

I have just been informed that the 3rd New Zealand Division has been designated as Area Reserve for the **Kavieng operation. There is an indication, still somewhat vague, that the **8th Brigade** may be required as part of the landing force at **Kavieng**.**

Target date for **Kavieng remains 1 April.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

413 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PUTTICK

413

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

11 March 1944

My telegram of 7 March. I am now advised that the **8th Brigade** will not be required as part of the landing force for FOREARM. ¹

Your telegram of 10 March is acknowledged. ² See my telegram to the Prime Minister. ³

¹ Operational code-name for the capture of **Kavieng** airfield on **New Ireland**.

² See *Withdrawal of 2nd NZEF IP, No. 417*. This telegram was from the Prime Minister, not General Puttick, although it was sent through the Army Department.

³ No. 419.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

WITHDRAWAL OF 2ND NZEF IP

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

414 – THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

414

The Deputy Prime Minister to Admiral Halsey

4 December 1943

From a survey of the manpower situation ¹ undertaken by **War Cabinet** it is apparent that New Zealand is faced with a most serious crisis, particularly in regard to the production of foodstuffs. Accordingly every effort is being made to effect the temporary release of any further men from the Armed Services, and it is most earnestly desired that men who are to be relieved of garrison duties in the **Pacific** should be brought back to New Zealand, if possible before the end of the year. Indeed, unless these men in the **Pacific** can be made available for employment in the freezing works before the peak of the season in January, it will not be possible to fulfil the commitments in respect of meat, either for the **United States Forces** in the **Pacific** or for the urgent needs of the **United Kingdom**.

We are satisfied that the situation calls for a number of urgent measures if a serious breakdown is to be avoided, with subsequent wastage of valuable foodstuffs owing to the fact that processing will not be possible at the right season. It is understood that you are willing to make shipping available to bring the **Pacific** garrison troops on **Tonga** and **Fiji** back, and it would be much appreciated if this could be arranged as a matter of urgency before the end of the year.

¹ See also Vol. II, *Maintenance of 2nd New Zealand Division; the Replacement Scheme*.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

415 – THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO ADMIRAL HALSEY

415

The Deputy Prime Minister to Admiral Halsey

12 December 1943

Your prompt attention to the request contained in my message dated 4 December is warmly appreciated and we are most relieved to learn from advice received from COMGENSOPAC that firm transport arrangements are in hand.

The meat-killing and cool storage situation in New Zealand is extremely critical and every day is of value in ensuring the maximum meat for freezing. The arrival of the men from **Tonga** and **Fiji**, most of whom will be directed to freezing work, is essential if a serious reduction in the quantity of valuable foodstuffs is to be avoided.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

416 – THE HON. W. NASH (NOUMEA) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

416

The Hon. W. Nash (Noumea) to the Prime Minister

31 December 1943

Arrived yesterday but Halsey is away. Have seen Admirals Shafroth,¹ Wilkinson, Carney and a representative of the planning staff. Wilkinson strongly represented his impression from his conference in New Zealand that New Zealand would maintain two **Pacific** brigades, so sending regular reinforcements in future. I made it quite clear that our manpower position makes it impossible to supply further troops for reinforcements or replacements and that the **New Zealand Government** understood that the two thousand now in the **Pacific** should suffice to cover requirements until March 1944. Wilkinson anticipates the use of one brigade in the operation planned but not yet finally approved,² and considers the present reserve of two thousand will cover replacements for that operation; also the proposals will be discussed with Barrowclough, with whom you will confer before final action is determined. I am planning to leave today for **Suva** and to meet General Price³ at a place to be arranged by Shafroth.

¹ Rear-Admiral J. F. Shafroth, USN; Deputy Commander, **South Pacific Area**, 1943–44.

² The capture of the Green Islands Group in February 1944.

³ Maj-Gen C. F. B. Price, US Marine Corps; Commanding General, **Samoan Defence Force**, 1942–44.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

417 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO ADMIRAL HALSEY⁴

417

*The Prime Minister to Admiral Halsey*⁴

10 March 1944

As you will have been advised from **Washington**, the Combined Chiefs of Staff have agreed that New Zealand's manpower position must be re-examined in relation to the urgent needs of food production for the **United Kingdom** and Allied forces in the **Pacific** and **Europe**, as well as the maintenance of various forces overseas.⁵ The Chiefs of Staff have now been advised as follows:

‘The essential minimum requirement of additional manpower for farms, dairy factories and freezing works is 10,650, made up as follows:

Dairying and Pig Production	7000
Meat and Wool	1000
Mixed Cropping and Stock	500
Vegetables and Fruit	300
Ancillary Occupations	
Butter and Cheese Factories	250
Freezing Works	1500
Food Processing Plants	100
	10,650

It will, however, not be possible to utilise these men unless accommodation is also provided, and it is estimated that the minimum number required for rural housing and ancillary occupations is 1950. The total required for food production is, therefore, 12,600.

‘It is estimated that 7000 of these men can be absorbed at once. In any event, unless that number is available as from 1 July, the commencement of the season, it will not be possible for essential

farming operations to commence. The remainder of the men could be absorbed at the rate of 2000 a month thereafter.

‘In addition to those required for agricultural production, other essential occupations are seriously handicapped by the lack of men, and unless the labour force in certain of these industries is augmented the efforts to increase farm production will be largely nullified. For instance, unless more coal can be produced it will not be possible to move fertilisers or the actual produce, and unless staff are returned to the railways it will not be possible to provide the additional rolling stock required. Similarly, unless certain essential hydro-electric developments in the **North Island** are pushed ahead, industrial activity cannot be sustained and farm machinery cannot operate owing to lack of electric power. Moreover, apart from the minimum, and possibly temporary, rural housing referred to above, certain other housing projects must be provided to meet the demands of high priority industries. The numbers of men required for the purposes set out in this paragraph are as follows:

Sawmilling	800
Coal mines	300
Hydro-electric development	800
Railways	1000
Housing	2000
	4900

‘The total number of men required from the armed forces over and above those now being directed from less essential to essential industries is therefore 17,500.

‘The New Zealand Government agree that the time of withdrawal of any troops in the forward areas must be dependent on strategic considerations. They would, however, point out that as the major portion of the 3rd Division have been serving under tropical conditions for nearly three years, and most of the men have been in forward areas since September 1943, this force is now due for withdrawal and rest, and that if men of the 3rd Division are to be used for food production, then, as stated above, 7000 are definitely required to commence work as from

July.'

The New Zealand Government have also advised the Combined Chiefs of Staff that they are anxious to discuss the whole matter with you at the earliest possible date, and it would be appreciated if you or your representative could find it possible to visit New Zealand for the purpose of examining these matters with the Government, or if that is not practicable at the present moment the Ministers concerned could fly to your headquarters.

I would be most grateful for an early reply.

⁴ Repeated to General Barrowclough through the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff representative at South Pacific Force headquarters (Colonel Salmon).

⁵ During January and February Mr Nash had discussions in **Washington** and **London** with President Roosevelt and Mr Churchill. His reports on these negotiations are published in Vol. II, *Maintenance of 2nd New Zealand Division; the Replacement Scheme* (**Nos. 359, 362, 366– 8, 370, 372– 5**). These messages should be read in conjunction with this section.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

418 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

418

The Prime Minister to Major-General Barrowclough

10 March 1944

1. With reference to my telegram to Admiral Halsey, repeated to you through Colonel Salmon, the Government have found it necessary to raise with the highest **United Kingdom** and **United States** authorities the question of the future employment of the New Zealand Forces in relation to manpower, both as regards reinforcements for overseas and the urgent needs of food production. Over the past few weeks we have received a number of urgent requests from the **United Kingdom** Government to increase food production. The Minister of Food advised us that the meat and dairy produce position was becoming worse as each day passes, and New Zealand's production was of vital importance to the people of the **United Kingdom** and to the Armed Forces. He states if this production declines there is no hope of making good the prospective deficiencies from any other source and it will mean a curtailment for civilian and service rations alike.

2. Both the **United Kingdom** and **United States** Chiefs of Staff have examined the case put forward through Mr Nash, and the balance of opinion is in favour of retention of the **Mediterranean** forces. The relevant paragraph in the **United Kingdom** Chiefs of Staff memorandum is repeated for your information:

‘Turning to the force of two brigade groups which has been taking part in operations in the Solomon Islands, apart from the fact that operations in this theatre are of secondary importance compared with those in which the New Zealand Division in **Italy** is engaged, it appears to us that, with the successful conclusion of the Solomon Islands

campaign, the immediate need for the maintenance of this force may have diminished. The Pacific war is one in which the availability of land forces is not likely to be a governing factor. Moreover, the transference to New Zealand of these two brigade groups would present less of a shipping problem than any large-scale withdrawal from the **Mediterranean** and could be carried out in the time available. Our conclusion therefore is that the immediate need for manpower for the production of meat and dairy produce should be met by the temporary withdrawal of the two New Zealand brigade groups engaged in the Solomon Islands. This would enable New Zealand to tide over the period when labour demands are at their highest, namely from August to December. We may reasonably hope that developments in the European theatre will be such as to allow of the later withdrawal of part or all of the New Zealand Division in time enough to constitute a complete division for further operations in the **Pacific** in 1945. We realise the importance which the **New Zealand Government** attaches to New Zealand forces playing their full part in the **Pacific** war. We suggest, however, that there will be ample scope for the employment there of a New Zealand Division in 1945, and that in the meanwhile New Zealand can be well represented in that theatre by her Navy and **Air Force**.'

3. The text of the United States Chiefs of Staff's comments are as follows:

'Reference OZ 995. ¹ We have studied CCS 499 ² and concur in the recommendations contained therein, subject to the following:

(The New Zealand Government should be requested to furnish the
a) Combined Chiefs of Staff with definite figures on the number of men required to be withdrawn from the armed forces for the purposes indicated.

(Such withdrawals should be made from the New Zealand Army
b) forces in the South-West Pacific considered as a whole rather than limiting consideration solely to the 3rd New Zealand Division. The New Zealand Government and the Commander **South Pacific Area** and South Pacific Forces should confer and jointly determine the units from which these withdrawals will be made.

¹ The British Chiefs of Staff's memorandum of 23 February.

² See Vol. II, No. 375. CCS 499 was a memorandum dated 26 Feb 1944 from the British Chiefs of Staff to the British representatives on the Combined Chiefs of Staff. It contained a summary of the British Chiefs of Staff's recommendations.

(The withdrawals should not be made prior to the completion of c) FOREARM and MERCANTILE ¹ and the consolidation of those positions.'

4. The whole question is being discussed by Parliament in secret session and with farmers' organisations, who are being asked to institute a new production programme based on the release of men from the Armed Forces referred to in my message to Admiral Halsey. I have learned from General Puttick of COMSOPAC's plans for the future employment of the 3rd Division, but before consenting to such use we must know that the actions contemplated will not interfere with the need for having the proportion of the men most urgently required back in New Zealand for the beginning of the production year next July. I would be grateful for your immediate comments on these points.

¹ These were the code-names for operations against **Kavieng** airfield on **New Ireland** and against Manus (Admiralty) Island respectively.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

419 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE PRIME MINISTER

419

Major-General Barrowclough to the Prime Minister

11 March 1944

I have received your most secret and personal telegram of 10 March and also General Puttick's similar message [No. 417]. ²

All here will deeply regret the decision on the temporary withdrawal of the 3rd New Zealand Division but all will understand that this development was inevitable. The disappointment is largely relieved by the indications you have given of the possible resurrection of a new and complete 3rd New Zealand Division in 1945, when we can complete the unfinished job. As requested, I make the following comments:

Firstly, the overriding requirements of 7000 men ready for work early in July will, I consider, make it impossible for us to fulfil the role of area reserve for FOREARM, and Halsey should be so advised at the earliest possible [date] to enable him to make other plans. An important factor will be the time required in a non-malarious area before disbanding the troops in New Zealand. The omission of this precaution is likely to result in a considerable incidence of malaria after the troops have been added to industry.

Secondly, I think, however, a scheme could be devised whereby we could fulfil until 30 April our present not unimportant roles in developing and holding operational bases in the Treasury and Green Islands and still supply 7000 men to begin work on approximately 1 July. This should give time for some degree of consolidation of the MERCANTILE and FOREARM positions. Possibly 2000 could be released almost immediately, but I would require advice regarding relevance of length of service and marital status as affecting the men to be released, as well as

occupational status.

The scheme is dependent on the availability of shipping, which probably is *not* an insuperable difficulty, and also on the question whether Halsey would desire that we continue in that capacity. Would you wish me to attend the proposed conference with Halsey? If yes, request advise place and time of rendezvous and sufficient warning to enable me to obtain permission to leave temporarily my present command.

² This message was sent by Mr Fraser, not General Puttick.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

420 – COLONEL SALMON TO THE PRIME MINISTER

420

Colonel Salmon to the Prime Minister

11 March 1944

Reference your telegram of 10 March [**No. 417**]. COMSOPAC has received preliminary advices but is awaiting papers mailed on 6 March, due here within one week. In the meantime General Harmon is preparing tentative plans to meet your requirements and will be asking General Barrowclough at some near date to come here to discuss them. Admiral Halsey is cognisant of the New Zealand situation, and as he may be absent it is felt there is no necessity for a Minister to come here, but the Admiral's representative may proceed to New Zealand. This message has been repeated to General Barrowclough for his information.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

421 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

421

The Prime Minister to Major-General Barrowclough

13 March 1944

Your message of 11 March [**No. 419**].

Thank you for your most helpful comments. We had hoped that you would be able to attend the conference with Halsey or his representative and would be glad if you could arrange accordingly. We will arrange for Salmon to advise you regarding date and place, which will probably be in Wellington.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

422 – MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
PUTTICK

422

Major-General Barrowclough to Lieutenant-General Puttick

17 March 1944

Your telegram of 13 March. ¹

Harmon saw me today. He indicated that Halsey saw no objection to the withdrawal of men from my Division, even though it precluded us from fulfilling the reserve role. It was agreed that the method of return was merely a question of arranging shipping. Harmon thought I should return to New Zealand for consultation and then submit a plan to him for the Commander-in-Chief for the necessary personnel. Harmon is to signal me shortly if Halsey approves of my temporary absence from **Green Island**. This is merely to report our interview. I do not purport to act as Halsey's spokesman. He will doubtless communicate with you direct.

¹ No. 421 was sent through the Army Department.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

423 – COLONEL SALMON TO THE PRIME MINISTER

423

Colonel Salmon to the Prime Minister

20 March 1944

Reference your G. 1605 of 20 March. ² The Chiefs of Staff's papers arrived yesterday. COMGENSOPAC is extremely reluctant to lose the New Zealanders with their invaluable Pacific amphibian and jungle experience, and he is endeavouring to formulate plans to preserve continuity yet fulfilling your immediate manpower requirements. These will be tentative plans only and will be presented next weekend to Admiral Halsey on his and General Harmon's return here from operations. I understand General Barrowclough is likely to come with General Harmon. I hope to telegraph you tomorrow afternoon giving an outline of these tentative plans for you to examine. ³ I will also repeat the plans to General Barrowclough.

² Not published. Requested information regarding the conversations with Admiral Halsey's representative referred to in No. 420.

³ These proposals are not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

424 – REPORT FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN SOUTH PACIFIC AREA – WITHDRAWAL OF PERSONNEL FROM 3RD NZ DIVISION FOR PURPOSES OF INDUSTRY

424

Report from Major-General Barrowclough to Headquarters, United States Army Forces in South Pacific Area

29 March 1944

WITHDRAWAL OF PERSONNEL FROM 3RD NZ DIVISION FOR PURPOSES OF INDUSTRY

1. I write to report the result of my visit to New Zealand and my interview with **War Cabinet** in Wellington. ⁴
2. After my conference with Admiral Newton ¹ and General Barnett ² on the 23rd instant I prepared a memorandum for submission to the **War Cabinet**. I enclose a copy of it herewith. ³ This memorandum was designed to bring to the notice of **War Cabinet** the fact that if my Force were reduced below 6000 men it would be impracticable to keep it in existence as a skeleton upon which to build a reconstituted Pacific Division. I recognised that if men were to be returned to industry in time for the forthcoming seasonal occupations they must, in the first instance, come from my Division. I thought, however, that in the near future a decision could, and should, be made on the broad question as to whether all the requirements of industry were to be found from my Division or whether some of them would not be found from the Middle East Division. I could, I thought, accept a reduction in my present strength of between 17,000 and 18,000 to around 6000 without destroying the nucleus of the Division. That meant that I could expect the return to New Zealand of between 11,000 and 12,000 men. These

may not all be absorbed into industry in New Zealand until about October, on which date it seemed likely that the final decision would have been made regarding our ultimate fate and if we were to continue in existence New Zealand would probably rely on withdrawals from the **Middle East** for all future requirements.

3. The War Cabinet accepted this memorandum in its entirety and instructed me to negotiate with the American Commander of the South Pacific with a view to implementing it in such a way as to cause the least inconvenience to Admiral Halsey's plans. I am now conducting a survey of the industrial classes in this Division and hope, within about a week's time, to be able to submit lists showing the number of men to be returned to New Zealand, the stations from which they would be withdrawn and the approximate dates when their return would be the most acceptable to New Zealand. It is realised that it may not be practicable to provide the shipping exactly on the desired dates but I propose to send a responsible staff officer to **Noumea** to place our desires before you and to finalise the details of shipping movements in accordance with the decisions which you may make thereon.

4. I understand it to be acceptable to you that we should reduce our strength in **Green Island** and in **Treasury Islands** in order to provide manpower for New Zealand industries and leave our reduced units in those islands until such time as they would normally be relieved. By June of this year we shall have completed nine months in the Forward Area and possibly about that time you may think it desirable to move all our forward elements back to **New Caledonia** for rehabilitation and re-organisation.

(*Sgd*) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

Major-General,

GOC 3 NZ DIVISION

⁴ General Barrowclough had discussions with **War Cabinet** on 25

March and on the 26th attended a meeting of the full Government Cabinet.

¹ Vice-Admiral J. H. Newton, USN; Deputy Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Area, 1943–44; commanded South Pacific Area, 1944–45; Inspector-General, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Area, 1945.

² Maj-General A. J. Barnett, US Army; Chief of Staff at Headquarters US Army Forces in South Pacific Area, 1943–44.

³ Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

425 – WAR CABINET MINUTE

425

War Cabinet Minute

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

MANPOWER

War Cabinet are of the opinion that it is necessary in order to provide the quantities of foodstuffs required for the **United Kingdom** and the Armed Forces of the **United Nations**, and as well to meet the requirements of urgent and essential services in New Zealand, to withdraw within a measurable period a total of up to 17,500 men from the New Zealand Armed Forces for return to industry.

It is recommended:

- (That in accordance with approval expressed by the Combined Chiefs a) of Staff, and in view of local tactical considerations, subject to the agreement of the Commander, **South Pacific Area** as to time, the 3rd New Zealand Division be withdrawn from participation in active operations in the South Pacific area.
- (That arrangements be made in the meantime for the return of 12,000 b) men to New Zealand from the 3rd Division for direction to and employment in essential industry as follows:

Farming	7000
Butter and cheese factories	300
Freezing works	1000
Building and constructional work	1800
Sawmilling	800
Coalmining	300
Railways	800
- (That the men be returned to New Zealand in batches commencing at c) the earliest possible date and extending over the period up to October

1944.

- (That in order to facilitate the selection of men for return to New Zealand a survey be made of the men in the Division, particulars to be obtained in respect of each man to include full details of past employment history, and whether prepared to volunteer for work in any one or more of the industries specified in (b) above.
- (That details regarding the above survey and the return of men to New Zealand be mutually arranged between the Army Department and the **National Service Department** and be generally in accordance with the plan set out in Appendix 'A' and Appendix 'B' of the paper entitled 'Man-power Policy' dated 30 March 1944. ¹
- (That men who are to be returned to New Zealand will be informed in writing by the **National Service Department** of their obligation for industrial service. Those who are Grade I, II or III be granted 28 days' leave on pay and then released from the Army on indefinite leave without pay. On release they shall receive a mufti allowance determined according to the usual procedure.
- (That men who are found unsuitable for work in industries stated in paragraph (b), or who refuse to undertake such work on return to New Zealand, be re-mobilized.
- (That a nucleus Divisional organization be retained to enable a reorganized Division to be formed for operations in the **Pacific** in 1945, following the return from **Europe** of the 2nd New Zealand Division, should this be decided.
- (That the nucleus divisional organization will be responsible for:
 - i) (Training of men in jungle and islands warfare to complete the formation of a reorganized Division.
 - (Maintenance of the base organization in **New Caledonia**.
 - b) (Care and maintenance of equipment and installations throughout the area.
 - c) (That in the meantime units will operate in gradually reducing strengths and will remain at present stations until so far reduced that it is undesirable to retain them there any longer or they are relieved for some other reason.
 - (That as units are brought down to cadre basis they should be withdrawn to **New Caledonia**, always retaining as far as possible the framework of the Division so as to be capable of reconstruction later.
 - (That men who are retained as part of the nucleus divisional organization will be given a period of 28 days' leave in New Zealand with full pay—time when leave will be given will be decided in the

discretion of the General Officer Commanding.

In War Cabinet, 4 April 1944. Approved.

¹ **Not published.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

[SECTION]

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

MANPOWER

MANPOWER

War Cabinet are of the opinion that it is necessary in order to provide the quantities of foodstuffs required for the **United Kingdom** and the Armed Forces of the **United Nations**, and as well to meet the requirements of urgent and essential services in New Zealand, to withdraw within a measurable period a total of up to 17,500 men from the New Zealand Armed Forces for return to industry.

It is recommended:

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a) of Staff, and in view of local tactical considerations, subject to the agreement of the Commander, **South Pacific Area** as to time, the 3rd New Zealand Division be withdrawn from participation in active operations in the South Pacific area.
- (That arrangements be made in the meantime for the return of 12,000
b) men to New Zealand from the 3rd Division for direction to and employment in essential industry as follows:

Farming	7000
Butter and cheese factories	300
Freezing works	1000
Building and constructional work	1800
Sawmilling	800
Coalmining	300
Railways	800
- (That the men be returned to New Zealand in batches commencing at
c) the earliest possible date and extending over the period up to October 1944.
- (That in order to facilitate the selection of men for return to New
d) Zealand a survey be made of the men in the Division, particulars to be obtained in respect of each man to include full details of past employment history, and whether prepared to volunteer for work in

any one or more of the industries specified in (b) above.

(That details regarding the above survey and the return of men to New Zealand be mutually arranged between the Army Department and the **National Service Department** and be generally in accordance with the plan set out in Appendix 'A' and Appendix 'B' of the paper entitled 'Man-power Policy' dated 30 March 1944. ¹

(That men who are to be returned to New Zealand will be informed in writing by the **National Service Department** of their obligation for industrial service. Those who are Grade I, II or III be granted 28 days' leave on pay and then released from the Army on indefinite leave without pay. On release they shall receive a mufti allowance determined according to the usual procedure.

(That men who are found unsuitable for work in industries stated in g) paragraph (b), or who refuse to undertake such work on return to New Zealand, be re-mobilized.

(That a nucleus Divisional organization be retained to enable a h) reorganized Division to be formed for operations in the **Pacific** in 1945, following the return from **Europe** of the 2nd New Zealand Division, should this be decided.

(That the nucleus divisional organization will be responsible for:

i) (Training of men in jungle and islands warfare to complete the a) formation of a reorganized Division.

(Maintenance of the base organization in **New Caledonia**.

b)

(Care and maintenance of equipment and installations

c) throughout the area.

(That in the meantime units will operate in gradually reducing j) strengths and will remain at present stations until so far reduced that it is undesirable to retain them there any longer or they are relieved for some other reason.

(That as units are brought down to cadre basis they should be k) withdrawn to **New Caledonia**, always retaining as far as possible the framework of the Division so as to be capable of reconstruction later.

(That men who are retained as part of the nucleus divisional l) organization will be given a period of 28 days' leave in New Zealand with full pay—time when leave will be given will be decided in the discretion of the General Officer Commanding.

In War Cabinet, 4 April 1944. Approved.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

426 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER¹

426

*Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to the acting Prime
Minister*¹

30 June 1944²

Sir

,

I have the honour to write to you regarding a recent development which may have an important bearing on the question of leave for members of this Force, and on the question of the manner in which drafts returning to industry should be handled.

²Correspondence between General Barrowclough and Army Headquarters and between the General and the Prime Minister (or acting Prime Minister) in the period April – June 1944 was largely concerned with details of the release and return of men of 2nd NZEF IP for employment in New Zealand. These letters have not been reproduced in this volume.

A few days ago I received advice through Army Headquarters that **War Cabinet** had approved of the general principle that members of this Force might be granted leave in New Zealand, as and when shipping became available. I also received instructions to make enquiries as to whether the necessary shipping for these leave men could be provided by the American authorities, and so obviate the necessity for providing a leave ship such as the *Wahine*. I therefore came down to **Noumea** yesterday and this morning I called on Admiral Newton, with the object of obtaining his agreement that our tactical role was over for the time being, and that he would therefore have no objection to our sending men

on leave. At the same time I asked whether he could arrange the necessary shipping to transport the leave men to New Zealand, and back again on the termination of their leave. Admiral Newton, as you know, has succeeded Admiral Halsey as Commander South Pacific. ³

The Admiral told me that he was quite agreeable that leave should now be taken, provided of course that I had the approval of the **New Zealand Government**. He said also that we could have the use of American shipping, but pointed out that accommodation could be allotted to us only when it was not required elsewhere on more important tasks. From such further enquiries as I have been able to make, I anticipate no great difficulty in getting the men back to New Zealand as rapidly as they can be handled there. Indeed we shall have to be careful that we do not send them back in such numbers as would cause embarrassment to the railway and ferry services in New Zealand. The provision of shipping to bring the men back to **New Caledonia** at the conclusion of their leave was not so definite. The Admiral said he could bring them back, but he was by no means certain when. The men might have to be held for some time in camps in New Zealand pending the availability of shipping. This is a situation which is anything but desirable, but it may be inevitable.

¹ **Hon. D. G. Sullivan**. At this date Mr Fraser was on his way back to New Zealand after attending a conference of Dominion Prime Ministers in **London**.

³ This change in command was announced on 15 June.

It was whilst we were discussing this aspect of the matter that the Admiral told me that he was preparing a recommendation that the whole Force (or rather the remnants of it) should be maintained in New Zealand rather than in **New Caledonia**. He explained that he had recently received advice that he would have to hold in **New Caledonia** considerably larger forces of American troops than had hitherto been

planned. The limited port facilities in this country and the still more limited road facilities create a really major logistic problem in maintaining and supplying these additional troops. The Admiral thought it uneconomical and perhaps quite impracticable to maintain in **New Caledonia a Force which has no immediate fighting role, and as to which there is at present no certainty as to whether it will or will not be reconstituted and built up to strength. He was therefore of opinion that the whole Force, with all its equipment, should be shipped back to New Zealand and maintained there until such time as it should again be ready for active employment.**

Admiral Newton added that he did not wish it to be thought that they wanted to get rid of the 3rd New Zealand Division. He said he was sure that if it were reconstituted Admirals Halsey and Nimitz would be delighted to have us back again. He also pointed out that he could not estimate at present when shipping would be available to transport our ammunition and equipment.

This proposal is of course at variance with **War Cabinet's present policy that in the meantime the Division should remain in **New Caledonia** in skeleton form, until a final decision should be made as to its future. I therefore thought it advisable to apprise you at once of what was in the Admiral's mind. I asked him if I might pass on what he had said, and he requested me to do so, but pointed out that the matter was still only in the planning stage and that the **New Zealand Government** would be approached officially on the subject in due course. I gathered that Admiral Newton would have to consult his immediate superiors before putting any formal proposals before you.**

The Admiral said that it might be preferable if the proposal for the recall of the Force came from New Zealand. I did not gather that this was a fully considered observation, and I made no response to it, as I had no means of knowing your views upon the subject, and indeed I thought you would not wish to act upon such a vague suggestion, at all events until future policy had been decided in the light of the Prime Minister's conversations in England.

The fact that the temporary recall of this Force is a possibility will no doubt have important repercussions. It is obvious that over here I shall have to keep down to a minimum any camp installations that cannot readily be moved. In New Zealand it may be necessary to maintain camps which otherwise might have been pulled down. If a Division has to be concentrated and trained in New Zealand in preparation for its future employment in the **Pacific** war, extensive camp facilities would have to be maintained somewhere in New Zealand. I would respectfully draw your attention to the paramount importance of such a Division being concentrated in one area, and not being dispersed over two or three military districts.

The implications for New Zealand of Admiral Newton's proposals will be more apparent to you than they can be to me. I am sending over to **Wellington** my AA & QMG (Colonel Bennett). ¹ He is going primarily to discuss with Army Headquarters the question of the leave drafts, and particularly the numbers that can be accommodated at one time in New Zealand. Colonel Bennett was present during my discussions with Admiral Newton, and is more fully in touch with this position than any other member of my staff. This letter is being entrusted to his care for delivery to you, and should you desire to obtain any further information as to Admiral Newton's remarks, he will be available to you. Colonel Bennett is also particularly familiar with our administrative problems here.

Respectfully

(*Sgd*) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

Major-General,

GOC 2 NZEF IN THE PACIFIC

¹ Col P. L. Bennett, DSO, MC, ED; AA & QMG, 3 NZ Div, 1943-44.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

427 – LETTER FROM THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO MAJOR-GENERAL
BARROWCLOUGH

427

*Letter from the acting Prime Minister to Major-General
Barrowclough*

3 July 1944

MY DEAR GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 30 June, which was delivered to me by Lieutenant-Colonel Bennett, and to thank you for informing me of the discussions which have taken place between Admiral Newton and yourself concerning the provision of shipping to enable personnel of the Division to proceed on leave to New Zealand, and the location of the nucleus Divisional organisation.

I note that Admiral Newton proposes that the cadre organisation should be maintained in New Zealand rather than in **New Caledonia**, and that if this proposal is later approved he will then communicate with us officially on the subject.

I recognise that any such proposal would involve difficulties, not the least of which will be the provision in New Zealand of the necessary facilities to enable the forces to be maintained and trained in one area. I am very grateful to you for bringing these developments to my notice and I shall discuss them with the Prime Minister and the other members of **War Cabinet** immediately Mr Fraser returns to New Zealand, which I anticipate will be sometime towards the end of this month.

If, in the interim, you should learn of any further proposals on the subject, I shall be very glad if you will inform me of them.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) D. G. SULLIVAN

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

428 – ARMY HEADQUARTERS (WELLINGTON) TO ADMIRAL NEWTON

428

Army Headquarters (Wellington) to Admiral Newton

22 July 1944

For Admiral Newton from Brigadier **Conway**,¹ in the absence of the Chief of the General Staff.²

General Barrowclough has reported the purport of your recent conversation with him regarding the location of the 3rd New Zealand Division in the immediate future. It is understood that several additional formations of **United States** troops will shortly be arriving in **New Caledonia** and that the logistic problems thereby presented would be considerably relieved if the New Zealand Division were withdrawn from that island, at all events until it has been reconstituted as a combat division. The New Zealand War Cabinet has considered the matter, and I have been directed to say that **War Cabinet** fully appreciates the position and readily agrees to your suggestion that in the meantime the Division should be withdrawn to New Zealand. We understand that the return of the troops with their stores and equipment will probably extend over a period of about three months. Will you kindly notify me and General Barrowclough as soon as a definite decision is made on this question.³

¹ **Brig A. E. Conway**, CB, OBE, Legion of Merit (US); Adjutant-General, **New Zealand Military Forces**, 1940–46.

² **General Puttick** had accompanied Mr Fraser overseas.

³ The withdrawal of 2nd NZEF IP to New Zealand was subsequently approved by Admiral Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Area.



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

429 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE PRIME MINISTER¹ – REPORT ON OPERATIONS—3 NEW ZEALAND DIVISION, 1 JANUARY 1944 TO 30 JUNE 1944

429

*Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to the Prime Minister*¹

5 August 1944

REPORT ON OPERATIONS—3 NEW ZEALAND DIVISION, 1 JANUARY 1944 TO 30 JUNE 1944

Sir,

In compliance with the policy decided on by **War Cabinet** and in agreement with the American authorities the whole of the 3rd NZ Division, together with its forward base establishments, its ammunition, stores and equipment, has been withdrawn from the combat area and is now concentrated in **New Caledonia**. The Division's first campaign is over. It now finds itself in a non-operational role and, by virtue of the demands of industry upon its personnel, it has ceased to be a fighting formation. At this lowest ebb of its existence I have the honour to report upon its past activities and upon its future potentialities.

My previous report of 31 December 1943² contained an account of our operations up to the end of last year. Before the close of that year I had already received a warning order to prepare for a further operation designed to seize and occupy the **Green Islands**—a coral atoll lying North West of **Buka** and East of the southern end of **New Ireland**. The operation was a step in the general strategic plan to draw a strangling cordon round the Japanese garrisons in the Bismarcks and on **Bougainville** and **Buka**. The occupation of the **Green Islands** would complete the encirclement of **Bougainville** and **Buka** and was shortly to be followed by

landings on the Admiralties and on **Emirau** and the complete encirclement of **New Britain** and **New Ireland**. That stranglehold could not be effective unless we could command the sea and the air around these enemy bases. It was a natural corollary that our main task would be the establishment of air and motor torpedo-boat bases, and to provide these facilities at the earliest possible moment. The operation therefore presented two aspects—an operational one involving the seizure of the atoll and putting it in a posture of defence, and a logistic one involving the construction of airfields out of the primitive jungle, the building of a small naval base and the landing of endless supplies, including enormous quantities of bombs and petroleum products. The task was no novelty. We had already performed a similar mission at Vella and at Treasury; but that did not lessen its magnitude. As one indication of its extent I may

¹ Mr Fraser had returned to New Zealand on 18 July.

² No. 406.

mention that within four weeks of our landing we were operating so many aircraft from the **Green Island** air base that the weekly consumption of aviation gasoline alone exceeded a quarter of a million gallons—and at that stage all of it was manhandled ashore in 40-gallon drums.

The forces assigned for the operation consisted of 3rd NZ Division (less **8th Brigade** Group, still in the Treasuries) and a considerable number of American units including a Naval Construction Regiment (four battalions), anti-aircraft and coastal artillery, air ground echelons, Radar and Communications units, Naval units, etc. Altogether these American units comprised about two-thirds of the Force—New Zealand personnel constituting the remaining third. The whole was placed under command of 3rd NZ Division.

Before the operation could be planned in any detail it was necessary to obtain a great deal of information regarding the landing beaches, depth of water in the lagoon, nature of the entrances thereto and a host of other matters. It would have been extremely hazardous to attempt to beach and unload the large initial convoy without some precise knowledge of the conditions likely to be encountered. It was therefore decided to make a preliminary reconnaissance in force. No one overlooked the fact that such a reconnaissance would forewarn the enemy of our intentions, but the advantages to be gained from it so far outweighed the disadvantages that no hesitation was felt in putting it into operation. The 30th NZ Battalion was detailed for the task and was accompanied on its mission by selected officers representing the Hydrographic, Air, Landing Craft, Intelligence, Communications and Engineer services. Lt-Col Cornwall ¹ (Comd. 30th NZ Battalion) was in command of the operations ashore.

This raiding party was carried to **Green Island** in three destroyer transports (APDs) and escorted by four US destroyers and two PT boats. It effected a landing shortly after midnight early on the morning of 31 January and secured a base of operations. With the first light the various fighting patrols and reconnaissance parties pushed out by land and water. They thoroughly explored the whole of the lagoon and the entrance channels. They selected landing beaches and sites for airfields, guns, radars and dumps, and collected information regarding the strength and dispositions of the enemy. So complete an investigation could not have been completed without some contact with the Japanese garrison, and during the afternoon a brisk encounter took place. Our troops were also attacked by seven Zeros, obviously called up by enemy radio. We lost four killed and nine wounded. After nightfall the troops successfully re-embarked with their wounded in small landing

¹ Lt-Col F. C. Cornwall, MC, Legion of Merit (US); CO **30 Bn**
Sep 1943 – Apr 1944.

craft and at midnight were picked up by their destroyer transports and returned to **Vella Lavella**. The whole operation was daringly conceived and splendidly carried out. Lt-Col Cornwall and the reconnaissance officers who accompanied him came back with information and data which were of inestimable value in planning the main operation.

It was now possible to finalize and settle all details of the plan for the seizure and occupation of the atoll. The plan conformed in all essentials to the Transport Doctrine with which we had long become familiar, and needs no elaboration except that I should pay a tribute to the splendid work of the staff in working out the enormous detail that is involved in every amphibious operation. Thanks to their skill and tireless efforts the embarkation of the first flight was effected without a hitch and the whole expedition got away in first class order. Whilst at sea the overall command was in the capable hands of Rear Admiral T. S. Wilkinson, USN, who had had charge of both of our previous operations and for whom we all had the highest possible regard. The large convoy started from Lunga Point on **Guadalcanal** and picked up various elements at the Russells, **Munda**, and **Vella Lavella**. It was divided into echelons of varying speeds leap-frogging through each other during the night preceding the attack and timed to arrive in the 'transport area' just off the landing beaches as their respective troops, stores and equipment were required to be disembarked.

Just before dawn on 15 February the leading ships of the convoy made out the dim low-lying shores of **Green Island**. They were the APDs (destroyer transports) carrying the leading assault parties. Just as the APDs came to a stop in the transport area in order to launch their small landing craft, the whole convoy was attacked by about fifteen enemy dive-bombers. The attack came in with little or no warning because the radar screens were confused with the large number of friendly fighter and bomber airplanes then on station to support the landing. But a warning was hardly necessary as all were alert and at their battle positions. The enemy aircraft were engaged by our own fighters and by

our AA fire. They had no fighter cover and though they pressed their attacks home we suffered no damage or casualties except on one LST which sustained minor damage from a near miss. The landing operation proceeded as if the incident had never occurred.

Complete plans had been made to support the initial landings with heavy fire from the guns of the supporting destroyers and by dive-bombing attacks. This fire was not needed, however, and was not used. The leading waves of boats hit the shore without the slightest opposition on all three landing beaches, and though on one beach a subsequent wave came under fire for a short time it was not long before the enemy post was liquidated and the rest of the landing operations were carried out with absolutely no enemy interference. This complete immunity from enemy interference lasted all day and was as surprising as it was gratifying. It spoke volumes for the effective work of Admiral Fitch's ¹ airmen who had been assigned the task of neutralising enemy airfields in the Bismarcks. They had succeeded one hundred per cent.

But though the skies were denuded of Japanese aircraft, Japanese soldiers still lurked in the jungle. The infantry pushing out from the immediate perimeter of the beachheads were to encounter isolated Japanese detachments, all of whom withdrew steadily before us. We located two enemy barges and some enemy personnel on Sirot Island and these were heavily shelled; but nowhere did we encounter any serious opposition. By nightfall every gun and vehicle, every single round of ammunition, every item of equipment had been unloaded and the whole convoy had safely retired, leaving us in well established positions on the atoll. Field and anti-aircraft guns had been emplaced, radars were already installed and in operation and defensive positions were manned. The huge administrative tasks were well in hand. During the night we were twice raided by enemy bombers but they caused neither casualties nor damage to the invading force though four natives were wounded, one of them quite seriously. Thanks to the prompt installation of the radars we were able to direct our night fighters on to the enemy bombers and two of them were shot down without loss to ourselves.

During the next four days our infantry were gradually combing the jungle and driving the Japs into one area. On Sirot Island after a very sharp engagement in which we lost five killed and four wounded we succeeded in destroying twenty-one Japs—the entire party. It was a desperate fight—the Japs were cornered and fought till the last man had been killed. Elsewhere there were minor patrol clashes in all of which we were successful. On 20 February (five days after the landing) the most serious engagement took place. It was supported by four of our Valentine tanks and the enemy, who was in a strong position amongst large boulders of very hard coral, fought as usual till the last man had been killed. On this small but bloody battlefield we counted seventy mangled bodies piled one on top of another in a most revolting confusion. Never in my experience have I encountered such a concentrated spectacle of carnage as was presented here. Our casualties were relatively very light. Only a few of our troops were engaged but they behaved with great gallantry. This was the first occasion in which our tanks were in operation in dense jungle and they played their part

¹ Vice-Admiral A. W. Fitch, USN; Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, Sep 1942 – Apr 1944; appointed to command combined air forces of Army, Navy, Marines and Australian Air Force in South Pacific, 1943; Deputy Chief, Naval Operations (Air), Aug 1944 – Jul 1945.

magnificently. With this victory all organised opposition ended. We were left to the prosaic task of establishing and developing the air and naval bases.

Though it was prosaic enough it was nevertheless a great undertaking. Speed in the development of the airfields and of the naval base facilities was the most important factor and from the very first night work proceeded all round the clock. Flood lights had been included in the equipment carried with the first flight, and from D day onwards **Green Island** was a blaze of light throughout the hours of darkness so that work might proceed without interruption. Blackout restrictions

were unknown and the Island must have been visible for miles out to sea. We relied on our radars to give us warning of approaching enemy air and surface craft and our confidence in them was never misplaced. The men and machines of the US Naval Construction Regiment—inspiringlly led by Commander C. A. Whyte—performed miracles which broke all records of that record making Corps—the **United States** ‘Sea Bees’. ¹ New Zealanders and Americans toiled all through steaming hot days and stifling nights scouring the jungles for isolated Jap fugitives, dragging guns, radars and other heavy equipment through trackless jungle, digging through almost impenetrable coral rock and unloading and transporting thousands of tons of supplies of every description. It is impossible to overestimate the magnitude of the work involved in unloading this cargo. Some of it came in LSTs which could enter the lagoon and drop their ramps on the various beaches. No sooner had the huge bow doors opened than men swarmed into the cavernous holds and in sweating teams they dragged out vehicles and loose cargo through oceans of mud to the dumps ashore. Most of the cargo, however, arrived in larger ships which could not enter the lagoon. These had to be unloaded into smaller landing craft (usually LCTs) which pitched and tossed alongside the larger ships in the heavy ocean swell that was usually running. The agility and skill of the soldiers in performing this dangerous task would have done credit to experienced sailors. All services of both nations worked with a most commendable zeal.

This whole-hearted enthusiasm could not be denied its inevitable reward. On 6 March the Fighter Strip was opened—fourteen days ahead of schedule—and moreover the strip was built to a length of 5000 feet whereas the Master Plan required only 3250 feet. This acceleration of the programme and the provision of a longer runway than was originally specified was to prove of great assistance to our air effort in the whole theatre. The Japanese began an assault on the airfields at **Bougainville** and many of the aircraft stationed there had to be moved to other fields. We were able to accommodate planes far

¹ United States Naval Construction Battalions.

in excess of the numbers originally planned and the partial denial of our use of the **Bougainville** fields was completely offset by the additional use we were able to make of the new air facilities now established on the **Green Islands**. The Bomber Strip was also completed ahead of schedule and soon the **Green Island** fields were operating aircraft of all kinds, including heavy Liberator Bombers as well as Fighters, Medium Bombers and Catalinas.

With the completion of the airfields and their ancillary services we were able to devote a little more time to the improvement of living conditions for the troops on the island and the development of roads. The United States Service of Supply brought forward and installed refrigerating machinery and it now became possible to obtain occasional supplies of fresh meat and vegetables. The change in diet was most welcome. So were the arrival of a cargo of beer and the provision of picture shows. Life began to assume a more normal routine. The landing of American troops in **Emirau Island** resulted in our ceasing to be in the van of the **South Pacific Area** and we were justified in relaxing to some extent the state of preparedness against enemy attack.

On 21 March I left **Green Island** and proceeded to New Zealand where I received instructions from the **War Cabinet** regarding the proposed withdrawal of troops from 3rd NZ Division to essential industries at home. I arrived back in **Green Island** on 1 April and from then on my attention and that of my staff was divided between the discharge of our duties in reference to the exercise of command over the combined American and New Zealand forces on the island and the fulfilment of the plan for the gradual return of a large proportion of the Division to civil occupations. This Industrial Plan, as it came to be called, assumed major proportions. It involved the despatch of troops from the base at **New Caledonia** as well as from the forward areas at **Guadalcanal**, **Treasury** and **Green Island**. The strength of the force was to be halved at one blow and in subsequent blows it was to be almost decimated. Not a single unit or sub-unit but was called on to make its contribution to the

army of industry. Our equipment, however, still remained with us. All the administrative functions of the Force had still to be performed. For a time we still had an operational role. In the result considerable reorganisation and improvisation were called for and additional work and responsibility were inevitably placed on those who remained. I am happy to report that all concerned shouldered these extra burdens with zeal and efficiency, and the first drafts to industry left the forward areas in time to fulfil to the letter our obligations under the scheme.

By the beginning of May we had received word of COMSOPAC's intention to relieve the whole Division—it having completed the usual period in an operational area. On 11 May I had a visit from General Lehman ¹ who called to discuss plans for our relief by his **93rd (Negro) Division**. The relief proceeded gradually as shipping became available. By 5 June all my troops on Treasury and most of the **Green Island** garrison had been relieved. On that date accordingly I left **Green Island** and moved my Headquarters to **New Caledonia** where the bulk of the troops was now encamped. It was part of the plan for returning troops to New Zealand that they should spend a period of four to five weeks in **New Caledonia**, during which they could be kept under medical examination with a view to detecting and treating any symptoms of malaria which might develop as they ceased taking the suppressive atebirin drug. Elaborate provision had been made for the entertainment of the troops during that period. During my visit to New Zealand I had asked **War Cabinet** for as much assistance as could be given me in that direction. It is now my pleasant duty to express both on my own behalf and on behalf of all members of the Force our very sincere thanks for the action that was taken in response to that request and our great appreciation of the entertainment provided. The Force was visited by a number of ladies and gentlemen from New Zealand who gave lectures, presented plays, concerts and other entertainments and generally did a great deal for the welfare and education of the returning troops. We are extremely grateful to these ladies and gentlemen for their help and to the Government and the Government Departments which arranged for their visit.

From time to time the Division has received many congratulatory messages from the American leaders under whose command it has been operating. I have already submitted to you, through Army HQ in New Zealand, the names of many officers and men whose conduct appeared to me to warrant special recognition and I was glad to learn that all of these recommendations had met with your approval and had subsequently been granted by His Majesty the King. More recently I forwarded through the same channel a list of American officers to whom I considered British awards might appropriately be made. I hope that these recommendations may meet with your approval. I am informed by HQ, USAFISPA that General Harmon has recommended certain officers of my Force for American decorations.

All such awards are limited in their allocation and representative in their nature. Of necessity they go to those few whose work happens to come most prominently under official recognition. You will be gratified to know, however, that all the members of your 3rd Division and of its Base organisations have acquitted themselves throughout in a manner which does credit to the country from which they come. As their Commander I am eternally indebted to them for the courage,

¹ Maj-Gen R. G. Lehman, **US Army**; appointed Commanding General, 93 US Inf Div, May 1943.

tenacity and determination with which they have carried out every task to which I have assigned them and for the loyalty which they have always shown to me.

About the middle of July, Admiral Newton, who had succeeded Admiral Halsey in the command of the **South Pacific Area**, informed me that he thought it would be advisable if the remnants of the Force were to be withdrawn to New Zealand. Hitherto the intention was to retain the Force in **New Caledonia**, on a reduced basis, until such time as it could be re-expanded and again placed on an operational footing. Admiral Newton stated that large American forces would shortly be

arriving in **New Caledonia** and that the logistic problems involved in accommodating and maintaining them would be greatly lessened by the return of your 3rd Division to New Zealand. The New Zealand Government acceded to Admiral Newton's request and at the time of writing the movement back is already under way. This movement will scarcely be completed before the middle of October. For this movement, as for the movement back from the forward areas, we are dependent on American Transport Services and it is appropriate here to place on record the very great help and assistance we have always received from the American authorities in the provision of shipping facilities.

Your 3rd Division is now in a very unenviable position. It is limping home depleted in numbers, discouraged by the many successive blows that Fate has dealt it and weary from the long periods of strenuous and unexciting work in tropical climates. It is but a fraction of its former self. But I do not believe for one moment that its spirit is broken. There remains a small but loyal nucleus upon which I am confident a new Pacific Division could be built. All it needs is some encouragement from an official source—some assurance that in the not too distant future it will once again become a fighting formation and be permitted to take part in the War against **Japan**—its actual or potential enemy for over three and a half disappointing years. Without such an assurance of future usefulness it will be difficult to maintain its discipline and its spirit in New Zealand. I very respectfully express the hope that it will shortly be found possible for you to make some authoritative and encouraging pronouncement on its future role. I know that that may not be immediately practicable; but I urge that such a statement be made as soon as circumstances will permit of it.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours respectfully

(Sgd) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

Major-General

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

430 – LETTER FROM MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO THE PRIME
MINISTER

430

Letter from Major-General Barrowclough to the Prime Minister

23 August 1944

Sir

,

I have the honour to report that I have now returned to New Zealand, and that I have opened my Headquarters in the Auckland District.

By far the greater proportion of the personnel of my Force has now reached this country, and I have left Brigadier Dove, my Base Commandant, to supervise the shipment of such equipment as is still in New Caledonia. All arrangements in regard to this are working smoothly.

I shall be glad to receive further instructions regarding the future of my Force as soon as you are in a position to give them. I have written to General Puttick suggesting that it might be advisable for me to come to Wellington at an early date. ¹ Even though it will be impracticable to make final policy decisions, I think it is imperative that some interim policy should be laid down at the earliest possible opportunity so that I shall know upon what lines you wish me to carry on in the meantime.

(Sgd) H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

,

Major-General,

GOC, NZEF IP

¹ **This letter is not published.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

431 – LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO MAJOR-GENERAL
BARROWCLOUGH

431

Letter from the Prime Minister to Major-General Barrowclough

30 August 1944

DEAR GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH

,

I have to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of 23 August, in which you inform me that you have now returned to New Zealand and that you have opened your Headquarters in the Auckland District.

I note also the arrangements for the completion of the transfer of your force back to this country.

I regret that it has not been possible for any final decision to be taken regarding the use of the two Divisions. Even in the short period since I saw you there have been developments which have necessitated a complete reorientation of views.

I must, therefore, have further discussions with my colleagues within the next two or three days before I can give you any indication as to the interim policy which should be laid down in respect of your own force.

I will advise you as to the earliest date upon which you should come to **Wellington**.

Yours sincerely

,

(Sgd) P. FRASER

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

432 – RECOMMENDATION BY MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH, BRIGADIER CONWAY AND MR H. L. BOCKETT¹ FOR RELIEF OF LONG- SERVICE PERSONNEL IN 2ND AND 3RD DIVISIONS AND RECONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DIVISION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

432

Recommendation by Major-General Barrowclough, Brigadier Conway and Mr H. L. Bockett¹ for relief of long-service personnel in 2nd and 3rd Divisions and reconstruction of a new division for employment in the war against Japan

- 1. That 2nd New Zealand Division should not at this stage be withdrawn from the Italian theatre.**
- 2. That after 2nd New Zealand Division has finished its work in Europe, New Zealand should still maintain one active division in the field until the defeat of Japan, or until it is decided that such a division is no longer required in the war against Japan.**
- 3. After completion of its task in Europe the 2nd Division be withdrawn to New Zealand, excepting men who on 31 October 1944 have less than two years' service abroad. Provided, however, that all men who are over 36 years of age on 31 October 1944, or who have more than two children, will be returned to New Zealand irrespective of length of service.²**
- 4. Members and ex-members of the 3rd Division in the same categories as above will be liable when called on for overseas service.**
- 5. If this scheme is adopted it will result in the gradual transfer of 3rd Division men and new recruits to the Middle East, and if it is fully accomplished, which normally would take approximately twelve months,**

the New Zealand Division would then consist of men with not more than three years' service abroad.

6. The time involved in effecting the replacement of personnel will depend on the employment of the Division and the availability of shipping, which will regulate the release of troops by **General Freyberg**. In certain circumstances the period of twelve months might well be considerably reduced.

7. This scheme should satisfy the popular demand for the return of the 2nd Division when the fighting in **Europe** ceases, because in point of fact the whole of the original 2nd Division and reinforcements up to and including the 7th Reinforcements are included in those to be returned.

WELLINGTON

5 September 1944

¹ Mr **H. L. Bockett**; Controller of Manpower, 1940–47; Secretary of Labour, 1947–.

² A table attached to this recommendation is not reproduced. It contained estimates of the numbers of men in the 2nd Division to be replaced and of the replacements available in New Zealand from various sources.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

433 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM – [EXTRACT]

433

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

[Extract]

9 September 1944

PEFRA No. 4

... ¹ I should like to add that since I saw you there has been a further change in the disposition of our forces in the **Pacific**. As you will recall, it was decided, on the advice of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, to withdraw the 3rd Division from active operations in the **Pacific** and to concentrate cadres in **New Caledonia**, which were to be used for rebuilding a new division for service against the Japanese in 1945. At the instance of the Americans, however, these cadres have now been moved from **New Caledonia** back to New Zealand. ²

We have delayed taking a final decision with regard to the disposition of our land forces overseas, firstly, because we were reluctant to take our 2nd Division out of action in the European theatre unless we had some firm indication that New Zealand troops would be required in the **Pacific** and would be given a definite role in the war against **Japan**, and secondly, because we did not wish to request the withdrawal of our Division in **Italy** at a time when those forces were actively engaged in what may well be the final victorious stage of the war against **Germany**, and in operations in which, as you yourself advised me only a few days ago, they are sorely needed.... ³

¹ For the rest of the text see *Proposals for Participation in*

Operations against Japan, No. 439.

² See No. 426.

³ In a telegram to Mr Fraser on 25 August Mr Churchill reported briefly on his visit to the Division in **Italy**. The telegram concluded: 'The Division is sorely needed in the forthcoming operations.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

434 – WAR CABINET MINUTE

434

War Cabinet Minute

HON. MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Recommended:

- (1) That the 2nd Division be maintained and its future employment be reviewed after the conclusion of the Italian campaign.
- (2) That the question of participation of New Zealand land forces in the war against **Japan** be deferred until further and more definite information is received from the Combined Chiefs of Staff regarding the employment of British Commonwealth forces in the **Pacific**.
- (3) That the cadres of the 3rd Division be disbanded and the personnel be made available for service with the 2nd Division.
- (4) That long-service personnel in the 2nd Division, namely, men of the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Reinforcements, be replaced from the existing pool in New Zealand, including the residue of the 3rd Division, those temporarily released to industry from that Division, Grade A men held on appeal, and all others liable for military service. (*Note:* It is not intended that the call-up for overseas service should include men over 36 years of age, men with three or more children, or those who have had three years or more overseas service.)
- (5) That, subject to **General Freyberg's** agreement as to their practicability, the proposals put forward by Army and National Service on 5 September as to numbers of replacement personnel to be provided be approved. ¹

Approved by **War Cabinet**, 11 September 1944

(*Sgd*) P. FRASER

¹ The text of a statement in Parliament by the Prime Minister on 21 September appears in *Documents*, Vol. II, No. 395. General Barrowclough's proposals for the future employment of 3rd

Division officers, warrant officers and NCOs are contained in Vol. II, No. 396.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

435 – SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY BY MAJOR-GENERAL BARROWCLOUGH TO 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

435

Special Order of the Day by Major-General Barrowclough to 3rd New Zealand Division

Manurewa

19 October 1944

The greater part of 2 NZEF IP has now been dispersed in one way or another and the 3rd New Zealand Division Headquarters will cease to function as from 1700 hours on 20 October 1944. The manner of our dispersal has unfortunately prevented me from speaking personally to more than a handful of you and I am unable to say goodbye except through the medium of this special order. Even that will fail to reach many of those to whom I would have wished to speak.

I want to tell you how proud I have been of the Division and the whole of its Base organisation. It was not my privilege to command the Force from its inception nor to have any part in its initial training. It was my good fortune to command it when the supreme test of battle tried out the value of that initial training and I am eternally indebted to Generals Cunningham and Mead and to all of you for the fine spirit and stern discipline which was so manifestly engendered in the early days of your existence. A commander owes everything to his troops. His own reputation depends so utterly and entirely on their behaviour in action. I very gratefully acknowledge your courage and devotion to duty and the uniformly high standards you established in the performance of every task it was my duty to call upon you to perform.

For most of you the war is not yet over and your services may be

required in another theatre. It is a matter for regret that this further service will not be with the Division nor with the units for which we have so warm a love and regard. This is as inevitable as it is regretful. I know, however, that you are qualified to take your place in any formation to which you may be posted and that you will serve therein with credit to yourselves and to your new units. My own interest in ex-members of 3rd NZ Division and its ancillary services will never wane and I shall regard it as my pleasing duty to further your interests in any way I can. I wish you the best of good fortune—for the rest of the war and afterwards.

H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

Major-General,

GOC 3RD NEW ZEALAND DIVISION

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

PROPOSALS FOR PARTICIPATION IN OPERATIONS AGAINST JAPAN

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

436 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

436

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

26 July 1944

PEFRA **No. 3.**

While I was in London I discussed with the Chiefs of Staff plans then in the early stages of formulation for the employment of British forces in the war against Japan. The whole question of the disposition of our own forces in Europe and the Pacific is dependent on proposals to constitute British forces in the Pacific, and I am most anxious to learn what progress has been made in arriving at decisions.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

437 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

437

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 August 1944

WINCH **No. 2.** Your PEFRA **No. 3.**

The whole question of Far Eastern strategy is still under consideration here. I have summoned Admiral Mountbatten ¹ to England for consultation and hope to be able to send you our proposals in the near future.

¹ Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten, KG, PC, GCB, GCSI, GCIE, GCVO, DSO; Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943–46; Viceroy of **India**, Mar–Aug 1947; Governor-General of **India**, Aug 1947–Jun 1948; First Sea Lord 1955–59.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

438 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME
MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA²

438

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
Australia* ²

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

23 August 1944

WINCH No. 3.

Your JOHCU 78 and 81. ³ Your PEFRA No. 3.

I am repeating for your private information the following telegram
despatched by the Chiefs of Staff to **Washington**, which explains the
conclusions reached by the **Defence Committee** on our strategy for the
war against **Japan**:

‘1. As agreed at the **SEXTANT** ¹ Conference, we have devoted
prolonged study to the strategy for the war against **Japan**. We have
considered how best our forces can be disposed and what operations they
should carry out, taking into account the undertaking given by His
Majesty's Government at the **Casablanca Conference** ² that on defeating
Germany we should assist the **United States** to the utmost of our power
in defeating **Japan**.

‘2. Several important developments have taken place since the
SEXTANT Conference:

- (i) The advance of the **United States** forces across the **Pacific** has
been accelerated.

- (ii) The Japanese have strongly reinforced **Burma**, and their strength in that country has risen from 4½ to 10 divisions.
- (iii) The capture of Myitkyina rules out, as was always foreseen, any purely defensive policy in North Burma.
- (iv) The likelihood of aggressive action by the **Japanese Fleet** in the Bay of Bengal is now remote.
- (v) The progress of the war against **Germany** on all fronts has been such as to render possible the partial or total collapse of **Germany**, which might free forces from the European theatre in the coming months.
- (vi) We now have overwhelming air superiority in the South-East Asia theatre.

‘The following paragraphs contain our proposals in the light of the above developments:

³ Not published. JOHCU was the code-name for telegrams from the Prime Minister of **Australia** (Rt. Hon. John Curtin) to Mr Churchill.

¹ Code-name for the first conference at **Cairo** between President Roosevelt, Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek** and Mr Churchill on 22–25 Nov 1943.

² Between President Roosevelt and Mr Churchill, 14–24 Jan 1943.

Operations in the South-East Asia Theatre

‘3. The present directive to the **South-East Asia Command** prescribed as a first task the protection of the air link to **China** and, so far as is possible, the support of the further construction of the **Burma Road** (which cannot be completely opened until 1946) and of the pipelines to Yunnan (which are also progressing slowly). In addition we have, of course, to defend the frontier of **India**. We are thus committed to a long-drawn-out struggle in jungles and swamps against an enemy who has superior lines of communication to those which we possess. The wastage

from sickness and disease amounted during the campaign of 1944, up to 30 June alone, to 282,000, in addition to a loss in killed, wounded and missing of approximately 40,000. Clearly, therefore, we should make every effort to liquidate this highly undesirable commitment if it can, by any means, be done.

‘4. Admiral Mountbatten has put forward two plans. The first plan (CHAMPION) is to continue to engage the Japanese in North Burma. This, in our opinion, will merely lead to a continuation of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, and we feel bound to reject it.

‘5. The second plan (VANGUARD) put forward by Admiral Mountbatten is to capture **Rangoon** by an airborne operation, to be followed by the opening of the port of **Rangoon** and the maintenance of the expedition by sea. This plan is now rendered practicable by the large measure of air superiority which we enjoy in this theatre and by Japanese inability any longer to dispute our sea lines of communication to **Rangoon**.

‘6. The capture of **Rangoon** and Pegu (20 miles distant) will, at a stroke, sever the enemy's main lines of communication to the interior of **Burma** by road, river and rail. This will give us the opportunity of liquidating once and for all under the most favourable military conditions our commitments in **Burma** by the destruction of the Japanese forces.

‘7. Until such time as the **Rangoon** operation can be launched, it will be essential to contain the Japanese by offensive action south of Myitkyina.

‘8. The bulk of the necessary resources for **Rangoon** are already available, and we now ask the Combined Chiefs of Staff to agree to the above plan in principle, and that every effort should be made to provide from our combined resources the balance of the forces required. We propose that General Wedemeyer ¹ should proceed to **Washington** as soon as possible to expound the outline of the plan to the United State

Chiefs of Staff and to provide them with any local information they may require.

‘9. We are now building up a strong fleet in the Bay of Bengal, the bulk of which, including our newest battleships, will not be required for the operations outlined above in the South-East Asia theatre. It is our desire, in accordance with His Majesty's Government's policy, that this fleet should play its full part at the earliest possible moment in the main operations against **Japan wherever the greatest naval strength is required, and it is necessary that its strength should be built up as rapidly as possible. This fleet by mid-1945 could probably comprise 4 battleships of the King George V class, 6 fleet carriers, 4 light fleet carriers, 15 escort carriers, 20 cruisers, 40-50 fleet destroyers, 100 escorts and a considerable fleet train, the whole constituting a force which could make a valuable contribution in the crucial operations leading to the assault on **Japan**. This fleet, built up as fast as possible, would operate under **United States** command.**

‘10. If for any reason the United States Chiefs of Staff are unable to accept the support of a British fleet in the main operations (which is our distinct preference) we should be willing to discuss an alternative. The suggestion we would make in this event is the formation of a British Empire task force under a British commander, consisting of British, Australian and New Zealand land, sea and air forces, to operate in the South-West Pacific theatre under General MacArthur's supreme command. This alternative, if decided upon, would still enable the British Fleet to be well placed to reinforce the United States Pacific Fleet if this should later be desired.

‘11. We ask for an early expression of the views of the United States Chiefs of Staff on all the above proposals. The urgency is dictated by the need to work out as soon as possible the logistic problems involved, including the development of the necessary base facilities.’

The reactions of the United States Chiefs of Staff have not yet been received. This will let you see how matters stand at present.

¹ Gen A. C. Wedemeyer, **US Army**; Deputy Chief of Staff to Admiral Mountbatten, **South-East Asia Command**, Oct 1943–Oct 1944; Commander US Forces in **China** and Chief of Staff to Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek**, 1944–46.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

23 AUGUST 1944

23 August 1944

WINCH No. 3.

Your JOHCU 78 and 81. ³ Your PEFRA No. 3.

I am repeating for your private information the following telegram despatched by the Chiefs of Staff to **Washington**, which explains the conclusions reached by the **Defence Committee** on our strategy for the war against **Japan**:

‘1. As agreed at the **SEXTANT** ¹ Conference, we have devoted prolonged study to the strategy for the war against **Japan**. We have considered how best our forces can be disposed and what operations they should carry out, taking into account the undertaking given by His Majesty's Government at the **Casablanca Conference** ² that on defeating **Germany** we should assist the **United States** to the utmost of our power in defeating **Japan**.

‘2. Several important developments have taken place since the **SEXTANT** Conference:

- (i) The advance of the **United States** forces across the **Pacific** has been accelerated.
- (ii) The Japanese have strongly reinforced **Burma**, and their strength in that country has risen from 4½ to 10 divisions.
- (iii) The capture of **Myitkyina** rules out, as was always foreseen, any purely defensive policy in **North Burma**.
- (iv) The likelihood of aggressive action by the **Japanese Fleet** in the **Bay of Bengal** is now remote.
- (v) The progress of the war against **Germany** on all fronts has been such as to render possible the partial or total collapse of **Germany**, which might free forces from the **European theatre** in the coming months.

(vi) We now have overwhelming air superiority in the South-East Asia theatre.

‘The following paragraphs contain our proposals in the light of the above developments:

³ Not published. JOHCU was the code-name for telegrams from the Prime Minister of **Australia** (Rt. Hon. John Curtin) to Mr Churchill.

¹ Code-name for the first conference at **Cairo** between President Roosevelt, Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek** and Mr Churchill on 22–25 Nov 1943.

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH-EAST ASIA THEATRE

Operations in the South-East Asia Theatre

‘3. The present directive to the **South-East Asia Command** prescribed as a first task the protection of the air link to **China** and, so far as is possible, the support of the further construction of the **Burma Road** (which cannot be completely opened until 1946) and of the pipelines to Yunnan (which are also progressing slowly). In addition we have, of course, to defend the frontier of **India**. We are thus committed to a long-drawn-out struggle in jungles and swamps against an enemy who has superior lines of communication to those which we possess. The wastage from sickness and disease amounted during the campaign of 1944, up to 30 June alone, to 282,000, in addition to a loss in killed, wounded and missing of approximately 40,000. Clearly, therefore, we should make every effort to liquidate this highly undesirable commitment if it can, by any means, be done.

‘4. Admiral Mountbatten has put forward two plans. The first plan (**CHAMPION**) is to continue to engage the Japanese in North Burma. This, in our opinion, will merely lead to a continuation of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, and we feel bound to reject it.

‘5. The second plan (**VANGUARD**) put forward by Admiral Mountbatten is to capture **Rangoon** by an airborne operation, to be followed by the opening of the port of **Rangoon** and the maintenance of the expedition by sea. This plan is now rendered practicable by the large measure of air superiority which we enjoy in this theatre and by Japanese inability any longer to dispute our sea lines of communication to **Rangoon**.

‘6. The capture of **Rangoon** and Pegu (20 miles distant) will, at a stroke, sever the enemy's main lines of communication to the interior of

Burma by road, river and rail. This will give us the opportunity of liquidating once and for all under the most favourable military conditions our commitments in **Burma** by the destruction of the Japanese forces.

‘7. Until such time as the **Rangoon** operation can be launched, it will be essential to contain the Japanese by offensive action south of Myitkyina.

‘8. The bulk of the necessary resources for **Rangoon** are already available, and we now ask the Combined Chiefs of Staff to agree to the above plan in principle, and that every effort should be made to provide from our combined resources the balance of the forces required. We propose that General Wedemeyer ¹ should proceed to **Washington** as soon as possible to expound the outline of the plan to the United State Chiefs of Staff and to provide them with any local information they may require.

‘9. We are now building up a strong fleet in the Bay of Bengal, the bulk of which, including our newest battleships, will not be required for the operations outlined above in the South-East Asia theatre. It is our desire, in accordance with His Majesty's Government's policy, that this fleet should play its full part at the earliest possible moment in the main operations against **Japan** wherever the greatest naval strength is required, and it is necessary that its strength should be built up as rapidly as possible. This fleet by mid-1945 could probably comprise 4 battleships of the King George V class, 6 fleet carriers, 4 light fleet carriers, 15 escort carriers, 20 cruisers, 40-50 fleet destroyers, 100 escorts and a considerable fleet train, the whole constituting a force which could make a valuable contribution in the crucial operations leading to the assault on **Japan**. This fleet, built up as fast as possible, would operate under **United States** command.

‘10. If for any reason the United States Chiefs of Staff are unable to accept the support of a British fleet in the main operations (which is our distinct preference) we should be willing to discuss an alternative. The

suggestion we would make in this event is the formation of a British Empire task force under a British commander, consisting of British, Australian and New Zealand land, sea and air forces, to operate in the South-West Pacific theatre under General MacArthur's supreme command. This alternative, if decided upon, would still enable the British Fleet to be well placed to reinforce the United States Pacific Fleet if this should later be desired.

‘11. We ask for an early expression of the views of the United States Chiefs of Staff on all the above proposals. The urgency is dictated by the need to work out as soon as possible the logistic problems involved, including the development of the necessary base facilities.’

The reactions of the United States Chiefs of Staff have not yet been received. This will let you see how matters stand at present.

¹ Gen A. C. Wedemeyer, [US Army](#); Deputy Chief of Staff to Admiral Mountbatten, [South-East Asia Command](#), Oct 1943–Oct 1944; Commander US Forces in [China](#) and Chief of Staff to Generalissimo [Chiang Kai-shek](#), 1944–46.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

439 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM – [EXTRACT]

439

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

[Extract]

9 September 1944

PEFRA No. 4.

Thank you for making available to us your message to Mr Curtin,
WINCH No. 3, the implications of which are of immediate concern to New
Zealand.

You are well aware of the problem we face in regard to our two
divisions, and I appreciate the ready acceptance given by yourself and
the Chiefs of Staff to the general understanding that our 2nd Division
should return from **Italy**, when it could be spared, in order to enable us
to build up a new division for service in the war against **Japan**.... ¹

From the tentative plans being discussed while I was in **London** it
was assumed that a New Zealand division would take its place with
United Kingdom and Australian divisions in a British Commonwealth
force, but it would appear from your telegram to Mr Curtin that the
British Commonwealth task force—land, sea and air—is now rated only
as a second alternative to a British naval force, which it is desired
should serve with the Americans.

This continued lack of certainty as to the probable future use of our
men, and the rapidly changing circumstances in **Europe**, have rendered
it impracticable to reach any final decision. At this stage, however, we
have come to the conclusion we should decide that our Division in

Europe should continue to be maintained and that its future should be reviewed at the close of the Italian campaign, and further, that the cadres of the 3rd (**Pacific**) Division should therefore be disbanded and the men used as replacements and reinforcements for the 2nd Division. It will be appreciated that this course will necessarily delay the building up of another **Pacific** division should such a force be required.

In view of its bearing on the future participation of New Zealand troops in the war, I would be glad to have at the earliest possible opportunity the decision of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** as to their present plans for the participation of British Commonwealth forces in the **Pacific**.

¹ See *Withdrawal of 2nd NZEF IP, No. 433*, for this portion of the text.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

440 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND – [EXTRACT]

440

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

[Extract]

18 September 1944

WINCH **No. 4.** I send you herewith for your personal information a
summary of the major operational decisions reached at OCTAGON ¹.... ²

4. War against Japan. The over-all objective is to force the
unconditional surrender of **Japan** by:

(Lowering Japanese ability and will to resist by establishing sea
a) and air blockades, conducting intensive air bombardment, and
destroying Japanese air and naval strength;

(Ultimately invading and seizing objectives in the industrial heart
b) of **Japan**.

5. Pacific Area. One of our greatest difficulties has been to find room
and opportunity for deploying the massive forces which the British
Empire and Commonwealth of Nations are ardent to engage against the
enemy.

**6. The Allied superiority in naval and air power is to be exploited to the
full, and costly land campaigns will be avoided as far as possible.
Unremitting submarine warfare against enemy shipping will be
continued. Very-long-range bomber operations against Japan proper will
be continued from bases now being established in the Marianas and from
others to be seized in the future. The Philippines are to be reconquered
and the seaway opened to China from the United States.**

¹ Code-name for the second Quebec Conference between Mr Churchill and President Roosevelt on 11–16 September. See also Vol. II, p. 361.

² Paragraphs 2 and 3 dealing with the Allied plans for North-West Europe and **Italy** have been omitted.

7. So far as **British Empire** participation is concerned, it has been agreed that the **British Fleet** will participate in the main operations against **Japan**. The actual method of employment of this fleet will be decided from time to time in accordance with prevailing circumstances. It has also been agreed in principle that the **British Empire** air forces shall take their share in the heavy bombardment of **Japan**. Proposals for this are now being prepared.

8. In view of the fact that the Americans have given us our first choice (see **paragraph 9 of my WINCH No. 3**) ¹ the alternative suggestion in paragraph 10 of the telegram does not arise.

9. *Operations in South-East Asia.* Our immediate object is the destruction or expulsion of all Japanese forces in **Burma** at the earliest possible date. To this end the operations in Upper Burma will be pressed on and operation DRACULA (see my immediately following telegram) ² will be launched in March 1945 if it is in any way possible to assemble the necessary resources in time. The most determined efforts are being made to do so. With the liquidation of the costly and tiresome **Burma** campaign considerable extra forces will be freed and many operations across the Bay of Bengal will be open to us. No attempt has yet been made to decide which of these will be adopted.

10. *Re-deployment after end of War in Europe.* The whole problem of re-deployment of forces after the end of the war in **Europe** is being earnestly studied in all its aspects.

11. *Duration of War against Japan.* For the purpose of planning production and allocation of manpower it has been agreed that the end

of the Japanese war should be set at eighteen months after the defeat of **Germany**, this date to be reviewed periodically in the light of developments.

¹ No. 438.

² Not published. This telegram advised that DRACULA was the code-name for the capture of **Rangoon**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

441 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

441

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

27 January 1945

WINCH **No. 1.**

1. Our plans for the prosecution of the war against **Japan** are now taking more definite shape, and we are considering how to employ our resources in formations, stores and shipping to the greatest advantage when the war with **Germany** ends. I feel that you may wish at this stage to consider with your Government the best method whereby New Zealand land forces can be brought to bear against this final enemy.

2. The considerations you advanced in your message to me, PEFRA No. 4 of 9 September 1944 [**No. 439**], are well appreciated here. Your decision to leave your 2nd Division to finish their great task in **Italy** was most welcome. They always maintain their high standard. I am glad to know that you are taking the opportunity to relieve the long-service men and thereby to refresh this famous Division.

3. If, as I believe, the **New Zealand Government** wish to be represented in active operations against the Japanese after **Germany's** defeat, the following broad alternatives for the employment of the 2nd Division are open:

(To operate in **South-East Asia Command** under Admiral
a) Mountbatten.

(To return to New Zealand and, thereafter, possibly to be re-formed
b) for operations in the **Pacific** under **United States** command, either in

conjunction with the Australian divisions or as a unit in a **United States** force.

4. We should, of course, rejoice in the accession of your Division to the Commonwealth forces operating in **South-East Asia Command**. The development of operations for the reconquest of the Japanese-occupied territories in this theatre depends both upon the quantity and the quality of the forces which we can build up against the enemy. The presence with us of the New Zealanders would thus bring at once a contribution of the first order.

5. We do not know yet what tasks the United States Chiefs of Staff will allot to the Australian forces after the completion of the **Philippines** campaign, nor of the role which they would assign to a New Zealand division if it were placed under American command.

6. I hope, therefore, that when you have had an opportunity to weigh carefully the factors involved, you will decide once again to keep your Division alongside ours to the end. Anyhow, God bless you all. ¹

¹ On 3 February **General Freyberg** was informed of the contents of this telegram and asked for his views and for an appreciation on the employment of a New Zealand force in the war against **Japan**. See Vol. II, Nos. 415, 416, 418, and 419.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

442 – THE HON. W. NASH TO THE RT. HON. P. FRASER (LONDON)²

442

*The Hon. W. Nash to the Rt. Hon. P. Fraser (London)*²

7 April 1945

1. Government and War Cabinets discussed yesterday the question of the contribution we might make, on the conclusion of hostilities in **Europe**, in the provision of land, naval and air forces for the war against **Japan**.

2. We are agreed, in view of our position as a **Pacific** nation, on the need for maintaining our relations with the **United States of America** on the friendliest terms and firmest basis, and on the declarations made in the Canberra Agreement¹ that we should, having regard to our other essential commitments and present manpower resources, make our full contribution of armed forces in the war against **Japan**.

3. It is clear that we cannot maintain our present military commitments after the end of this year. The general conclusion reached yesterday was that, having regard to our potential and our commitments for the production of essential goods, advice should be sought on the strength and balance of our forces, particularly Army and Air. The Combined Chiefs of Staff are the logical authorities to consider this since they have full information of all resources and all requirements. But the **United Kingdom** authorities and Chiefs of Staff should be able to offer some helpful advice.

4. Notwithstanding the limited information available to us we did attempt some assessment of the form that our contribution in armed forces might take, and on the assumption that hostilities in **Europe** end this year, the possibilities appeared to be as follows:

ARMY:

- 5. On the assumption that our air effort is maintained at nineteen squadrons (but see paragraph 14) and the naval contribution continues, we consider that New Zealand could provide, and maintain during 1946 and possibly also 1947, a land force 15,000 strong. This envisages a division of not more than two brigades, plus ancillaries. Such a force must of course retain New Zealand identity and command.**
- 6. The force of 15,000 men can be secured as follows:**
- (From the remaining 11th to 14th Reinforcement personnel,**
- a) which at present total 11,500 but, allowing 2500 for wastage this year, will be reduced to 9000.**
- (From the 15th and 16th Reinforcements 6500, with wastage 500,**
- b) making a total at the end of this year of 15,000.**
- 7. It is considered that only men in the present categories for Army service overseas should serve with the force, and that none over 35 years or with more than two children should be employed. The general opinion expressed is that the force should, with the exceptions mentioned, be built up from personnel who have served not more than two years overseas, and that the present rule of return to New Zealand on completion of three years' overseas service should be maintained.**
- 8. The estimated annual reinforcement for this force is 5000. There is no difficulty in finding this number for 1946. But if the replacement scheme is to continue, as we feel it should, and of which we have taken account by including only the 11th and subsequent reinforcement drafts in the new force, then some difficulty will be felt in 1947.**
- 9. Puttick has emphasised the disadvantages of a two-brigade force. It is suggested that the [United Kingdom](#) might find an additional brigade to bring it to a full division. The possibility of attaching the Fiji Brigade has not been overlooked.**
- 10. The theatre of employment was discussed. Our preference is that the force function under British command in South-East Asia or with the Australians.**

11. No final conclusion was reached regarding the place where the force should be reorganised. There are advantages and disadvantages in the case of both the **Middle East** and New Zealand.

NAVY:

12. The present annual naval commitment is 770 men, but the Navy ask, and we are disposed to agree, that this be increased to 1100 to permit the replacement of men with four or more years' service.

AIR:

13. The present annual intake is 5400 men, of whom 2700 come from Army overseas categories. This is on the basis of continuing the present nineteen squadron plan. In the case of New Zealand personnel serving with the **Royal Air Force**, we are considering a proposal that all aircrew remain at the disposal of the **Royal Air Force** until after the completion of two tours of operations, or until eligible for repatriation under the existing policy of completion of three years' service overseas, or until they can be released by the **Royal Air Force** within the period of three years. It is intended that the existing provision remain in force that New Zealand personnel serving with the **Royal Air Force** are not posted to **South-East Asia Command** unless they have at least twelve months' service to complete a total of three years.

14. Reference is made in paragraph 3 to the balance between Army and Air. If the Air commitment were reduced there would be little if any direct advantage accruing to the land force, although the skilled ground personnel should increase the capacity of the engineering trades in New Zealand and contribute to the release of Grade A men held on appeal.

15. It is suggested, if you agree with the proposals outlined above, that the position be discussed with the **United Kingdom** authorities and that you might then inform us of your own and their views. It may be considered that we could better help in other directions, and we could of course consider any other adjustment of personnel attached to the three

Services. But the total number given appears to be the limit of the manpower that we can make available.

16. Please see succeeding message on general political issues.

² Mr Fraser was in London en route to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco, which opened on 25 April.

¹ An agreement on Pacific security and regional collaboration between Australia and New Zealand was signed at Canberra on 21 Jan 1944.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

443 – HON. W. NASH TO THE PRIME MINISTER (LONDON)

443

Hon. W. Nash to the Prime Minister (London)

7 April 1945

My telegram [No. 442].

The general political issues involved in the proposals contained in my telegram were discussed generally in both Government and War Cabinets. On the place for the reorganisation of the land force, opinion was divided. The sentiment of both the men and their relatives would certainly be that it should be done here, particularly since it will be six months or more before the force can be ready for operations. If, however, the men return home, it is doubtful whether a force would ever become available at all. There would be pressure for the release of men and for the limitation of categories. There would be losses through questionable medical boardings, although we could take some measures to limit this. There would be incidents if men refused to proceed overseas. Shipping difficulties would certainly cause serious delays to the despatch of the force, assuming one could be marshalled, and it would be nearer to 1947 before it would be available for operations.

2. Reorganisation overseas would certainly cause disappointment to men and relatives alike. There may even be incidents, but discipline overseas can be more effective and the men more readily controlled. Moreover, training can be done with greater expedition and effect. A decision to adopt this course, particularly if it is announced at the same time that the force is limited in size, that no man over 35 years or with more than two children, and only men of two years' or less service will be employed, should prove generally acceptable. It would be clear that our action was consistent and fair to all men. It would mean that we had a force and

that it was available on the earliest date for operations.

3. Caucus, while favouring return to New Zealand for reorganisation, would, I feel, in the light of our detailed proposals as to size and general qualifications for service, acquiesce in the general view of the Government and War Cabinets that the force should be reorganised overseas. We all agree that decisions as to our future course of action should be taken as soon as practicable and that they should then be communicated fully and frankly to the men and the public. There will be growls and complaints, but we shall have to meet these.

4. The area where the force might operate was discussed, and we all feel it would be more satisfactory as to command and otherwise if it served either under British command or with the Australians. We have no information as to the likely roles and cannot therefore assess which would be preferred. The United Kingdom authorities may be able to give you some information on which a decision could be taken.

5. There are strong reasons in favour of the force operating with the Australians. They are our nearest neighbours. We are close politically and will continue to be. It would renew and fortify the traditions and spirit of Anzac. There is, however, some doubt, and this particularly because of the fact that the force will not be more than two-brigade strength, whether we are likely to get the most effective employment for our force with the Australians. We have experience of operations with British units which have already been satisfactory.

6. It is of course not possible to carry the matter further until we have some appreciation of likely employment.

7. There is also the question of command. We would consider **Freyberg's** desires and views, as well as also the rigorous conditions of service which may exist in any part of the area of the war with **Japan**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

444 – THE HON. W. NASH TO GENERAL FREYBERG

444

The Hon. W. Nash to General Freyberg

8 April 1945

The following telegram is being sent to the Prime Minister:

[Text of telegram No. 442 of 7 April 1945.]

We should much appreciate any comments you might wish to make and should be grateful if these could be telegraphed to the Prime Minister in **London at the same time that you communicate them to us.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

445 – GENERAL FREYBERG TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER¹

445

*General Freyberg to the acting Prime Minister*¹

11 April 1945

1. Your cable of 8 April arrived eight hours before our offensive² started here and, as you will realise, we are working under difficulties. I know that my comments to be of any use must arrive quickly. I am commenting upon your proposals only in so far as numbers and organisation are concerned.

2. In considering this problem I have accepted your figure of 15,000 as a basis upon which to calculate, but feel that owing to the inclusion of the 3rd Division in recent drafts the numbers will be much lower. Dealing with the possibilities of producing a force more economically, both as regards the Base organisation and the size of the Division, I believe that this can only be done by sacrificing the fighting efficiency and endurance as well as the welfare and eventual morale of the force. Although reductions can be made, I do not think the Line of Communication can be cut much. I am strongly against a small division and strongly in favour of fighting the Japanese with heavy equipment rather than infantry. I feel that if the figures given in your telegram cannot be increased, it will be necessary to dilute with too great a complement of British troops to maintain the character of the force. I feel that before an answer can be given, the full facts, which are not available here, want considering most carefully. It seems, with the best will in the world, doubtful whether New Zealand's resources can produce the necessary men to meet all the demands made upon them.

3. Dealing with your figures, I assume you have made allowance for the fact that the 14th Reinforcements contained some 1000 men ex-3rd

Division. Presumably the 15th and 16th Reinforcements will also include at least some hundreds. These men will qualify for replacement before the rest of their draft. While, therefore, 2500 is a generous figure for wastage for normal casualties for the 11th to 14th Reinforcements, 500 seems too low for the 15th and 16th if 3rd Division personnel are to be excluded. Altogether, it appears doubtful if the total of 15,000 will in fact be attained. A safe figure would be nearer 13,000.

4. No allowance appears to be made for Base and Line of Communication troops. The standard of our Base services at present is high and, if the need arose, could be reduced, but it will then be appreciated that we would have to accept a lower standard of overseas training and of medical, ordnance, dental and welfare services than hitherto. We could do with two General Hospitals instead of three, but even with these reductions it is doubtful if the figure for Line of Communication units can be brought much below 3000. The high standard of efficiency and contentment of the NZEF has been the result of New Zealanders fighting together with a force big enough to look after itself, and with Base and Line of Communication services that looked after our health and welfare. This has been necessary in the **Middle East, but will be more necessary in a theatre such as **South-East Asia Command**, where climate and sickness play such a large part.**

5. In the foregoing calculations, no allowance has been made for sickness. At the present time we have a steady 5 per cent always in hospital. The chances are that in a tropical theatre the sickness rate would rise. Five per cent for the proposed 15,000 gives a sickness figure of about 750, and this figure may well rise to double.

6. The result of deducting 3000 Line of Communication, 1000 permanently sick in hospital, and 1000 3rd Division men in the 15th and 16th Reinforcements would appear to reduce at the outset the fighting force in the field to 10,000. These figures are borne out by experience over the last five years, as on the present organisation and standard of service to troops, 30,000 are required to maintain the existing Division of 19,000.

7. If you agree that, after deduction for Line of Communication, etc., the figure would be 10,000 all ranks, then this is no more than enough for **Divisional Headquarters, Artillery and ancillary services, and one infantry brigade. Even if one complete brigade group of **United Kingdom** troops were added, it would still be no more than a division of two brigade groups. I agree wholeheartedly with General Puttick's opinion of two-brigade divisions. I feel that the smallest force that should be committed is a division of three infantry brigades of three battalions, plus artillery and a small quota of tanks. To commit a smaller than normal division might result in our being given a role too great for our force, or else we might be given mopping-up jobs to do. In either case, the high record of New Zealand forces during this war could not be maintained.**

8. The problem of the organisation of a full-strength division requires very careful consideration to achieve the correct balance between infantry and supporting arms. The war establishment of a present **South-East Asia Command division, 20,130 strong, shows a great preponderance of infantry and a small amount of supporting arms. With this I do not agree. Our policy should be to fight the Japanese with artillery and tanks as far as possible and avoid costly hand-to-hand fighting by infantry. I feel that the ideal organisation is the organisation we now have, with perhaps a smaller tank component. To achieve this we will require to have a division at a fighting strength of 18,000, with 3000 for Base, and allow for 1000 permanently sick, giving a total of 22,000, plus 5000 reinforcements per annum. This number made up from New Zealanders would be the ideal solution. If that is not possible then the next best solution is for you to produce 18,000, to include Line of Communication, instead of 15,000, plus reinforcements at the rate of 5000 per year, which will allow for sick, and get the British to produce the equivalent of a brigade group of 4000. If, however, the figures of 15,000 plus 5000 per year for wastage are the maximum than can be produced, then I am most doubtful and, without fuller information, would advise against sending land forces to be committed in possible**

jungle warfare in an unspecified theatre of war. It will be appreciated that the above figures can only be taken as approximate.

¹ Repeated to Mr Fraser in [London](#).

² This was the 2nd Division's final offensive in [Italy](#), which commenced on 9 April with an assault crossing of the [Senio River](#).

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

446 – THE PRIME MINISTER (LONDON) TO THE HON. W. NASH

446

The Prime Minister (London) to the Hon. W. Nash

20 April 1945

Your telegram of 7 April [No. 442].

I have today had talks with Field Marshal Brooke and Air Vice-Marshal Saunders. ¹ Field Marshal Brooke is preparing an appreciation which he will send on to me regarding the possible deployment of a two-brigade force. It seems clear that the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff would welcome the idea of any such New Zealand force, particularly if it could be reorganised in the **Middle East** for immediate transfer to the concentration area, which would probably be **South-East Asia Command**. From the military point of view they would greatly prefer such a course to our taking the division back to New Zealand for re-forming there. The matter is of course one for both the Government Cabinet and **War Cabinet** to decide in the light of the facts, and particularly the figures of manpower available. We cannot overlook **Freyberg's** condemnatory message, but the matter will have to be re-examined in the light of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff appreciation. When it is received, I consider that the whole manpower problem—land, sea and air—should be reviewed together.

If it should be decided that land forces cannot be made available, it would no doubt be advisable to increase the air effort. In that event I think the air policy indicated in your telegram [No. 442] is as good a one as we can devise, but if a new division is to be formed then obviously we must save every man that we possibly can, and air and naval commitments must be re-examined and readjustments made accordingly. Saunders, who is now in charge of postings on the

personnel side, explained the difficulties which are confronting the **United Kingdom**, the chief of which is the apparent decision of the Canadian Government to withdraw all their airmen after the war with **Germany**, with the exception of their Article 15 squadrons. The result of this policy is that the **RAF** can no longer post Canadians to **RAF** aircrew since their withdrawal will mean breaking up units and will necessitate complete reorganisation. The Australians have not so far indicated what their policy is to be.

Saunders stated quite frankly that the difficulty was not so much one of manpower as the desire to obtain New Zealanders, who have proved themselves to be of outstanding merit. I can only say that the final decision must be made in New Zealand when consideration has been given to the future deployment of our land forces.

¹ Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Director-General of Postings at the **Air Ministry** respectively.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

447 – THE HON. W. NASH TO THE PRIME MINISTER NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION, SAN FRANCISCO

447

*The Hon. W. Nash to the Prime Minister New Zealand Delegation,
San Francisco*

12 May 1945

There has been some discussion in various quarters about our men going to **Burma**, and the general opinion expressed is that it would be undesirable. There is as well general speculation as to the future of the Division and a clear public desire to have a definite statement of our intentions as soon as possible. Nothing has been said in the editorial sections of the press due, I am certain, to the fact that at the press conference I took the editors fully into our confidence, explaining that we were waiting for advice from the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff and yourself before a decision could be taken. It would be unwise to have an unduly long delay before issuing a definite statement of policy from the Government. The question will undoubtedly be raised at the **Hamilton** by-election.... ¹

Public opinion is not rigid on the issues. At the ceremony in connection with the cessation of hostilities the references to carrying on against **Japan** were received with some applause. **War Cabinet** considers that a statement should be made as soon as possible indicating that the question is being given some attention, that we have sought the advice of the competent authorities overseas with a view to deciding how best we can make an effective contribution to the war against **Japan**, and that, immediately this information becomes available, a decision will be taken and publicly notified. I have it in mind to make this statement in the very near future, but would be glad of any comments you might have to offer. Receipt of the **United Kingdom**

appreciation would certainly be helpful, and I am glad to note from your telegram received here yesterday that Park has been asked to telegraph it here to us. ²

You will have seen **Freyberg's** telegram of 8 May in which he refers to the general question of future employment and seeks approval of a draft statement he has prepared for issue to the men. ³ On this we expect to be telegraphing him very shortly.

¹ A personal reference is omitted.

² See p. 475, note 2.

³ See Vol. II, *Return of 2nd Division to New Zealand*, No. 462.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

448 – GENERAL FREYBERG TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE – [EXTRACT]

448

General Freyberg to the Minister of Defence

[Extract]

15 May 1945

... ¹ With regard to future planning, I see no reason to alter the opinions I have already expressed. I still feel that **Burma** and **Singapore** will be taken before New Zealand forces can be redeployed towards the end of 1945, and that by that time jungle fighting should be over and the approaches to better fighting country will be cleared. In that case our present organisation and training would be suitable. I realise that national prestige as a **Pacific** power will weigh in making your difficult decision. Here again national prestige and all it means to us is one side which is outside my province. In forming my opinions I have only considered the military side of the problem. In tendering my advice to **War Cabinet** I am guided by our experience over the whole period of the war against **Germany**. It shows the wisdom of sending and maintaining a formation such as you have done—one which has been really a small but complete National Army. In my telegram of 13 May, ² which was for publication, I explained the importance of adequate rearward services.

Further, as your Commander I know what a wise decision it was to give me wide powers in the event of a crisis. Your Commander has always been in a very strong position and, since equipment has been available, he has had a strong force capable of defending itself, with adequate powers to influence not only tactics but often policy. These powers helped me in **Greece**, **Crete**, **Tobruk** 1941, and **Mersa Matruh** 1942, and many other times in those early days. It was for these reasons that I hesitate to advise using a smaller and less powerful force, which

might give the initial prestige but in the event of hard fighting would lack the means to maintain it.

I still feel that defeating the main Japanese army will not be as difficult as it was to defeat the Germans. That being so, it is justifiable to embark upon the campaign in the **Far East** with a smaller margin of reserve. You will notice in the suggested reorganisation that I have cut the Division by 2000 and reduced Line of Communication. I am sure that the force I suggest would be a superb fighting machine. It would not have the endurance of the New Zealand Division as at present organised. If there was prolonged heavy fighting with a large number of casualties or a sickness epidemic, the Division would have to be rested more than at present.

If it is **War Cabinet's** decision in the light of these circumstances to keep a division overseas, we should if possible keep to our traditional role of a mobile, hard-hitting force, with all possible heavy equipment and artillery but with a smaller tank component. If you decide on these lines, our present Division would require very little reorganisation and we could be ready to take the field three months after the 16th Reinforcements arrive, say in November or December 1945. But this will be dependent upon shipping.

The numbers in the **Middle East** after the 16th Reinforcements arrive and the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Reinforcements have been returned to New Zealand will be approximately 23,000, and this would just be sufficient to start the campaign. We could regroup as follows:

Strength of the present Division	19,000
Less Brigade Headquarters and two tank regiments	1,600
Less Anti-Tank Regiment	400
	2,000
New division up to strength	17,000
Add Line of Communication	3,500
Sick in hospital	1,150
Total	21,650

One thousand three hundred and fifty all ranks would therefore be immediately available for reinforcements for 1945. We would require 5000 additional reinforcements for 1946, 2000 to be in our training depots before we go to the new theatre.

Although the New Zealand War Cabinet would be safe in deciding the new policy on these figures, if you decide in favour of keeping a division overseas I would like to get an expression of opinion from **South-East Asia Command or other theatre upon the proposed reorganisation before the final decision as to reorganisation is made.**

Lastly, I want to make it quite clear that I am not putting forward any opinion as to whether New Zealand should or should not send a force. I do not know the facts and I realise it is not within my province to do so. All I have done is, in the light of my experience as your Commander, to give a military appreciation of the situation as a basis for your consideration.

¹ For text omitted see Vol. II, No. 464.

² See Vol. II, *End of Campaign in Italy*, No. 443.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

449 – NEW ZEALAND MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND (SAN FRANCISCO)¹

449

*New Zealand Military Liaison Officer (London) to the Prime Minister
of New Zealand (San Francisco) ¹*

21 May 1945

Your telegram No. 11 of 8 May. ²

The following appreciation concerning the future employment of the
2nd New Zealand Division is forwarded by the Chief of the Imperial
General Staff and dated 18 May:

‘1. In the war against **Japan** the course of operations may shape as
follows:

(Operations against the mainland of **Japan**. In addition to the
a) **British Pacific Fleet**, it is possible that British Empire land and air
forces will take part in these operations.

(Operations into **Malaya, Siam, Indo- China** and **Sumatra** under
b) **South-East Asia Command**.

(Operations in the South-West Pacific area in the main Dutch
c) islands of the East Indies.

(Operations into the lesser islands of the East Indies, the
d) completion of clearance of the Japanese from the islands around **New
Guinea** and other islands in the **Pacific** such as Ocean and Nauru.

‘2. New Zealand was one of the countries most closely threatened by
the advance of the Japanese in 1945–43. As a **Pacific** power she is vitally
interested in the fate of **Japan**. It would be fitting were she to take part
in operations against the Japanese. It would not, however, be easy for
her to operate with the Americans, by reason of the difference of
equipment and organisation, unless her Division formed part of a larger
British Empire force.

‘3. There are important and arduous campaigns ahead of the South-East Asia Command in Malaya, Siam, Indo- China and Sumatra. The clearance of these areas is of importance not only from a military but also from an economic point of view. World conditions cannot get back to normal until the resources of this area are again available. In this theatre the 2nd New Zealand Division would be operating, as it has done for so long, alongside British and Indian armies and would be most appreciated.

‘4. Assuming that the 2nd New Zealand Division is to take part in operations in the Far East, the most convenient and logical place for reorganisation and training would be in the Middle East. This would probably enable the Division to become operational in the Far East

¹ Repeated to the acting Prime Minister.

² Not published. In this telegram to Brigadier Park the Prime Minister asked what was the position regarding the Chiefs of Staff appreciation and requested that it be repeated to the acting Prime Minister in Wellington.

early in 1946 and to take an important part in operations. If, on the other hand, it was necessary to return the Division to New Zealand for leave, reorganisation and training, considerable delay would result and the Division might only be able to take part in the closing stages of the war against Japan, and then only in subsidiary mopping-up operations.

‘5. If it should later prove possible for a British land force to take part in the assault on Japan, the New Zealand Division, if reorganised in the Middle East and employed in South-East Asia Command, would be well positioned to take part in this project.

‘6. The New Zealand forces under Field Marshal Alexander ¹ [in Italy] and in the Middle East consist of a composite division of one armoured brigade and three infantry brigades, together with a fairly

comprehensive Base layout. It is understood that neither the Division nor its administrative tail could be maintained at present strength. In operations in the **Pacific** there is no opportunity for the employment of armour on the same scale as in **Europe**. The reduction of the Division by the removal of its armoured component would therefore be quite in keeping with the requirements of this theatre. If further reductions were necessary one more infantry brigade could be cut. Though this would have some adverse effect on the tactical handling of the Division, this disadvantage can be accepted. The size of the administrative tail would require adjustment to the availability of manpower and to the assistance which could be given to the Division by **South-East Asia Command**.

‘7. Conclusion. The 2nd New Zealand Division, reduced to two-brigade strength and backed by a reasonable administrative tail, could be used most effectively against the Japanese in **South-East Asia Command**, and possibly later as part of a British Empire force against **Japan**. It would be an advantage if it could be reorganised in the **Middle East** and moved thence to its new operational area.’

¹ Field Marshal Earl Alexander, KG, PC, GCB, GCMG, CSI, DSO, MC; Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 1944–45.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

450 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

450

The acting Prime Minister to General Freyberg

23 May 1945

I am repeating to you in my immediately following telegram the text of the appreciation concerning the future employment of the 2nd Division, forwarded by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff under date 18 May and telegraphed to us by Brigadier Park and to the Prime Minister.

We are grateful for your message of 15 May [No. 448], but will defer consideration of the whole position until you let us have such comments as you might wish to make on the appreciation, and which I should be grateful if you would repeat to the Prime Minister.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

451 – GENERAL FREYBERG TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER¹

451

*General Freyberg to the acting Prime Minister*¹

27 May 1945

Reference your telegram of 23 May.

I have read the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's appreciation most carefully, and in view of **War Cabinet's** statement in a previous cable that they desire to keep their Division in the field as long as possible,² I have assumed that the New Zealand Division will take part in the war against **Japan** if manpower allows.

In the **War Office** appreciation it appears that in planning they expect important and arduous campaigns in **Malaya** to open the Malacca Straits, followed later by a possible campaign against **Japan** with a British Empire force. It will depend on the timing of the **South-East Asia Command** plans which of these campaigns we would take part in. Time appears to be an important factor. If we come early in 1946 we will be in time. A few months' delay may relegate the Division to cleaning-up operations of a minor nature, presumably after **Japan** has been invaded. As there are already considerable forces in **South-East Asia Command**, they may embark upon operations in **Malaya** towards the end of 1945 without waiting for reinforcements. It would seem to follow from this that the value to the Allied cause of New Zealand's contribution depends to a great extent on the speed with which it is made available. Without more information I have formed this opinion which, if accepted, may influence you in making your difficult decision.

Dealing with the **War Office** conclusions, I see no cause for disagreement. They do not like the two-brigade division any more than we do. They appear, however, so anxious to have a New Zealand force

that they will be grateful for any help.

I agree that the New Zealand Division should, if possible, work with British forces. Our limited experience of fighting with the Americans shows that difficulties do occur, mostly from an organisation, equipment and training point of view.

I agree that **South-East Asia Command** appears to be the only theatre of war open to New Zealand forces at present, and if **South-East Asia Command** is chosen the most convenient and logical place for reorganisation would appear to be in Egypt. I feel that a decision to go to **South-East Asia Command** direct would be accepted, provided it is well presented and a good system of relief of long-service men is announced and implemented. Short-service men here would accept, and indeed expect, a policy which involves further campaigns against the Japanese.

I am not in any position to assess the difficulties which will face the **New Zealand Government** if they bring the whole force back to New Zealand before committing it to another theatre of war. You are in a better position to judge this problem.

If for any reasons the Government decide to return the force to New Zealand before committing it to another theatre, a readjustment to the policy of replacement will be advisable. The sending of long-service men home first will be in conflict with the need for speed in reorganisation. It would seem advisable to take the force home in existing units made up of short-service personnel, the long-service personnel who would not have any further service coming later.

It is possible that there will be a number of changes in organisation for a **South-East Asia Command** force, which in my opinion could be carried out in Egypt without difficulty.

Although I fully appreciate the manpower difficulties, I urge you against the two-brigade division. I also feel that we should have our own small armoured unit and our own rearward services. We have had

experience of these matters in the past, and my opinion is formed after long experience.

The result of the recent conversion of your Division from two infantry brigades to three is shown by our recent successes. At one stage, moreover, we had to be given a fourth infantry brigade to help relieve the strain on the overworked infantry.

Tactically, a two-brigade division forces a commander to fight on a narrow front without reserves, which increases casualties and minimises success. It really amounts to attempting to achieve with six infantry battalions what others do with nine. In the **Burma** campaign infantry divisions all have twelve battalions.

I would counsel against dispensing with our armoured component and relying on **United Kingdom** troops for tank support. We should keep a small unit. Our experience in 1941 and 1942 at **Tobruk**, **Minqar Qaim** and **Ruweisat Ridge** proved this. British tanks failed to keep up with our infantry, which has never been the case since we have had tanks under command.

The use of **United Kingdom** rearward services would not prove satisfactory. Our men have had a very high standard of service, especially in hospitals and welfare. I agree that we could make savings, but after five and a half years' experience of commanding your Division I am convinced that our fighting troops are best looked after by their own services.

The Division we have at the present time is excellently balanced for war here in **Italy**, and it has proved itself as one of the finest fighting formations in the British Army. Here again, before the final organisation is decided, it would be necessary to consult **South-East Asia Command**. Conditions here have been purely offensive and we have been able to cut out all defensive weapons, Machine Gun Battalion, anti-aircraft and anti-tank regiments, and have given up the Cavalry Regiment because it was never used. At the same time we have increased our heavy mortars

and maintained our artillery and our tanks. The result of our reorganisation has been most gratifying. It is possible, however, that conditions in **South-East Asia Command** may demand a different organisation.

In my telegram of 15 May [**No. 448**] I suggested a possible organisation for economising on manpower. I believe the proposals to be practical and I believe it to be the smallest force that should be committed. I feel that given this organisation, together with 5000 reinforcements, and provided we have no epidemics, we could fight through 1946 and might even go on into 1947.

To sum up my views on the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's appreciation:

- (1) It appears certain that the British Government would welcome any force that the **New Zealand Government** will send.
- (2) Time is important and the early arrival of a New Zealand Division will help the British war effort.
- (3) It is better to link up with British forces than with the Americans.
- (4) If **South-East Asia Command** is chosen, Egypt is the logical place to carry out reorganisation.
- (5) I urge against sending a two-brigade division. The organisation I have suggested in my telegram of 15 May is what I consider the smallest and best organisation. Before any decision in detail is made, however, **South-East Asia Command** would have to be consulted.
- (6) Provided a fair replacement scheme is implemented, the decision to go to **South-East Asia Command** would be accepted by all ranks.
- (7) If a two-brigade division is decided upon there will be no difficulty in carrying out the necessary reorganisation.

¹ Repeated to Mr Fraser and General Puttick.

² See Vol. II, No. 415.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

452 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

452

The acting Prime Minister to General Freyberg

9 June 1945

After close consideration of all factors, **War Cabinet** sees little prospect of being able to provide a force against **Japan** exceeding fifteen or sixteen thousand. We recognise the disadvantages of a force of less than a complete division and the difficulties that may arise if British or other troops are added to complete. You will observe from our telegram of 8 April [**No. 444**] that we envisaged 15,000 would provide a two-brigade division with ancillaries. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff has made the same assumption, while in your cable of 11 April [**No. 445**] you consider only one brigade possible. We would be glad to have this point reconciled. If the Fiji Brigade of three battalions is available it would be additional to 15,000 New Zealanders. We would like your views regarding its inclusion before asking for the brigade. We agree with you that, as far as possible, Base and other facilities in rear of the Division should be provided by New Zealand troops and that the Division should be under New Zealand command. We wish you to discuss the position with **South-East Asia Command** and, if you consider necessary, in person, and forward as early as possible the proposed organisation of the force showing the British or other component, if any, and any comments you may wish to offer. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff has been informed of the situation as above and requested to approve and facilitate your consultation with **South-East Asia Command**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

453 – GENERAL FREYBERG TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER

453

General Freyberg to the acting Prime Minister

12 June 1945

Reference your telegram of 9 June.

Regarding the Fijians, I feel that good use could be made of their infantry battalions, their engineers and a number of men for small units. The approximate numbers which we could use with great effect would be:

	<i>Other Ranks</i>
Divisional Defence and Employment Company	250
Brigade Defence Platoons (3 × 23)	69
Field Company, Engineers	259
Infantry battalions (3 × 786)	2,358
Total	2,936
First reinforcements for 1946	500
Grand total	3,436

A reply to your cable and outline proposals for your consideration will be cabled in a few days.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

454 – GENERAL FREYBERG TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER – [EXTRACT]

454

*General Freyberg to the acting Prime Minister
[Extract]*

14 June 1945

Reference your telegram of 9 June [**No. 452**].

Your manpower difficulties, together with the necessity for New Zealand to send a force against the Japanese, will necessitate our accepting a smaller force and a lower standard of rearward services. I am therefore suggesting further cuts in the establishments of the Division and Line of Communication units. I consider that with 16,000 it will be possible to organise a division of two infantry brigades with the necessary supporting arms and its own Line of Communication. Five thousand reinforcements will enable us to carry on through 1946 and leave a small surplus to meet the increases in war establishments which always occur.

In my telegram of 11 April [**No. 445**] I questioned the numbers in your telegram of 8 April [**No. 444**]. I doubted whether your estimate of 15,000 would be available at the end of the war with **Germany** after the departure of the 6th to 10th Reinforcements. My reason was that you allowed 3000 for wastage to the end of 1945 in the 11th to 16th Reinforcements who would remain. I had to take a conservative view and I calculated that wastage would be 2000 greater as reclassified ex-3rd Division men alone totalled 3133. The early finish of the war in **Europe** eases the situation. We know now that firm figures for those remaining are:

11th to 15th Reinforcements, plus 400 entitled officers	12,000
16th Reinforcements (still to come)	3,000 to 4,000
Total available	15,000 to 16,000

Note: It is to be urged that the 16th Reinforcements should be kept as high as possible.

With these figures it is possible to organise a force comprising a two-brigade division, plus Line of Communication, and to provide for sick permanently in hospital. It will be necessary, however, to have first reinforcements for 1946 ready and trained in our training depots before the force takes the field. Totals are:

Division (two infantry brigades), detailed War Establishment later in cable ¹	12,622
Line of Communication	2,500
Sick in hospital (at 5 per cent)	800
Total	15,922
First reinforcements for 1946	2,500

If only 15,000 are available we shall have to make further reductions as follows, but in my opinion this is a most inadvisable step:

One Field Regiment	641
One Field Company, Royal Engineers	259
Total	900

These figures can only be taken as approximately correct.

Dealing with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's appreciation, ² I have the following observations to make. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff does not know that the third New Zealand infantry brigade was formed not by increasing the strength of the Division but by cutting out units no longer effective in the Italian theatre. Some of these units, however, may be required in **South-East Asia Command. We disbanded or changed the following to form the third infantry brigade: Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, part of the Anti-Tank Regiment, 22nd Motor Battalion, Machine Gun Battalion, **Divisional Cavalry Regiment**. If we**

now give up this brigade plus all

¹ The War Establishment is not published.

² No. 449.

our tanks we shall become tactically unbalanced as a force. We shall in any case have to re-form an armoured reconnaissance unit and may have to increase some of our defensive weapons.

In his appreciation the Chief of the Imperial General Staff considered that 15,000 will be sufficient to form a two-infantry brigade division with the necessary ancillaries. With this we agree, but it will not be sufficient to form the Division, plus the force necessary to maintain it overseas, and leave any margin. He must realise this, but hopes we can contract the administrative tail by using **South-East Asia Command** aid. We all know that this would not be a success. His desire to get a New Zealand force under any conditions has led him to urge a weak case. The New Zealand War Cabinet will, after seeing the figures, realise the very narrow margin and the difficulties that will face the Commander of the new force in the field during the early stages. A generous scale of reinforcement will correct this position later in 1946.

I am glad that **War Cabinet** have decided that we should form our own rearward services within the limit of our manpower, and this we are proposing should be done. I will examine the **South-East Asia Command** rearward services and see if further savings can be made.

Your suggested proposal to send a Fijian brigade may enable us to solve many of our difficulties. I do not of course know the Fijians as soldiers. I have spoken on this subject with Brigadier Gentry and he bears out all I have heard of them, and I feel that they might be used in our existing organisation. General Puttick would be able to say if my proposals here would appear practical. If the Fijians are in addition to the 16,000 it will enable us to form a three infantry brigade division.

In any case we can make additional savings in existing war establishments by disbanding the existing Armoured Brigade; disbanding the Anti-Tank Regiment; reducing the [Army Service Corps](#); cutting Line of Communication to 2500; disbanding one infantry battalion per brigade; making three-battalion brigades by placing one Fijian battalion with each of our three infantry brigades; substituting Fijians for New Zealanders in a company of [Divisional Engineers](#) and in defence platoons for the brigades and the Division.

But we should have to provide men for re-forming an armoured reconnaissance unit.

The suggested reorganisation of the Division would then be as follows:

[A detailed schedule showing by units the numbers of New Zealand personnel required for a two-brigade division and New Zealand and Fijian personnel for a three-brigade division has been omitted.]

.... The division so planned would still keep the bulk of its heavy weapons such as a full Divisional Artillery and Mechanical Equipment Company, and would still have light and medium tanks in its Reconnaissance Regiment.

This proposal involves a far-reaching reorganisation, and a great deal of training would be required before the new division could take the field. But given time, and with the retention of experienced brigade, unit and sub-unit commanders, it could be achieved and would produce a fighting formation worthy of upholding the traditions of the 2nd New Zealand Division.

The smooth working of the reorganisation would be greatly assisted by getting our first reinforcements over in the [Middle East](#) in time to complete their training before the Division took the field early in 1946.

As you realise, this establishment is provisional, and it would have to be considered in the light of my visit to [South-East Asia Command](#). Time

presses, and when I have your views upon these outline proposals I will fly to **South-East Asia Command** to go more closely into all questions of organisation.

The situation here is quiet. The Yugoslavs left **Trieste** last Tuesday.¹ All our plans for the move back to Egypt are in train. We await confirmation of shipping dates.

I do not want to move the force from this healthy area to a malarial one until necessary.

Would you please acknowledge this cable.

¹ See Vol. II, *Trieste*.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

455 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

455

The acting Prime Minister to General Freyberg

21 June 1945

Your telegram of 14 June and earlier messages.

War Cabinet plan to provide a capital force of 16,000 as proposed by you for participation in operations against **Japan**, and to furnish a reinforcement of 2500 men this year with the necessary reinforcements next [year]. We concur in the proposal outlined in your message P. 307 of 10 June ² for the retention of certain officers, but as we have decided that personnel of the reinforcements up to and including the 10th should be returned, it is considered that the 3133 men of the 3rd Division should also be repatriated.

2. We note that of the numbers required for the capital force, 12,000 are available in the **Middle East**. There are sufficient men now in camp with the 16th Reinforcements to permit of the despatch of an additional 1300, making a total of 4300. This will complete the capital force of 16,000 required and give 300 men towards the reinforcement of 2500 for this year. Arrangements will be made for a sufficient number of Category A men to enter camp to complete the first reinforcement which we hope to despatch from New Zealand early in October.

3. The foregoing is provisional at this juncture and it will not be possible to give a final decision until after Parliament has met and discussed the matter. The first opportunity for debate is not likely to occur until Wednesday, 4 July, and the final decision should come very shortly after that.

4. We are informing the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the

Governor of **Fiji** ¹ generally of our proposals, and are inviting their agreement to employment with our forces of those elements of the Fiji Brigade indicated in your message of 12 June [**No. 453**]. We shall let you know the result immediately a reply is received. On the assumption that the **United Kingdom** and Fiji Governments are agreeable to the proposed employment of the Fiji Brigade, concerted arrangements will be made for publicity and we shall let you know in good time.

5. The United Kingdom authorities have been informed of the plans outlined in your telegram P.308 of 10 June ² for the movement of personnel to New Zealand and a request made for the provision of shipping on the dates indicated.

6. Questions concerning the disposal of divisional equipment have been discussed with the Army authorities, who are telegraphing our proposals to you separately.

7. **South-East Asia Command** seems the most likely theatre of employment and, in order that a decision may be taken as to this, we would be grateful if, as suggested, you would proceed and discuss the position with the Commander-in-Chief. ³ We have some reservations on political grounds about the employment of our forces in **Burma** since the engagement of our forces in this area would have certain repercussions here. It would be preferred that our forces would be employed in some other part of the theatre, although there would be no objection to their being deployed through **Burma** so that they could participate in operations.

² Not published.

¹ Sir Alexander Grantham, GCMG; Governor of **Fiji** and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1944–47.

² Not published. Contained **General Freyberg's** proposals for the return of various reinforcement drafts to New Zealand. The

General requested the New Zealand Government to make representations to the United Kingdom Government regarding the provision of shipping.

³ The proposed visit by General Freyberg to South-East Asia Command did not take place.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

456 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

456

*The acting Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State
for Dominion Affairs*¹

21 June 1945

We are completing plans for a New Zealand land force for employment in operations in the war against **Japan**, very likely in **South-East Asia Command**, and these provide for a force of a capital strength of 16,000 men consisting of two brigade groups and units needed for lines of communication.

2. We are anxious that a suitable component should be added to this force in order to complete it to the strength of a division, so ensuring that it can fight to advantage and effectively as a unit of the forces deployed against **Japan**. We had it in mind, if this were agreeable to the Government of **Fiji** and yourself, that the Fiji Brigade, the majority of officers and NCOs of which are provided by New Zealand, might be attached to this force. We are aware that it was proposed to employ this brigade with the Australian forces but understand that this has not been pursued.

3. Recently we consulted **General Freyberg** regarding the use of the Fiji Brigade and he feels that good use could be made of their infantry battalions, their engineers and a number of men for small units. The approximate numbers would be: Divisional Defence and Employment Company, 250 other ranks; Brigade Defence Platoons (3 × 23), 69 other ranks; Field Company of Engineers, 259 other ranks; Infantry battalions (3 × 786), 2358 other ranks: Total, 2936 other ranks. First reinforcement for 1946, 500 other ranks. Grand total, 3436. We would

be glad if we could be informed, and early advice on this point would be appreciated, whether the Fiji Government and His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** would be agreeable to the employment of the Fiji Brigade with the New Zealand forces.

4. We would like it to be understood that we have not yet reached a final decision in this matter, and indeed such a decision will not be taken until Parliament meets and the provision of a land force from this Dominion has been settled. No details of our proposals have been released to the press, and in the meantime we would be grateful if the fullest reserve with respect to this proposal could be maintained. Should the proposed employment of the Fiji Brigade be accepted and the decision to provide a force approved, then arrangements regarding announcement will be concerted with the Governor of **Fiji** and yourself.

¹ Repeated to the Governor of **Fiji**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

457 – THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

457

The acting Prime Minister to General Freyberg

4 July 1945

Following is the text of a message dated 26 June from the Governor of **Fiji** to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, repeated to us for information, regarding the suggested employment of the Fiji Brigade with any New Zealand land force:

EMPLOYMENT OF FIJIAN TROOPS

‘1. I am agreeable to the new proposal and prefer it to the proposal now under consideration that the troops should be under Australian command, because of the previous association of Fijian troops with the New Zealand Army and the fact that there are a substantial number of New Zealand personnel in the Fijian forces.

‘2. At this stage I have the following comments:

(I assume that the presence of more than 2000 Japanese in
a) Shortland and **Choiseul** has not been overlooked. My telegram No. 83 refers. ¹ Copy is being sent by air mail to **Wellington**.

(The Fijian troops should be employed as an infantry brigade. The
b) first sentence of paragraph 3 of the telegram under reference [**No. 456**] seems to indicate that the Brigade may be split up, and I would not advise this.

(The following Fijian units are available: Infantry Brigade
c) Headquarters, with defence platoon and brigade section of Divisional Signals; three battalions; Brigade mobile workshops; detachment of **Army Service Corps**; bearer and nursing orderly sections. Reinforcements for 1946 can be found.

(Engineers will not be available because they are already
d) earmarked for Ocean and Nauru. See my telegram **No. 90** of 27 April

1944. ² Also, I could not supply divisional defence and employment companies and/or defence platoons for New Zealand brigades.

‘3. I assume that New Zealand is keeping **Australia** informed.’

The Commonwealth authorities, who had earlier accepted the use of this force, but only on the understanding that shipping would be provided from other than Australian resources, have been informed of the position and their agreement invited to the use of the Fiji Brigade with any New Zealand force. ³ You will be kept informed of developments.

¹ Not published.

² Not published.

³ The Prime Minister of **Australia** (Mr J. B. Chifley) advised the **New Zealand Government** on 30 July that the Commonwealth Government had no objection to the proposed use of the Fiji Brigade.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

4 JULY 1945

4 July 1945

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

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The Commonwealth authorities, who had earlier accepted the use of this force, but only on the understanding that shipping would be provided from other than Australian resources, have been informed of the position and their agreement invited to the use of the Fiji Brigade with any New Zealand force. ³ You will be kept informed of

developments.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

458 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

458

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

5 July 1945

As you are aware, plans for British participation in the Japanese war have until now been restricted to the **British Pacific Fleet**, the Very Long Range Bomber Force, to operations in **South-East Asia Command**, and to Australian operations under **United States** command in the South-West Pacific area.

2. The over-all objective in the war against **Japan** is to force the unconditional surrender of the Japanese by:

- (a) Lowering the Japanese ability and will to resist by establishing sea and air blockades, conducting an intensive air bombardment, and destroying Japanese naval and air strength.
- (b) Invading and seizing objectives in the industrial heart of **Japan**.

We have not hitherto planned to provide land forces to take part in operations against the Japanese main islands, but with the early capture of **Rangoon** ¹ and the prospect of the opening of the Malacca Straits before the end of the year, it has been possible to reconsider the whole problem.

3. A preliminary examination has shown that it might now be possible to provide a British Commonwealth force of some three to five divisions, carried in British shipping and supported by British naval forces and a small tactical air component. The whole force would be placed under **United States** command.

- 4. I am well aware that the [New Zealand Government](#) wish to take part in operations against [Japan](#), and therefore I propose, with your agreement, that the Headquarters and two infantry brigades of the New Zealand Division now in [Italy](#) should join this force, and that the Royal New Zealand Air Force should form part of the air component. Ships of the Royal New Zealand Navy are already operating with the [British Pacific Fleet](#).**
- 5. I am sending a similar proposal to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#).**
- 6. I am sure you would agree with me that a joint Commonwealth force of British, Australian, New Zealand, British-Indian and possibly Canadian divisions would form a striking demonstration of Commonwealth solidarity, and that it is important that we should share with the Americans the burden of the assault on [Japan](#). If you concur, I will approach the President to obtain agreement in principle to a proposal on these lines. It would then be for the staffs to work out the exact size, composition and role of the British Commonwealth force.**
- 7. In presenting our proposal to the Americans, we wish also to discuss the question of command in the South-West Pacific area.**
- 8. The United States Chiefs of Staff have recently proposed that they should hand over the South-West Pacific area, less the [Philippines](#) and the Admiralty Islands bases, to British command. They do not intend, however, to leave in this area any resources which it is possible to move further forward, and we are therefore loath to accept responsibility for this area at the time proposed (15 August).**
- 9. If our proposals for participation in the assault on [Japan](#) are accepted, however, it would clearly be desirable eventually to assume responsibility for the South-West Pacific area, particularly if the Australian Division were taken from that area.**
- 10. Our tentative proposals, therefore, would take the form that the [United States](#) should hand over responsibility for the South-West Pacific**

area, less the **Philippines**, as soon as practicable, probably after the recapture of **Singapore**, and that the Australian Chiefs of Staff, linked with the Combined Chiefs of Staff through the British Chiefs of Staff, should take over that part of the area east of the **Celebes**, while the remainder should come under the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia. Details of the boundaries must, of course, await broad agreement.

11. I would be grateful if you could give me your views on these proposals. A very early reply would be appreciated in order that the proposals may be discussed at the next conference.

¹ **Rangoon** had been recaptured on 2 May 1945.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

459 — THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

459

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*

14 July 1945

I received your telegram of 5 July shortly after my return to New Zealand, and I am very grateful to you for informing me of your ideas regarding the over-all strategy in the war against **Japan**, with which I am in general agreement. I note particularly your tentative proposals regarding the South-West Pacific area, and also the fact that you have addressed similar suggestions regarding a British Commonwealth force to the Prime Minister of **Australia** as well as to myself.

I am fully seized of the value and importance of providing a British Commonwealth force such as you have in mind, and I have no hesitation in assuring you that the units of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and Royal New Zealand Navy will be fully available if required. I regret, however, that I am not in a position to give you the definite undertaking you seek regarding the availability of New Zealand forces.

During my three months' absence, the whole question of the withdrawal of our forces from **Europe** and their further participation in the war against **Japan** has become a major political problem. The line taken by the Opposition at a by-election last month and by their Leader¹ in Parliament last week—to the effect that a land force should not be sent into the **Pacific** unless expressly asked for by the Chiefs of Staff—renders it necessary for me to discuss this matter with him in all its aspects. I feel that unless and until the Government and the Opposition are at one on this issue, and unless there is the largest degree of

unanimity in Parliament, a firm commitment cannot be entered into.

I will be unable to continue my discussions with Mr Holland and with my own people on this issue until after he and I have returned to **Wellington** following another by-election next week. I very much regret the delay which has occurred in regard to this matter, but the Government must give full consideration to the state of public opinion, as well as to the exigencies of manpower in the light of existing commitments.

The matter has been complicated further by pronouncements in New Zealand from American Admirals, in their well-meant endeavours to stress New Zealand's contribution to the war in the **Pacific**, urging the paramount necessity for concentrating our manpower resources on food production.

You will, I know, fully appreciate the imperative need for complete national unity before embarking on fresh military undertakings in what will be for us, as for you, the seventh year of this long and arduous war.

I will not fail to advise you as soon as I have been able to obtain a decision, which I trust will be shortly after my return to **Wellington**.

I send you with my warmest personal regards every good wish for a successful conference in **Berlin**.²

¹ Rt. Hon. Sir Sidney Holland, PC, CH, GCB (then Hon. S. G. **Holland**); Leader of the Opposition, 1940–49; Prime Minister of New Zealand, 1949–57; died **Wellington**, 5 Aug 1961.

² This was the **Potsdam** conference, attended by President Truman, Marshal Stalin, Mr Churchill and Mr Attlee.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

460 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

460

General Freyberg (London) to the Minister of Defence

3 August 1945

I am now in **London** and have had conferences with branches in the **War Office** to ensure that they appreciate our difficulties, which are considerable. I have also discussed the possible Order of Battle for the New Zealand forces to be used against the Japanese. As you are now aware, the **South-East Asia Command** theatre is rapidly becoming of secondary importance. I will keep you in touch with opinion here. It is quite clear that everything to do with our redeployment for the Japanese war is being arranged in **London**. Allied Force Headquarters, **Italy**, is not in the picture. As soon as the **New Zealand Government's** decision regarding the possible future participation of the New Zealand forces has been made, all necessary details of the move, equipment, shipping, etc., can be quickly and expeditiously arranged here. I therefore await your policy cable before working out any plans in detail, which would of course be submitted to the New Zealand War Cabinet first in the usual way.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

461 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

461

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*

4 August 1945

Your telegram of 31 July. ¹

Consideration has been given to the plans for British Commonwealth participation in the Japanese war, as set out in your telegram of 5 July [No. 458] and in the Prime Minister's summary of the major operational decisions reached in the Anglo-American military discussions at Berlin. ²

The difficulties I referred to in my telegram of 14 July [No. 459] have now been surmounted and proposals have now been approved by Parliament for participation in the British Commonwealth Force in the forthcoming operations against Japan.

It has been agreed that New Zealand shall contribute two infantry brigades with Headquarters and Line of Communication units, as suggested in paragraph 4 of your telegram [No. 458], and that the Royal New Zealand Air Force should form part of the air component. Ships of the Royal New Zealand Navy will continue to operate with the British Pacific Fleet.

This two-brigade force will be made up of 12,000 men now serving with the 2nd Division in the European theatre, together with 4000 troops at present held in New Zealand and a further contingent of 2000 reinforcements to be sent to the Middle East training centre this year. It is planned to send 3000 further reinforcements early in 1946.

Considerable difficulties are being experienced in New Zealand at the present time owing to manpower shortages which are gravely affecting production.

¹ See *The Defeat of Japan*, No. 468.

² Ibid.

In agreeing to the formation of this new land force, the Government and Parliament both consider that it is necessary at the same time to effect drastic reductions in the other two Services, including the air formations at present serving in the Pacific. Moreover, it will only be possible to provide the necessary men for the proposed land force from New Zealand if a sufficient number of suitable men are returned promptly from overseas to take their places in essential industry.

It is therefore most essential that the 20,000 men from the 2nd Division who are due to return to New Zealand to be demobilised should arrive at the earliest possible date, and I would be most grateful if urgent attention could be given to the solution of existing difficulties in regard to the provision of the requisite shipping, which is referred to in my [earlier] telegram. ¹

¹ See Vol. II, *Return of 2nd Division to New Zealand*, No. 471.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

462 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON)

462

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

4 August 1945

Parliament has now approved proposals for New Zealand's participation in the Commonwealth Land Force in the **Pacific, and it has been agreed that two infantry brigades with Headquarters and Line of Communication units should be made available. The establishment approved is 16,000. Two thousand reinforcements will be made available this year and the remaining 3000 early next year.**

Arrangements are now in hand for the despatch of the 16th Reinforcements from New Zealand.

I am informing the Secretary of State, and also requesting immediate advice regarding the shipping arrangements for the 20,000 men due for return from the **Middle East.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

463 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM² TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

463

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom² to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

4 August 1945

1. You will remember that in his telegram of 5 July [[No. 458](#)] Mr Churchill put to you a proposition for a British Commonwealth force of some five divisions to take part in the assault on the mainland of **Japan**. You replied in your telegram of 14 July [[No. 459](#)] that certain political difficulties made it impossible for you at the time to give a firm decision on the participation of a New Zealand contingent in the proposed force. In the meantime we have had discussions with the United States Chiefs of Staff at **Potsdam** and I now send you the result of these discussions.

2. Agreement was reached by the President and Mr Churchill on the recommendation of the Combined Chiefs of Staff that a British Commonwealth force should participate in the main operations against **Japan** next spring, subject to the resolution of operational and administration problems. These problems are to be worked out by the force commanders of the British Commonwealth force, in consultation with General MacArthur at his headquarters, as soon as possible. A plan will then be submitted for the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

3. Without prejudicing General MacArthur's recommendations, the Chiefs of Staff have come to the conclusion that his most likely plan will be something on the following lines. The British Commonwealth contribution would be a corps of three divisions to be used as an assault reserve afloat. The corps would be fought as an integral corps within the United States Army, though divisions might be used separately within

United States corps if the situation so required. A plan of this kind would necessitate the re-equipping of the British Commonwealth force with American equipment and the provision by the **United States** of the logistic support. It may also be possible to arrange for the inclusion of a small British Commonwealth tactical air force drawn largely from the Dominion air forces at present in the South-West Pacific area.

4. It seems from the present position of divisions that a corps could be formed by the use of one **United Kingdom**, one Canadian and one Australian division, as indeed has already been suggested by the **United States**. We would welcome the participation by a New Zealand division if you so wish. It would seem that this could best be employed in the build-up. We hope that, in any case, some of your squadrons will help to form the tactical air force if this materialises.

5. I should therefore be glad to know if you can yet give a decision on the use of a New Zealand contingent in these operations so that the force commanders can be suitably instructed before they leave for discussions with General MacArthur in the very near future.

6. Agreement in principle was also reached at **Potsdam** on the proposal for revision of the boundaries of command in the South-West Pacific outlined to you in telegram [**No. 458**]. It was left that the British Chiefs of Staff should obtain the agreement of yourselves, of the Australian Government and of the Dutch Government, and that they should investigate and report the earliest date on which the transfer of command could be effected. The Australian Government, as being the party chiefly interested in the operational implications, are sending a representative to **London** to take part in discussions here in the next few days with Admiral Mountbatten, and I should be very grateful if I might have your general views as soon as possible.

² The Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee became Prime Minister on 26 July 1945 after the defeat of Mr Churchill's government in the General Election.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

464 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

464

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

7 August 1945

This cable is to put the **New Zealand Government** in possession of the facts as seen by us in **London**.

1. I find that military opinion here is hardening against **South-East Asia Command** as a main theatre of operations for the **United Kingdom's** war effort against the Japanese. It is now proposed to send a mixed Empire force, equipped with American equipment, to fight under General MacArthur's command in operations against the mainland of **Japan**. **South-East Asia Command** now becomes of secondary importance in the nature of a series of mopping-up operations after the capture of **Singapore**.
2. In conversations in the **War Office** it is clear that they want the New Zealand force to take part in the new proposed operations and will ask, if they have not already done so, for permission to use the New Zealand force in these operations.
3. **CORONET**, the proposed operation, visualises three divisions, one each Australian, Canadian and British, and if possible the New Zealand Division as a fourth, but General MacArthur will have to agree to this.
4. The present project is still in the planning stage and is the result of the Berlin Conference. It envisages the British and New Zealand divisions at present in **Europe** moving to the **United Kingdom** and then concentrating as soon as possible in the **United States**, where they will draw American equipment. After a short period of training they would then move to the **Pacific**.

5. If the New Zealand Division is accepted, this proposal would appear to have much to recommend it from New Zealand's point of view. It enables us to get clear of jungle fighting and we will be used in our traditional role, together with all our guns and heavy equipment. In principle I am in agreement. I have never been in favour of the **South-East Asia Command** theatre of war for reasons I have already explained to the New Zealand War Cabinet in my earlier appreciation. ¹

6. The implementing of this new proposal presents a number of problems, which are not insurmountable. If the New Zealand War Cabinet agreed with the proposal, we would hand in all our British equipment in **Italy** and the 2nd NZEF would then have to divide into two groups, the 8th, 9th and 10th Reinforcements for repatriation to New Zealand, while the remaining 12,000 would be moved to the **United Kingdom** for short leave en route for the **United States of America**, to be joined in the **United States** by the 16th, 17th and possibly 18th Reinforcements.

7. In my inquiries in the **War Office** I have come to the conclusion that there is a great deal of manoeuvring going on here for shipping. I fear we are likely to suffer unless a firm line is taken by the **New Zealand Government**.

8. I heard unofficially that there is a proposal being formulated in military planning circles for the British division, which is to form part of CORONET, to take the shipping intended for the New Zealand forces to move it at an early date to the **United States**, the planning circles urging that the New Zealand Division could move to the **United States** after the other three divisions of the force have concentrated.

9. I must advise against this proposal should it be made to you. I feel that in view of the drastic nature of our reorganisation, a very early concentration in the **United States** is necessary. I will not attempt to go into any detail until the proposal is put to you in a concrete form, as it will be, by the United Kingdom Government.

10. The purpose of this cable is to let the New Zealand War Cabinet know what is happening here in the **United Kingdom**. I have not taken part in any of these **War Office** discussions or expressed any opinions. I have told the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that I am not in a position to discuss questions of major policy, which are purely a matter for the New Zealand War Cabinet. Time is a most important factor. When the decisions are finalised, I could work out all the movement plans here in **London** and then go back to **Italy** to see them implemented.

11. Would you please acknowledge this cable, and if **War Cabinet** can give me any early guidance as to their wishes, it will greatly assist me here in getting the whole involved problem sorted out.

¹ See Vol. II, No. 419, dated 19 Feb 1945. **General Freyberg** considered that operations in **South-East Asia Command** were of secondary importance and that the 'main and decisive battles for the defeat of **Japan**' would probably take place in **China**, **Manchuria** and **Japan** itself.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

465 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

465

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

11 August 1945

1. At a **War Office** conference held on 10 August we discussed the participation of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the CORONET project. Planning was subject to confirmation by (a) the **New Zealand Government** of its agreement to the use of the New Zealand Division for CORONET, and (b) General MacArthur to the inclusion of the New Zealand Division in the British Commonwealth corps to fight under his command. Provisional planning was completed for the concentration of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the **United Kingdom** for short leave before proceeding to the **United States of America** for equipping and final training.

2. As a result of the news of the Japanese surrender offer ¹ these above plans for CORONET are now at a standstill. I understand that the Dominions Office has already approached the **New Zealand Government** to find out New Zealand's reactions to the treatment of **Japan**.

3. As I can save a great deal of time by negotiating direct with the **War Office**, where the control of redeployment and shipping is centralised, I propose to remain in **London** pending receipt of your policy directive for the future employment of the 2nd NZEF. I would, however, appreciate your guidance as to the probable date of receipt of such a directive as, if an appreciable lapse of time is likely, it would be more convenient for me to return to **Italy** in the meantime.

¹ See *The Defeat of Japan*, No. 470.

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III**

THE DEFEAT OF JAPAN

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime Minister of New Zealand ¹

6 May 1945

Following for the information of the acting Prime Minister is a summary of the broad conclusions of an appreciation by our military advisers, dated 28 April 1945, on the Japanese strategy and capacity to resist:

‘1. The conclusions have taken into account approved and probable Allied operations, have assumed that **Germany** is defeated by 1 July 1945, and that **Russia** does not declare war on **Japan** before 1 October 1945.

‘2. The fall of the Koiso Government and its replacement by the Suzuki Government is not in itself significant. ² The constitution of the new Cabinet and the evidence available of its intentions suggest that, while **Japan** may be prepared to limit her ambitions in **China** and attempt to buy off **Russia**, she has no immediate intention of trying to negotiate a compromise peace with Great Britain and **America**, as the **Japanese Government** do not believe such a peace could at present be obtained.

‘3. The possibility cannot be excluded that, under the impact of the defeat of **Germany** and the intervention of **Russia**, the Japanese, rather than see the entire country laid waste, might later, under a new Government, be prepared to accept peace tantamount to unconditional surrender, though not necessarily so described to the Japanese people.

‘4. The Japanese Government have no illusions about the seriousness of the situation. The dominant features in Japanese eyes are the threat of imminent invasion, the likelihood of Russian intervention, the mounting Allied bombing offensive, the severance of the inner from

the outer zone, acute Japanese logistic difficulties, and the hopeless inadequacy of Japanese forces and war production.

‘5. The Japanese strategy in the inner zone is to try to build up as quickly as possible the defence of the islands of **Japan** and **Manchuria**, **Korea** and northern **China**. **Japan** appreciates that the invasion of **Japan** by Anglo-American forces is more imminent than the invasion of **Manchuria** by the Russians.

‘6. **Japan's** strategy in the outer zone, where her forces have little prospect of further reinforcement, or even replacement, from the inner zone, is to prolong her defence of **Burma** while concentrating small land forces in defence of key areas of **Malaya**, **Siam** and Indo- **China**, where they can best hope to pin down the maximum Allied forces and prevent the British in the **Indian Ocean** linking up with the Americans in the **Pacific** and so becoming available for the final battle of **Japan**. At the same time they are apprehensive of Allied attacks from the north-east on **Borneo**, and thereafter on the coast of **French Indo-China**.

‘7. **Japan's** war production, hampered by inadequate transport within the inner zone and subject to ever-increasing destruction by Allied bombers, will continue to decline.

‘8. For the defence of the inner zone **Japan** may deploy by 1 October 1945 some ninety-six divisions with a total strength of some 3,100,000 men, but these forces are still widely scattered and an acute shortage of shipping will prevent the rapid transfer of uncommitted forces to the battle area. The bulk of the Japanese air force and navy are already concentrated in the inner zone. These forces will be increasingly used in a suicide role.

‘9. In the outer zone **Japan's** land forces are already small and likely to be subjected to further serious losses by operations in **Burma**, by further Allied operations in South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific, and by normal wastage. By April 1946 they will be incapable of anything save purely delaying actions. Japanese air and naval forces in this zone

already have nothing but a small nuisance value.'

¹ Repeated to the **United Kingdom** delegation at **San Francisco**.

² General Kuniaki Koiso succeeded General Tojo on 19 Jul 1944 as Prime Minister; he resigned on 5 Apr 1945 and was succeeded by Admiral Baron Suzuki.

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The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

11 July 1945

My telegram of 6 May. Following for the Prime Minister is a summary of a recent appreciation by our military advisers on Japanese dispositions, strength and intentions in South-East Asia:

'1. Territories still occupied by the Japanese in the South-East Asia area have now lost most of their economic importance to **Japan**, but as continued possession of these territories denies their economic resources to the Allies and pins down large Allied forces which would otherwise be available for attacks on **Japan** itself, these outer territories are still of strategic value.

'2. **Japan's** strategy in this area is designed to impose the greatest possible delay upon the Allies and prevent the linking up of the British and **United States** forces.

'3. The Japanese seem to have decided not to keep open the overland route through south **China** to South-East Asia, and with the sea routes virtually cut, no withdrawals or reinforcements of men or munitions are likely to or from **Japan** or her territories in the north. Her forces in this outer zone are inadequate for the defence of all the areas she now holds, and she will continue to regroup them as best she can so as to concentrate the greatest possible strength for the defence of **Siam**, Indo-

China, Malaya, and the sea approaches to the South China Sea via the Malacca and Sunda Straits. To this end she is trying to thin out her forces in the less strategically important islands and territories, though this process of concentration is being made increasingly laborious, slow and costly by Allied operations.

468

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

31 July 1945

I send you herewith for your personal information a summary of the major operational decisions reached in Anglo-American military discussions at Berlin.

General Policy:

2. It was agreed that the invasion of Japan and operations directly connected therewith should be the supreme operations in the war against Japan. Forces and resources will be allocated on the required scale to assure that invasion can be accomplished at the earliest practicable date. No other operations will be undertaken which hazard the success of or delay these main operations.

Strategic Direction of the War:

3. It was agreed—

(**Control of operational strategy in the Pacific theatre will remain a) in the hands of the United States Chiefs of Staff, who will provide the British Chiefs of Staff with full and timely information on future plans and intentions.**

(**The United States Chiefs of Staff will consult the British Chiefs of b) Staff on matters of general strategy, on the understanding that in the event of disagreement the final decisions on the action to be taken will lie with the United States Chiefs of Staff.**

(**Should the British Chiefs of Staff decide that they cannot commit c) British troops in support of a decision made by the United States**

Chiefs of Staff as indicated in (b) above, they will give to the United States Chiefs of Staff such advance notice of their decision as will permit the latter to make timely rearrangements.

(If the **USSR** enters the war against **Japan** the strategy to be d) pursued will be discussed between the parties concerned.

Operations in the Pacific:

4. The plan for operations in the **Pacific** is first to intensify the blockade and air bombardment of **Japan** in order to create a situation favourable to an assault on Kyushu. Thereafter the blockade and air bombardment will be intensified in order to establish a tactical condition favourable to the decisive invasion of **Honshu**.

5. Planning is premised on the belief that the defeat of the enemy's armed forces in the Japanese homeland is a prerequisite to unconditional surrender, and that such defeat will establish the optimum prospect of capitulation by Japanese forces outside the main Japanese islands.

British Commonwealth Participation in Operations in the Pacific Theatre:

6. The **British Pacific Fleet** will participate as at present planned. A British VLR ¹ bomber force of ten squadrons, increasing to twenty squadrons when more airfields become available, will participate. It was agreed in principle that a Commonwealth land force and, if possible, a small tactical air force should take part in the final phase of the war against **Japan**, subject to the satisfactory resolution of logistical and other problems.

7. The participation of this Commonwealth land force is the subject of separate communications to the Dominion Governments concerned. ²

Operations in South-East Asia Command:

8. A directive has been approved for issue to Admiral Mountbatten. His primary task is to open the **Straits of Malacca** at the earliest possible

moment. Thereafter operations are to continue in the outer

¹ Very Long Range.

² See *Proposals for Participation in Operations against Japan, No. 458*. Replying to an inquiry from the **New Zealand Government**, the Dominions Secretary on 1 August explained that the reference in paragraph 7 above was to Mr Churchill's earlier telegram (**No. 458**) and not to any future communication.

zone to the extent that forces and resources permit. The order of priority for these operations has been laid down as:

(The completion of the liberation of **Malaya**.

a)

(The maintenance of pressure on the Japanese across the **Burma-Siam** frontier.

(The capture of key areas in **Siam**.

c)

(The establishment of bridgeheads in **Java** and/or **Sumatra** to enable the subsequent clearance of these areas to be undertaken in due course.

9. It has been agreed that the eastern boundary of **South-East Asia Command** will be extended to include **Borneo, Java** and the **Celebes**. This extension of command and rearrangement in the South-West Pacific is the subject of separate communications to the Australian and New Zealand Governments. ¹ When agreement has been reached with them agreement with the Dutch Government will be sought.

10. A proposal is to be put to Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek** that that part of Indo- **China** lying south of latitude 16 degrees north should be transferred to the area of **South-East Asia Command**.

French and Dutch Participation in the War Against Japan:

11. While it is at present impracticable on account of logistical difficulties for French or Dutch armed forces to take a major part in the

immediate operations in the **Far East**, the provision of such assistance as may be synchronised with the operations is to be taken into account. The use of French or Dutch forces will depend solely on military considerations, and the French and Dutch representatives will be given timely information of intentions affecting their territories or armed forces in the **Far East**. The French have offered a corps of two infantry divisions to serve in the **Pacific** war. This offer has been accepted in principle, but it will not be possible to commit the corps to operations prior to the spring of 1946. The place where the corps will operate will be determined later.

*Planning Date for the End of Organised Resistance by **Japan**:*

12. Subject to periodical adjustment, 15 November 1946 has been adopted as the planning date for the end of organised resistance by **Japan**. This is for the purpose of planning production and the allocation of manpower.

Cargo Shipping:

13. Present estimates indicate the position to be sufficiently manageable to provide for the maximum effort in the prosecution of the war against **Japan**, for the maintenance of the war-making capacity of the

¹ Not published.

British Commonwealth of Nations and the Western Hemisphere in so far as it is connected with the prosecution of the war against **Japan**, and for other essential programmes.

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The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ¹ to the Prime Minister of New Zealand ²

7 August 1945

Text of Three-Power Proclamation to Japan: ³

‘1. We, the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end the war.

‘2. The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

‘3. The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, will mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and, just as inevitably, the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

‘4. The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.

‘5. The following are our terms. We shall not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

¹ Viscount Addison succeeded Viscount Cranborne on 3 Aug 1945.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#).

³ This was the ultimatum to [Japan](#) demanding unconditional surrender, issued from [Potsdam](#) on 26 Jul 1945. New Zealand and [Australia](#) protested that the ultimatum had been issued and published without their prior knowledge or concurrence. On 7 August the Dominions Secretary expressed regret that the proclamation 'should have been issued without previous communication with Dominion Governments.'

'6. There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of [Japan](#) into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

'7. Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that [Japan](#)'s war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

'8. The terms of the Cairo Declaration ¹ shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of [Honshu](#), Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.

'9. The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

'10. We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights, shall be established.

‘11. Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those industries which would enable her to rearm for war. To this end access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

‘12. The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established, in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people, a peacefully inclined and responsible Government.

‘13. We call upon the Government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.’²

¹ The chief of these terms stated the Allies' determination to procure the unconditional surrender of **Japan** and to expel her from all territories seized or occupied.

² At 8.15 a.m. Japanese time on 6 August an atomic bomb was dropped on **Hiroshima**; a second bomb was dropped on **Nagasaki** at 11.02 a.m. on 9 August.

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The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

10 August 1945

Cabinet this afternoon considered today's Japanese broadcast, which is the only intimation we have so far received of **Japan's** desire to surrender.¹ Cabinet felt that further consideration must be given to the precise meaning of the Japanese reservation regarding the position of the Emperor. They accordingly decided to issue an announcement to the

effect that we are in consultation with our Allies as to the position, and that in the meantime all concerned should carry on. The text will be telegraphed to you when finally settled. We are also telegraphing to the Governments of the **United States**, **Russia**² and **China** asking for their views. We would be grateful if you would telegraph at once any observations which you may wish to make.

¹ A broadcast from **Tokyo** on 10 August announced that the **Japanese Government** had sent a message through the Swiss and Swedish Governments to the British, American, Chinese and Russian Governments saying that they were prepared to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration of 26 July, 'with the understanding that the said Declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty [the Emperor] as a sovereign ruler.'

² **Russia** declared war on **Japan** as from midnight on 8–9 August.

471

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

10 August 1945

His Majesty's representative at **Stockholm**³ reports that the Swedish Foreign Minister⁴ asked him and his Soviet colleague to call on him urgently today to receive the text of a communication received today from the Japanese Minister. The original telegram from **Tokyo** is in Japanese and promises that the official English text will follow. An interim English text has been made locally in the Japanese Legation in **Stockholm** and may therefore differ from the text handed at the request of the **Japanese Government** to the United States Minister⁵ and the Chinese Minister in Berne. M. Undén asked them to preserve the utmost secrecy, but agreed to their telling **United States** and Chinese colleagues in confidence.

2. The interim text, dated 10 August, is as follows:

‘In accordance with the desire of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan to bring peace as soon as possible in order to prevent humanity from further disasters of war, the Japanese Government had asked the Soviet Government, who were maintaining neutral relations with Japan with regard to the war of Greater East Asia, to use their good offices. Unfortunately, however, the above efforts of the Japanese Government to bring peace did not bear fruit. Hereupon the Japanese Government, based upon the above-mentioned desire for peace of His Majesty the Emperor, earnestly wishing to remove immediately further disasters of war and to bring peace, have made the following decision. The Japanese Government accept the Potsdam Proclamation to Japan with the clear understanding that the terms of the Joint Proclamation to Japan, which was decided upon and published jointly by the leaders of the United States, Great Britain and China on 26 July 1945 at Potsdam, and to which the Soviet Government participated later, do not contain in any way a request for change of sovereignty of His Majesty the Emperor.¹ The Japanese Government earnestly hope the above understanding of the Japanese Government is correct, and that the intention of your Government on this point will be made clear at the earliest moment. The Japanese Government have the honour to request the Swedish Government to convey the above to the British Government and to the Soviet Government respectively without delay.’

³ Sir Bertrand Jerram, KCMG (then Mr C. B. Jerram); Minister in Stockholm, 1945–47; Ambassador, 1947–48.

⁴ M. B. O. Undén, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵ Mr Leland Harrison, United States Minister to Switzerland, 1937–47.

¹ The official English text of this Note reads: ‘... does not

comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler.’

472

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

11 August 1945

My telegram of 10 August [**No. 471**]

The following message from the United States Secretary of State ² was delivered tonight by the United States Ambassador: ³

‘1. This Government proposes that a reply as quoted in paragraph 3 be made to the **Japanese Government's** acceptance of the Potsdam Proclamation.

‘2. In order that hostilities may be terminated and further loss of life be prevented, this Government hopes that the British Government will associate itself with this Government in making an early reply as quoted in paragraph 3.

‘3. With regard to the **Japanese Government's** message accepting the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation but containing the statement, “with the understanding that the said Declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler”, our position is as follows:

“From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the **Japanese Government** to rule the State shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, ¹ who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms. The Emperor and the Japanese High Command will be required to sign the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, to issue orders to all the armed forces of **Japan** to cease hostilities and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme

Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms. Immediately upon the surrender the **Japanese Government** shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports. The ultimate form of government of **Japan** shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. The armed forces of the Allied powers will remain in **Japan** until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.”

The following reply has been given to the United States Ambassador:

‘We have examined your draft. While agreeing in principle, we desire to make certain amendments on the ground that we doubt if it is wise to ask the Emperor personally to sign the surrender terms, and therefore we would suggest the following:

“The Emperor shall authorise and ensure the signature by the Government of **Japan** and the Japanese General Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control, wherever located, to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, etc. (as in your draft).”

‘This is in keeping with Clause 13 of the Potsdam Declaration. This, we believe, also will secure the immediate surrender of Japanese in all outlying areas and thereby save American, British and Allied lives. We presume that if we are in accord on these terms we should get the agreement of Generalissimo Stalin and Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek**. We trust you will agree.’

² Mr James F. Byrnes succeeded Mr E. R. Stettinius as Secretary of State on 1 July.

³ Mr J. G. Winant.

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The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

11 August 1945

If the Japanese surrender is accepted during the next few days, we assume that the **United States** will take the lead on all general matters such as the draft armistice terms, arrangements to meet plenipotentiaries and so forth, and we are awaiting their proposals. Meanwhile we ourselves are giving urgent consideration to plans and preparations for taking surrenders and occupying various areas in **South-East Asia Command**.

2. We shall of course keep you currently informed of developments here.

3. In view of the urgency of the situation we are also arranging for our Joint Staff Mission in **Washington** to keep in closest touch with their Dominion colleagues as regards military plans and developments. We suggest, therefore, that you should keep both us and your representatives at **Washington** informed of your views and comments.

474

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

11 August 1945

Following is the text of the Note sent by the United States Government to the Swiss Government for the **Japanese Government**:

‘I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Note of 10 August ¹ and in reply to inform you that the President of the **United States** has directed me to send to you for transmission by your

Government to the **Japanese Government** the following message on behalf of the Governments of the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and **China**:

“With regard to the **Japanese Government's** message accepting the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation but containing the statement, ‘with the understanding that the said Declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler’, our position is as follows:

“From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the **Japanese Government** to rule the State shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

“The Emperor will be required to authorise and ensure the signature by the Government of **Japan** and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control, wherever located, to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.

“Immediately upon the surrender the **Japanese Government** shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.

“The ultimate form of government of **Japan** shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

“The armed forces of the Allied powers will remain in **Japan** until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.”

‘Accept, sir, etc.’

475

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

15 August 1945

Victory in **Europe** has been speedily followed by the surrender of the last of our foes. ¹ On behalf of the Government and people of this country I send this message of congratulation to our kinsfolk in New Zealand. Our hearts have gone out to the people of the Dominion in the anxieties which have so long beset them and today we join with them in rejoicing and thanksgiving for victory. New Zealand was with us from the moment when, nearly six years ago, war was loosed upon the world, and in many widely separated theatres of war her sons have added lustre to her name. Their feats of arms, whether on distant seas, on the European and African continents, or in the air warfare, are the admiration of the world and worthily compare with those of the earlier generation when, in the furnace of conflict, New Zealand proved her title to nationhood. We hail also the work of all those who in field or workshop have contributed to the material resources without which human effort would be powerless to conquer. Through long years of toil New Zealand has never failed to provide of her best in all that lay within her power. We are now called to finish the work so well begun, to build a new world whence the scourge of war and the fear of aggression have been removed, to repair the devastation which these years have brought in their train and to open up the prospect of hope to all those who still sit in darkness. In all these efforts we know that we can count on the willing partnership and unfailing help of New Zealand. From all our hearts we thank you.

¹ An announcement by President Truman and Mr Attlee that **Japan** had accepted the Allied demand for unconditional surrender was made at midnight on 14 August. The instrument

of surrender was signed on behalf of the [New Zealand Government](#) by Air Vice-Marshal L. M. Isitt, Chief of the New Zealand Air Staff, on 2 September. The surrender took place on board Admiral Halsey's flagship, USS *Missouri*, in Tokyo Bay.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

466 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

466

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the acting Prime
Minister of New Zealand*¹

6 May 1945

Following for the information of the acting Prime Minister is a summary of the broad conclusions of an appreciation by our military advisers, dated 28 April 1945, on the Japanese strategy and capacity to resist:

‘1. The conclusions have taken into account approved and probable Allied operations, have assumed that **Germany** is defeated by 1 July 1945, and that **Russia** does not declare war on **Japan** before 1 October 1945.

‘2. The fall of the Koiso Government and its replacement by the Suzuki Government is not in itself significant.² The constitution of the new Cabinet and the evidence available of its intentions suggest that, while **Japan** may be prepared to limit her ambitions in **China** and attempt to buy off **Russia**, she has no immediate intention of trying to negotiate a compromise peace with Great Britain and **America**, as the **Japanese Government** do not believe such a peace could at present be obtained.

‘3. The possibility cannot be excluded that, under the impact of the defeat of **Germany** and the intervention of **Russia**, the Japanese, rather than see the entire country laid waste, might later, under a new Government, be prepared to accept peace tantamount to unconditional surrender, though not necessarily so described to the Japanese people.

‘4. The Japanese Government have no illusions about the seriousness of the situation. The dominant features in Japanese eyes are the threat of imminent invasion, the likelihood of Russian intervention, the mounting Allied bombing offensive, the severance of the inner from the outer zone, acute Japanese logistic difficulties, and the hopeless inadequacy of Japanese forces and war production.

‘5. The Japanese strategy in the inner zone is to try to build up as quickly as possible the defence of the islands of **Japan and **Manchuria**, **Korea** and northern **China**. **Japan** appreciates that the invasion of **Japan** by Anglo-American forces is more imminent than the invasion of **Manchuria** by the Russians.**

‘6. **Japan's strategy in the outer zone, where her forces have little prospect of further reinforcement, or even replacement, from the inner zone, is to prolong her defence of **Burma** while concentrating small land forces in defence of key areas of **Malaya**, **Siam** and Indo- **China**, where they can best hope to pin down the maximum Allied forces and prevent the British in the **Indian Ocean** linking up with the Americans in the **Pacific** and so becoming available for the final battle of **Japan**. At the same time they are apprehensive of Allied attacks from the north-east on **Borneo**, and thereafter on the coast of **French Indo-China**.**

‘7. **Japan's war production, hampered by inadequate transport within the inner zone and subject to ever-increasing destruction by Allied bombers, will continue to decline.**

‘8. For the defence of the inner zone **Japan may deploy by 1 October 1945 some ninety-six divisions with a total strength of some 3,100,000 men, but these forces are still widely scattered and an acute shortage of shipping will prevent the rapid transfer of uncommitted forces to the battle area. The bulk of the Japanese air force and navy are already concentrated in the inner zone. These forces will be increasingly used in a suicide role.**

‘9. In the outer zone **Japan's land forces are already small and likely**

to be subjected to further serious losses by operations in **Burma**, by further Allied operations in South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific, and by normal wastage. By April 1946 they will be incapable of anything save purely delaying actions. Japanese air and naval forces in this zone already have nothing but a small nuisance value.'

¹ Repeated to the **United Kingdom** delegation at **San Francisco**.

² General Kuniaki Koiso succeeded General Tojo on 19 Jul 1944 as Prime Minister; he resigned on 5 Apr 1945 and was succeeded by Admiral Baron Suzuki.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

467 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

467

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

11 July 1945

My telegram of 6 May. Following for the Prime Minister is a summary of a recent appreciation by our military advisers on Japanese dispositions, strength and intentions in South-East Asia:

‘1. Territories still occupied by the Japanese in the South-East Asia area have now lost most of their economic importance to **Japan**, but as continued possession of these territories denies their economic resources to the Allies and pins down large Allied forces which would otherwise be available for attacks on **Japan** itself, these outer territories are still of strategic value.

‘2. **Japan's** strategy in this area is designed to impose the greatest possible delay upon the Allies and prevent the linking up of the British and **United States** forces.

‘3. The Japanese seem to have decided not to keep open the overland route through south **China** to South-East Asia, and with the sea routes virtually cut, no withdrawals or reinforcements of men or munitions are likely to or from **Japan** or her territories in the north. Her forces in this outer zone are inadequate for the defence of all the areas she now holds, and she will continue to regroup them as best she can so as to concentrate the greatest possible strength for the defence of **Siam**, **Indo-China**, **Malaya**, and the sea approaches to the South China Sea via the Malacca and **Sunda Straits**. To this end she is trying to thin out her

forces in the less strategically important islands and territories, though this process of concentration is being made increasingly laborious, slow and costly by Allied operations.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

468 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

468

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

31 July 1945

I send you herewith for your personal information a summary of the major operational decisions reached in Anglo-American military discussions at **Berlin**.

General Policy:

2. It was agreed that the invasion of **Japan** and operations directly connected therewith should be the supreme operations in the war against **Japan**. Forces and resources will be allocated on the required scale to assure that invasion can be accomplished at the earliest practicable date. No other operations will be undertaken which hazard the success of or delay these main operations.

Strategic Direction of the War:

3. It was agreed—

(Control of operational strategy in the **Pacific** theatre will remain
a) in the hands of the United States Chiefs of Staff, who will provide the British Chiefs of Staff with full and timely information on future plans and intentions.

(The United States Chiefs of Staff will consult the British Chiefs of
b) Staff on matters of general strategy, on the understanding that in the event of disagreement the final decisions on the action to be taken will lie with the United States Chiefs of Staff.

(Should the British Chiefs of Staff decide that they cannot commit
c) British troops in support of a decision made by the United States

Chiefs of Staff as indicated in (b) above, they will give to the United States Chiefs of Staff such advance notice of their decision as will permit the latter to make timely rearrangements.

(If the **USSR** enters the war against **Japan** the strategy to be d) pursued will be discussed between the parties concerned.

Operations in the Pacific:

4. The plan for operations in the **Pacific** is first to intensify the blockade and air bombardment of **Japan** in order to create a situation favourable to an assault on Kyushu. Thereafter the blockade and air bombardment will be intensified in order to establish a tactical condition favourable to the decisive invasion of **Honshu**.

5. Planning is premised on the belief that the defeat of the enemy's armed forces in the Japanese homeland is a prerequisite to unconditional surrender, and that such defeat will establish the optimum prospect of capitulation by Japanese forces outside the main Japanese islands.

British Commonwealth Participation in Operations in the Pacific Theatre:

6. The **British Pacific Fleet** will participate as at present planned. A British VLR ¹ bomber force of ten squadrons, increasing to twenty squadrons when more airfields become available, will participate. It was agreed in principle that a Commonwealth land force and, if possible, a small tactical air force should take part in the final phase of the war against **Japan**, subject to the satisfactory resolution of logistical and other problems.

7. The participation of this Commonwealth land force is the subject of separate communications to the Dominion Governments concerned. ²

Operations in South-East Asia Command:

8. A directive has been approved for issue to Admiral Mountbatten. His primary task is to open the **Straits of Malacca** at the earliest possible moment. Thereafter operations are to continue in the outer

¹ Very Long Range.

² See *Proposals for Participation in Operations against Japan*, No. 458. Replying to an inquiry from the **New Zealand Government**, the Dominions Secretary on 1 August explained that the reference in paragraph 7 above was to Mr Churchill's earlier telegram (**No. 458**) and not to any future communication.

zone to the extent that forces and resources permit. The order of priority for these operations has been laid down as:

- (The completion of the liberation of **Malaya**.
- a)
- (The maintenance of pressure on the Japanese across the **Burma-**
- b) **Siam** frontier.
- (The capture of key areas in **Siam**.
- c)
- (The establishment of bridgeheads in **Java** and/or **Sumatra** to
- d) enable the subsequent clearance of these areas to be undertaken in due course.

9. It has been agreed that the eastern boundary of **South-East Asia Command** will be extended to include **Borneo**, **Java** and the **Celebes**. This extension of command and rearrangement in the South-West Pacific is the subject of separate communications to the Australian and New Zealand Governments. ¹ When agreement has been reached with them agreement with the Dutch Government will be sought.

10. A proposal is to be put to Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek** that that part of Indo- **China** lying south of latitude 16 degrees north should be transferred to the area of **South-East Asia Command**.

French and Dutch Participation in the War Against Japan:

11. While it is at present impracticable on account of logistical difficulties for French or Dutch armed forces to take a major part in the immediate operations in the **Far East**, the provision of such assistance

as may be synchronised with the operations is to be taken into account. The use of French or Dutch forces will depend solely on military considerations, and the French and Dutch representatives will be given timely information of intentions affecting their territories or armed forces in the **Far East**. The French have offered a corps of two infantry divisions to serve in the **Pacific** war. This offer has been accepted in principle, but it will not be possible to commit the corps to operations prior to the spring of 1946. The place where the corps will operate will be determined later.

Planning Date for the End of Organised Resistance by Japan:

12. Subject to periodical adjustment, 15 November 1946 has been adopted as the planning date for the end of organised resistance by **Japan**. This is for the purpose of planning production and the allocation of manpower.

Cargo Shipping:

13. Present estimates indicate the position to be sufficiently manageable to provide for the maximum effort in the prosecution of the war against **Japan**, for the maintenance of the war-making capacity of the

¹ Not published.

British Commonwealth of Nations and the Western Hemisphere in so far as it is connected with the prosecution of the war against **Japan, and for other essential programmes.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

469 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND²

469

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs¹ to the Prime Minister
of New Zealand²*

7 August 1945

Text of Three-Power Proclamation to Japan:³

‘1. We, the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end the war.

‘2. The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

‘3. The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, will mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and, just as inevitably, the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

‘4. The time has come for [Japan](#) to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the empire of [Japan](#) to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.

‘5. The following are our terms. We shall not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

¹ Viscount Addison succeeded Viscount Cranborne on 3 Aug 1945.

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#).

³ This was the ultimatum to [Japan](#) demanding unconditional surrender, issued from [Potsdam](#) on 26 Jul 1945. New Zealand and [Australia](#) protested that the ultimatum had been issued and published without their prior knowledge or concurrence. On 7 August the Dominions Secretary expressed regret that the proclamation ‘should have been issued without previous communication with Dominion Governments.’

‘6. There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of [Japan](#) into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

‘7. Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that [Japan](#)'s war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

‘8. The terms of the Cairo Declaration ¹ shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of [Honshu](#), Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.

‘9. The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

‘10. We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights, shall be established.

‘11. **Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those industries which would enable her to rearm for war. To this end access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.**

‘12. The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from **Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established, in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people, a peacefully inclined and responsible Government.**

‘13. We call upon the Government of **Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for **Japan** is prompt and utter destruction.’²**

¹ The chief of these terms stated the Allies' determination to procure the unconditional surrender of **Japan** and to expel her from all territories seized or occupied.

² At 8.15 a.m. Japanese time on 6 August an atomic bomb was dropped on **Hiroshima**; a second bomb was dropped on **Nagasaki** at 11.02 a.m. on 9 August.



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

470 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

470

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

10 August 1945

Cabinet this afternoon considered today's Japanese broadcast, which is the only intimation we have so far received of **Japan's** desire to surrender. ¹ Cabinet felt that further consideration must be given to the precise meaning of the Japanese reservation regarding the position of the Emperor. They accordingly decided to issue an announcement to the effect that we are in consultation with our Allies as to the position, and that in the meantime all concerned should carry on. The text will be telegraphed to you when finally settled. We are also telegraphing to the Governments of the **United States**, **Russia** ² and **China** asking for their views. We would be grateful if you would telegraph at once any observations which you may wish to make.

¹ A broadcast from **Tokyo** on 10 August announced that the **Japanese Government** had sent a message through the Swiss and Swedish Governments to the British, American, Chinese and Russian Governments saying that they were prepared to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration of 26 July, 'with the understanding that the said Declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty [the Emperor] as a sovereign ruler.'

² **Russia** declared war on **Japan** as from midnight on 8–9 August.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

471 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

471

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

10 August 1945

His Majesty's representative at **Stockholm**³ reports that the Swedish Foreign Minister⁴ asked him and his Soviet colleague to call on him urgently today to receive the text of a communication received today from the Japanese Minister. The original telegram from **Tokyo** is in Japanese and promises that the official English text will follow. An interim English text has been made locally in the Japanese Legation in **Stockholm** and may therefore differ from the text handed at the request of the **Japanese Government** to the United States Minister⁵ and the Chinese Minister in Berne. M. Undén asked them to preserve the utmost secrecy, but agreed to their telling **United States** and Chinese colleagues in confidence.

2. The interim text, dated 10 August, is as follows:

‘In accordance with the desire of His Majesty the Emperor of **Japan** to bring peace as soon as possible in order to prevent humanity from further disasters of war, the **Japanese Government** had asked the Soviet Government, who were maintaining neutral relations with **Japan** with regard to the war of Greater East Asia, to use their good offices. Unfortunately, however, the above efforts of the **Japanese Government** to bring peace did not bear fruit. Hereupon the **Japanese Government**, based upon the above-mentioned desire for peace of His Majesty the Emperor, earnestly wishing to remove immediately further disasters of war and to bring peace, have made the following decision. The Japanese

Government accept the Potsdam Proclamation to Japan with the clear understanding that the terms of the Joint Proclamation to Japan, which was decided upon and published jointly by the leaders of the United States, Great Britain and China on 26 July 1945 at Potsdam, and to which the Soviet Government participated later, do not contain in any way a request for change of sovereignty of His Majesty the Emperor.¹ The Japanese Government earnestly hope the above understanding of the Japanese Government is correct, and that the intention of your Government on this point will be made clear at the earliest moment. The Japanese Government have the honour to request the Swedish Government to convey the above to the British Government and to the Soviet Government respectively without delay.'

³ Sir Bertrand Jerram, KCMG (then Mr C. B. Jerram); Minister in Stockholm, 1945–47; Ambassador, 1947–48.

⁴ M. B. O. Undén, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵ Mr Leland Harrison, United States Minister to Switzerland, 1937–47.

¹ The official English text of this Note reads: '... does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

472 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

472

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

11 August 1945

My telegram of 10 August [**No. 471**]

The following message from the United States Secretary of State ²
was delivered tonight by the United States Ambassador: ³

‘1. This Government proposes that a reply as quoted in paragraph 3
be made to the **Japanese Government's** acceptance of the Potsdam
Proclamation.

‘2. In order that hostilities may be terminated and further loss of life
be prevented, this Government hopes that the British Government will
associate itself with this Government in making an early reply as quoted
in paragraph 3.

‘3. With regard to the **Japanese Government's** message accepting the
terms of the Potsdam Proclamation but containing the statement, “with
the understanding that the said Declaration does not comprise any
demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign
ruler”, our position is as follows:

“From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and
the **Japanese Government** to rule the State shall be subject to the
Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, ¹ who will take such steps as
he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms. The Emperor and the
Japanese High Command will be required to sign the surrender terms

necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, to issue orders to all the armed forces of **Japan** to cease hostilities and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms. Immediately upon the surrender the **Japanese Government** shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports. The ultimate form of government of **Japan** shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. The armed forces of the Allied powers will remain in **Japan** until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.”

The following reply has been given to the United States Ambassador:

‘We have examined your draft. While agreeing in principle, we desire to make certain amendments on the ground that we doubt if it is wise to ask the Emperor personally to sign the surrender terms, and therefore we would suggest the following:

“The Emperor shall authorise and ensure the signature by the Government of **Japan** and the Japanese General Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control, wherever located, to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, etc. (as in your draft).”

‘This is in keeping with Clause 13 of the Potsdam Declaration. This, we believe, also will secure the immediate surrender of Japanese in all outlying areas and thereby save American, British and Allied lives. We presume that if we are in accord on these terms we should get the agreement of Generalissimo Stalin and Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek**. We trust you will agree.’

² Mr James F. Byrnes succeeded Mr E. R. Stettinius as Secretary

of State on 1 July.

³ Mr J. G. Winant.

¹ General MacArthur.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

473 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

473

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

11 August 1945

If the Japanese surrender is accepted during the next few days, we assume that the **United States** will take the lead on all general matters such as the draft armistice terms, arrangements to meet plenipotentiaries and so forth, and we are awaiting their proposals. Meanwhile we ourselves are giving urgent consideration to plans and preparations for taking surrenders and occupying various areas in **South-East Asia Command**.

2. We shall of course keep you currently informed of developments here.

3. In view of the urgency of the situation we are also arranging for our Joint Staff Mission in **Washington** to keep in closest touch with their Dominion colleagues as regards military plans and developments. We suggest, therefore, that you should keep both us and your representatives at **Washington** informed of your views and comments.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

474 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

474

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

11 August 1945

Following is the text of the Note sent by the United States
Government to the Swiss Government for the **Japanese Government**:

‘I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Note of 10
August ¹ and in reply to inform you that the President of the **United
States** has directed me to send to you for transmission by your
Government to the **Japanese Government** the following message on
behalf of the Governments of the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**,
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and **China**:

“With regard to the **Japanese Government**'s message accepting the
terms of the Potsdam Proclamation but containing the statement, ‘with
the understanding that the said Declaration does not comprise any
demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign
ruler’, our position is as follows:

“From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and
the **Japanese Government** to rule the State shall be subject to the
Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, who will take such steps as he
deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

“The Emperor will be required to authorise and ensure the signature
by the Government of **Japan** and the Japanese Imperial General
Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the
provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, and shall issue his commands to

all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control, wherever located, to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.

“Immediately upon the surrender the **Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.**

“The ultimate form of government of **Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.**

“The armed forces of the Allied powers will remain in **Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.”**

‘Accept, sir, etc.’

¹ See No. 471.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

475 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

475

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

15 August 1945

Victory in **Europe** has been speedily followed by the surrender of the last of our foes. ¹ On behalf of the Government and people of this country I send this message of congratulation to our kinsfolk in New Zealand. Our hearts have gone out to the people of the Dominion in the anxieties which have so long beset them and today we join with them in rejoicing and thanksgiving for victory. New Zealand was with us from the moment when, nearly six years ago, war was loosed upon the world, and in many widely separated theatres of war her sons have added lustre to her name. Their feats of arms, whether on distant seas, on the European and African continents, or in the air warfare, are the admiration of the world and worthily compare with those of the earlier generation when, in the furnace of conflict, New Zealand proved her title to nationhood. We hail also the work of all those who in field or workshop have contributed to the material resources without which human effort would be powerless to conquer. Through long years of toil New Zealand has never failed to provide of her best in all that lay within her power. We are now called to finish the work so well begun, to build a new world whence the scourge of war and the fear of aggression have been removed, to repair the devastation which these years have brought in their train and to open up the prospect of hope to all those who still sit in darkness. In all these efforts we know that we can count on the willing partnership and unfailing help of New Zealand. From all our hearts we thank you.

¹ An announcement by President Truman and Mr Attlee that **Japan** had accepted the Allied demand for unconditional surrender was made at midnight on 14 August. The instrument of surrender was signed on behalf of the **New Zealand Government** by Air Vice-Marshal L. M. Isitt, Chief of the New Zealand Air Staff, on 2 September. The surrender took place on board Admiral Halsey's flagship, USS *Missouri*, in Tokyo Bay.

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III**

PARTICIPATION IN OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

Participation in Occupation of Japan

476

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

13 August 1945

1. As soon as the Japanese surrender has been accepted by their Governments, the Allies will be faced with many tasks resulting from the Japanese capitulation. We trust that we may rely on your assistance in these, and indeed we regard your assistance as indispensable. The proposals set out below are to be regarded as replacing the suggestion for a British Commonwealth force dealt with in my telegram of 31 July ¹ and in connected subsequent telegrams.

2. The tasks confronting us are:

(The reoccupation of key areas of occupied territories in order to
a) secure effective control and to enforce the surrender and disarmament of the Japanese armed forces.

(The earliest release of British and Allied prisoners of war and
b) internees.

(Participation in the occupation of **Japan**.

c)

(Protection of British interests in **China**.

d)

(The ending of our state of war with **Siam**. ²

e)

3. Subject to your agreement, we suggest that plans shall be made on the following assumptions on policy:

(The South-West Pacific area will pass to British and Australian
a) command.

(It is highly important that British Commonwealth forces should
b) accept the surrender of **Hong Kong** at the earliest possible date.

(A British Commonwealth force shall take part in the occupation
c) of **Japan**. We suggest that it should be formed from one brigade group each of Australian, British, British-Indian, Canadian and New Zealand

troops with a tactical air force contingent. Questions of command can be dealt with separately.

¹ See *The Defeat of Japan*, No. 468.

² See

May we have your very early agreement in principle to these suggestions?

4. Orders have been given to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, ¹ and the Commander-in-Chief **British Pacific Fleet**, ² to make plans for the following operations:

- (The early reopening of the **Straits of Malacca** and the occupation a) of **Singapore** and the key areas of **Malaya**.
- (The early re-establishment of a British garrison in **Hong Kong**. b) The proposal is that the Commander-in-Chief **British Pacific Fleet** should embark from **Borneo** an Australian force of about one brigade strength and transport it with all possible speed to **Hong Kong**. It will be relieved, as soon as the **Straits of Malacca** are opened, by forces from **South-East Asia Command**.
- (The acceptance of the surrender of Japanese forces in **Java**, c) **Sumatra** and **French Indo-China**, and the preliminary arrangements for handing back these territories to the Dutch and French.
- (The occupation of **Siam**. d)

5. We are asking the Australian authorities to arrange for accepting the surrender of all Japanese troops in **Borneo** and in the territory east thereof. We should welcome the association of Royal New Zealand Air Force squadrons in this operation and, if you agree, I suggest that you communicate with the Australian Government direct on this point. We have undertaken to make some assault and merchant shipping available to this area.

6. We hope that you will agree to the continued attachment of the New Zealand ships to the **British Pacific Fleet**.

7. In view of the time factor, we are informing the United States Chiefs of Staff of the proposals in paragraphs 3 and 4 above and inviting their comments.

¹ Admiral Mountbatten.

² Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser, GCB, KBE (then Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser); Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, 1943–44; C-in-C Eastern Fleet, 1944; C-in-C **British Pacific Fleet**, 1945–46; First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, 1948–51.

477

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

16 August 1945

I have been advised of the proposal for a New Zealand brigade group in the British Commonwealth Occupational Force for **Japan**.

It seems clear that the Commonwealth Force will be required to embark for **Japan** as early as possible. Assuming your agreement to the project, it would seem that the New Zealand brigade group could be formed from personnel who are already overseas in the **Mediterranean** area. Alternatively, you might consider sending it direct from New Zealand. In the event of your decision to send it from the **Mediterranean**, presumably you would take men who have been the shortest time overseas. Numerically, the 14th and 15th Reinforcements would be sufficient. There would, however, be certain difficulties to be overcome with officers, NCOs and specialists. Our own problems in organising a brigade group at short notice are such that early notice of your decision in this matter would be most helpful.

478

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom ¹

21 August 1945

Your telegram of 13 August [**No. 476**].

New Zealand participation in the **British Commonwealth Force** for

the occupation of **Japan** is still under consideration by the **New Zealand Government**, and inquiries are now being made as to the possibility of obtaining sufficient men for a brigade group on a volunteer basis from men now with the 2nd New Zealand Division in **Italy**.

2. It is agreed that one New Zealand squadron should be made available for the tactical air force contingent referred to in paragraph 3 (c) of your telegram under reference.

3. While we are agreed to the association of Royal New Zealand Air Force squadrons with the Australian force which is to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops in **Borneo** and the territory to the east thereof, and will make two squadrons available for this purpose, we assume that this mission will be of short duration, and that it will be possible for these two New Zealand squadrons to be relieved and returned to New Zealand when the surrender of **Borneo** and contiguous territories is completed.

4. We agree to the continued attachment of New Zealand ships to the **British Pacific Fleet**.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

479

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

21 August 1945

Your telegram of 16 August [**No. 477**].

War Cabinet have considered the request from the United Kingdom Government that a New Zealand brigade group should be made available with other British Commonwealth forces to take part in the occupation of **Japan**. While agreeing in principle, it is felt that before coming to a final decision your advice should be sought as to whether or not it would be possible to obtain a properly balanced brigade group of 5000 all ranks from volunteers drawn from the single men at present in the **Middle East**

in the 11th to 15th Reinforcements.

It is also proposed, in the event of such a volunteer force being made available, that the strength of the brigade group should be 'turned over' in a period of twelve months by providing from New Zealand on a volunteer basis at quarterly intervals replacement drafts of 1250 men, and that the men in the force with the longest service should be returned to New Zealand first. Future replacements would not be effected under a period of six months. I would be grateful for your earliest comments.

480

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

22 August 1945

Your telegram of 21 August.

The total number of single men in the 11th to 15th Reinforcements now in the **Mediterranean area is only 7500. I am not hopeful of getting 5000 all ranks as volunteers for service in **Japan** from this number. Further, we would not get the correct proportion of officers, NCOs or specialists to form a balanced brigade group. In the circumstances I do not feel that a voluntary system will succeed. I do not wish to call for volunteers unless you so direct, because should we fail, as I feel we should, it would prevent the subsequent detailing of these men as an ordinary military duty. As an alternative plan, I feel there will be no difficulty or hardship should we detail 5000 single men from the 11th to 15th Reinforcements under the conditions set out in your telegram of 21 August. Even so, I feel that certain officers and key personnel outside the 11th to 15th Reinforcements will have to remain until replacements from New Zealand are made available. If you decide to provide the force from our resources in the **Mediterranean** area, I feel that such a course is the only solution to the problem. I realise the reliefs suggested in your telegram will have to be accelerated unless the men are called upon to remain a few months after their present engagement for military service**

has been completed. ¹ I have consulted [Brigadiers] Stevens ² and Gentry, ³ who is at present administering command of the Division, and the above also represents their opinion.

¹ Members of the 2nd NZEF enlisted 'for the duration of the war and twelve months thereafter, or until lawfully discharged'. See Vol. I, *Formation and Despatch of First Echelon*, p. 34, note 4.

² Maj-Gen W. G. Stevens, CB, CBE; Officer in Charge of Administration, 2 NZEF, 1940–45; GOC 2 NZEF, 22 Nov 1945–6 Jul 1946.

³ Maj-Gen Sir William Gentry, KBE, CB, DSO and bar, MC (Gk), Bronze Star (US); comd 6 Bde Sep 1942–Apr 1943; Deputy Chief of General Staff 1943–44; comd NZ Troops in Egypt, 6 NZ Div, and NZ Maadi Camp, Aug 1944–Feb 1945; 9 Bde (Italy) 1945; Deputy Chief of General Staff, 1946–47; Adjutant-General, 1949–52; Chief of General Staff, 1952–55.

481

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

23 August 1945

Thank you for your telegram of 22 August. Would it be possible to obtain the requisite number of volunteers from all categories of men in the 11th to 15th Reinforcements?

482

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

25 August 1945

Reference your telegram of 23 August. While I personally would prefer a voluntary scheme, if the force is to be found from men overseas, I feel that such a course would produce a relatively low number of men. This has been a long war and there is a general war-weariness and desire

to get home and make a fresh start. I feel, and in this I am supported by all my brigadiers, that should an occupational force be required from New Zealand troops overseas, the only sure way is for its personnel to be detailed from among the last-joined reinforcements, as indicated in my telegram of 22 August [**No. 480**]. An early decision in this [matter] would greatly assist us here.

483

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand*¹

25 August 1945

Your telegram of 21 August [**No. 478**].

We are grateful for your agreement to make available one Royal New Zealand Air Force squadron for the **Tactical Air Force** contingent and [for the advice] that your ships may continue their attachment to the **British Pacific Fleet**. We also note that you are making inquiries as to the possibility of obtaining sufficient volunteers from men of the 2nd New Zealand Division for a brigade group for the occupational forces in **Japan**.

2. Your paragraph 3. We have already informed the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, that as soon as he is in a position to spare the necessary forces and shipping, it is our intention to instruct him to take over by stages from **Australia** their initial responsibilities in the South-West Pacific area, other than Papua and Australian mandated territories. This arrangement should, subject to unforeseen circumstances, provide relief for your squadrons in **Borneo** as soon as the first priority occupation tasks of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, have been completed.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

484

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

[Extract]

28 August 1945

... ² With regard to the minimum number of men necessary to form one brigade group, I assume that we should conform to the order of battle of the standard operational brigade group with which we are familiar, plus Brigade Army Service Corps company, Brigade Workshops, and sections of Ciphers, Field Security, Provost, Field Hygiene, Ordnance Field Park and Mobile Laundry and Bath Unit. We should require, in addition, Force units, including a small General Hospital and a welfare [service]. Preliminary calculations give a brigade group of 4320, plus Force units 850, total 5170. This figure excludes reinforcements in the theatre: in round numbers, 5000.

² In the text omitted **General Freyberg** gave details of a proposed leave scheme to the **United Kingdom**.

485

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom ¹

29 August 1945

My telegram of 21 August [**No. 478**] and yours of 13 August [**No. 476**].

After further consideration of the question of New Zealand's participation with other British Commonwealth forces in the occupation of **Japan**, the **New Zealand Government** agree to the provision of one brigade group.

It is proposed that this force should be made available for a period of six months' service in **Japan** and that its subsequent withdrawal or

replacement would be subject to review before the expiration of that period. The brigade group will be obtained from single men of later reinforcements of the 2nd NZEF now in the **Mediterranean** area.

¹ Repeated to **General Freyberg** in **London**.

486

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to General Freyberg (London)

30 August 1945

As indicated in my telegram of 29 August, the Government have agreed to provide one brigade group for the British Commonwealth force for a period of six months. It is further agreed that the strength of this force should be 5000 all ranks, and that it should be a properly balanced brigade group with the necessary administrative and welfare services.

In the circumstances it is considered that the men required to fill the establishment should be drawn from the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. The Government also consider that suitable volunteers should be accepted from all categories of men outside the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements.

It is at present proposed that the term of service in **Japan** should be six months, but if it is decided to retain a New Zealand force there for any greater length of time, volunteers will be sent from New Zealand for the purpose of reliefs.

487

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

31 August 1945

Reference my telegram of 30 August.

Owing to the great reluctance of the Government party to agree to the compulsory direction of men for the brigade group from **Europe** to

Japan, I am compelled to ask you to give consideration again to the possibility of attaining 5000 volunteers for **Japan** in suitable units from all forces under your command, the period of service to be six months. The relief would be from volunteers in New Zealand, of whom 2500 could be trained in New Zealand during three months and be ready to leave New Zealand at the end of that period, if shipping would be available, for the purpose of replacing half the brigade group. Owing to the attitude of a very large minority of the Government party and the consequent great difficulties, I must ask you to explore every possibility of obtaining sufficient suitable volunteers, and would like you again to give the fullest consideration to the matter before a final decision is made either to direct compulsorily or to give instructions to call for volunteers. In the meantime until the matter is further considered and you receive final instructions, please do not take any action on my telegram [**No. 486**] sent earlier.

488
General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

30 August 1945 ¹

I have received your telegram [**No. 487**] and realise the difficulties. All necessary and possible arrangements for shipping and movement and organisation of the brigade group have been made. I must now inform the **War Office** that no final decision has been taken about the brigade group, and I will go back to **Italy** on Sunday and cable you after discreet consultation with selected officers. I feel that the shorter term of service in the **Far East** will be more acceptable, but I am not hopeful that any voluntary system will meet with the necessary support. I will cable you as soon as possible next week.

¹The difference in time between New Zealand and the **United Kingdom** and the fact that **No. 487** was despatched shortly after midnight explain the anomaly in the dates of **Nos. 487** and **488**.

489

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

1 September 1945

Your telegram of 29 August [**No. 485**].

We are very glad to learn that New Zealand can provide a brigade group to take part in the occupation of **Japan**.

We have been considering the position in the light of Australian Government telegrams **Nos. 240** and **245**,¹ and while appreciating Australian wishes in the matter, we still feel strongly that the best interests of us all would be served if a joint Commonwealth force for service in **Japan** could be arranged.

I am therefore sending to the Prime Minister of **Australia** a message, of which the text is being repeated to you in my immediately following telegram,² expressing the hope that **Australia** will agree to the constitution of a single British Commonwealth contingent, to be under an Australian officer as Commander-in-Chief of the whole force.

I hope very much that this suggestion will commend itself to you.

¹ In telegram No. 240, dated 17 August, to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the Australian Government stated that the Australian force to take part in the occupation of **Japan** should operate under an Australian commander and that it should not form part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. In telegram No. 245 of 21 August the Australian Government informed the United Kingdom Government that it had conveyed a direct request to **Washington** for **United States** concurrence in Australian participation as a principal in the Allied Control Council for **Japan** or any other similar body. The Australian view was that **Australia** should participate in the main act of surrender; that the Australian forces constituting part of the occupation forces in **Japan** should be accepted as independently designated Australian forces, subordinate only to the Supreme Commander; and that **Australia** should take a full part as a member of the Council of Foreign Ministers in relation to all

matters affecting or concerning the **Pacific and Far East**.

² Not published. In this telegram Mr Attlee said that if **Australia** agreed to a unified British Commonwealth contingent, the United Kingdom Government would welcome the appointment of an Australian officer as inter-service Commander-in-Chief. The Australian Government at first disagreed with this proposal but later reconsidered its decision. On 21 September Mr Chifley advised Mr Attlee that his Government was agreeable to participating in a British Commonwealth force subject to certain conditions.

490

General Freyberg (Italy) to the Prime Minister

5 September 1945

Reference your telegram of 31 August [**No. 487**].

I am now back in **Italy** with the Division and have seen the nine senior officers of the force, including Brigadier **Parkinson** ³ from Egypt, where we still have 3000 of the 15th Reinforcements. We have examined the suggested policy of providing the occupational force by voluntary enlistment from the whole of the 2nd NZEF overseas. We have all approached the problem with the greatest desire to make a voluntary force possible. I have spoken individually with these nine officers and have put the best possible case for a voluntary force to them.

My approach has been that with the shortage of shipping at least 9000 of the latest-joined reinforcements will not get back to New Zealand until March or April. These men will therefore remain where they are for at least another six months in the knowledge that there will be little to do to keep up their interest. If they volunteer they will join the occupational force for **Japan**, which will concentrate in **Italy** as soon as possible and, providing the Americans agree to receive the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in **Japan** at that time, will move to **Japan** early in November, arriving there before the end of the year.

Under the terms of the scheme they would be back in New Zealand about the end of July 1946, having seen in all probability **Singapore** and **Manila**, as well as **Japan** itself.

Although none of the officers feel that they can with confidence give a definite figure, they all agree that we should not get the required number of volunteers. Their estimates run from 750 to 2500 in the extreme cases, with the consensus of opinion less than 1500.

I also discussed the problem with a selected group of officers at the **War Office**, asking them what they would expect to get from a British force of equivalent size and in similar circumstances. They felt that they might get 1000 volunteers. Field Marshal Alexander and his Chief of Staff, General Morgan, ¹ also gave a figure of about 1000. My own opinion is that we might get 1500—which falls far short of the required 5000 for a brigade group. Further, I feel it would not be possible to get the correct grades or numbers of specialist personnel to enable a balanced fighting force to be formed. In reference to your request, I therefore feel, after giving the matter all possible consideration, that a voluntary system from the present 2nd NZEF overseas would not succeed.

I must point out that the fact that the Australian and **United States** forces are being raised on a voluntary basis does not appear to be analogous with our own case. The **Australian Imperial Force** is already in the **Pacific**. The United States troops are to have ninety days' home leave before going to **Japan**. The two British brigades are already in **India** and have been fighting the Japanese. We should be the only force which would move direct from the European theatre to the **Pacific**.

I would suggest as a possibility that the British Government, for the purpose of maintaining the Commonwealth aspect of the force, might consider accepting from us a smaller garrison force capable of carrying out guard duties but not capable of working as an operational brigade group. Such a force of three battalions plus rearward services could be formed from 4000 men. Should this proposal be acceptable, these 4000

could be detailed from the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. Officers and certain additional specialists would have to be detailed from outside these reinforcement categories. As the bulk of the men so detailed have seen little fighting they could not logically have any grievance.

I know from certain definite pointers that opinion here has altered to a marked degree since VJ Day. All entitled officers and men who volunteered to stay on at Base for the duration of the war against **Japan** have withdrawn their applications to remain and now wish to proceed home at the earliest date. VJ Day meant far less to our men than will the day they leave here for New Zealand. This general desire of everyone to get home and re-established into their new life is most pronounced.

The United Kingdom leave scheme is being kept in mind as a means of relieving the boredom which is bound to follow a long wait in the present surroundings. Such leave, however, could not be given to the men who will leave by the vessel promised for October, nor to those for the occupational brigade. The announcement of the scheme is therefore not being made in the meantime.

At present the tone of the Force both in **Italy** and **Egypt** is all that is desired, but a considerable prolongation of the present state of waiting is bound to have its effect. As you know, there has already been trouble with the Canadians at **Aldershot** and with the South Africans in **Cairo**.

There is little more we can do here at the moment. There should not be any trouble if we are able in the near future to give the men a detailed statement of the **New Zealand Government's** policy. Although I do appreciate the difficult position in which Cabinet is placed, I am told that such a statement of policy is generally expected by all ranks now that I have returned from England.

³ **Maj-Gen G. B. Parkinson**, CBE, DSO and bar, Legion of Merit (US); CO 4 Fd Regt Jan 1940–Aug 1941; comd 1 NZ Army Tank Bde and 7 Inf Bde Gp (in NZ) 1941–42; 6 Bde Apr 1943–Jun 1944;

GOC 2 NZ Div 3–27 Mar 1944; CRA 2 NZ Div Jun–Aug 1944; comd 6 Bde Aug 1944–Jun 1945; NZ Military Liaison Officer, **London**, 1946–49; Commander, Southern Military District, 1949–51.

¹ General Sir William Morgan, GCB, DSO, MC; Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander, **Mediterranean**, 1945; Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 1945–47.

491

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ¹

7 September 1945

My telegram of 29 August [**No. 485**].

Advice has now been received from **General Freyberg** that it will not be possible to obtain a sufficient number from the 2nd New Zealand Division on a volunteer basis for the purpose of providing a brigade group for service in **Japan**. We are thus faced with the alternatives of exercising compulsion, which we are most reluctant to do at this stage, or of endeavouring to obtain a sufficient number of volunteers largely from New Zealand, supplemented by others from the Division.

The matter clearly calls for an immediate decision and I should like to take the opportunity tomorrow of discussing the whole question with the Government party and, if possible, of reaching a definite conclusion on the course to follow. Before I raise the matter I wish to know whether or not the **United States** have actually been advised of the proposed British Commonwealth force and, if so, whether they have signified their agreement to this form of participation in the occupation of **Japan**. As you will appreciate, we do not wish, in view of the difficulties already confronting us, to go ahead with our arrangements if the proposal to send a British Commonwealth force should not prove acceptable.

¹ In a telegram on 11 September to the acting High Commissioner for New Zealand in **London** (**Dr R. M. Campbell**) the Prime Minister advised that this telegram should have been addressed Prime Minister to Prime Minister. Mr Fraser asked Dr Campbell to ensure that this telegram and the Dominions Office reply (**No. 492**) were seen by Mr Attlee.

492

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

7 September 1945

Your telegram of 7 September on the proposed British Commonwealth Occupation Force for **Japan**.

The proposal was mentioned by our Joint Staff Mission in **Washington** to the United States Chiefs of Staff on the instructions described in my telegram of 13 August [**No. 476**], and the United States Chiefs of Staff replied that they accepted in principle the participation of British ground forces in the occupation of **Japan**, and that details of size and composition would be a matter for later determination. Accordingly, we are making our own plans on the basis that there will be participation by British Commonwealth ground forces, whether by separate forces, as proposed by **Australia**, or by a joint force to which, as you will have seen from my telegram to **Australia** of 31 August, ¹ we hope the Australian Government will agree. We greatly hope that we may count on New Zealand participation in either case.

¹ See p. 518, note 2.

493

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

12 September 1945

Your telegram of 5 September [[No. 490](#)].

I am most grateful for your endeavours in connection with the formation of a brigade group for [Japan](#) on the basis of volunteers. The difficulties are appreciated. I have had an opportunity of discussing the matter with members of the Government party, and I am now negotiating with the Leader of the Opposition party on the basis of New Zealand participation in the manner suggested in your telegram under reference, namely a force of three battalions plus rearward services, composed of single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. I am doing my best to reach an agreed decision as soon as possible. The position has been rendered more difficult in the meantime by the announcement over the [BBC](#) this morning, in a despatch from Rome, that 5000 single men from the 2nd Division will be called upon to volunteer for garrison duty in the [Pacific](#). ²

² This despatch was published in the New Zealand press. On 13 September [General Freyberg](#) replied that 'considerable annoyance' had been caused by the despatches of the [BBC's](#) Rome correspondent. He asked, in the absence of military censorship, whether something could be done to stop such announcements.

494

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

14 September 1945

I regret to inform you that a decision is not yet possible. The Opposition did not agree that the force should be raised by compulsion. I hope that further discussions after the weekend will enable the Government to reach a satisfactory settlement.

The Leader of the Opposition is laying stress on the statement contained in your telegram of 5 September [[No. 490](#)] that the Australian and [United States](#) forces are being raised on a voluntary basis, and the

fact that **United States** troops are to have ninety days' home leave before going to **Japan**. I would be grateful for elucidation of these points, which are being checked here also.

495

General Freyberg to the Prime Minister

14 September 1945

Your telegram of 14 September.

1. As far as **United States** and Australian forces are concerned, we depend upon broadcast statements and reports in *Stars and Stripes* and British newspapers for our news, much of which may be inaccurate, and it causes considerable confusion. Based on such reports, our understanding of the long-term policy for the occupation of **Japan** is that immediate occupational forces of the kind referred to in my following paragraph are to be replaced by forces enlisted voluntarily in the **United States** and **Australia**. In the case of the Americans such volunteers, if they are already serving in an overseas theatre, are to receive a period of home leave in the **United States** before going to **Japan**. The paragraph in my previous cable [**No. 490**] was meant to relate only to the raising of a voluntary force, and I did not consider, therefore, that our call for a voluntary force from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force overseas would meet with much success without similar leave in New Zealand.

2. With regard to the employment of Australian, American, and British troops for the immediate occupation of **Japan**, the point that is evident is that these troops were actually being employed in operations against the Japanese or were deployed in the Far Eastern operational area at the time of the Japanese surrender. In carrying out their immediate occupational duties in **Japan** they are doing no more than the New Zealand Division did in **Trieste** and the British are still doing in **Austria**. As we are not called on to do garrison duties in **Europe**, I see no reason why our short-service personnel, who have seen little or no fighting,

should not be used as a temporary garrison force in **Japan**.

496

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

25 September 1945

Your telegram of 18 September. ¹

My own statement regarding New Zealand's participation in the occupation force and the initial composition of the brigade group may be delayed for a few more days pending agreement of the **United Kingdom** and Australian Governments on broad questions of formation and command of the **British Commonwealth Force**.

There is no objection meanwhile to you making your own statement as amended and I had assumed that you would have done this.

For your own personal and confidential information, Cabinet are agreed that the force should comprise single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. It seems clear that it would not be possible to organise the force in time on any other basis.

¹ See Vol. II, No. 479.

497

The Prime Minister to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs ²

30 September 1945

New Zealand's participation in the occupation of **Japan** was today the subject of a statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. P. Fraser.

'In referring to the Press Association cable regarding **General Freyberg**'s statement to the men of the 2nd NZEF, Mr Fraser said the actual text of **General Freyberg**'s remarks had been conveyed to the **New Zealand Government** and approved in advance of publication. These were

as follows:

“The question of finding a small New Zealand Force to assist in the garrison of [Japan](#) is still under consideration and subject to negotiations by the British and United States Governments regarding the forces required for the occupation of [Japan](#). I can only tell you that eventually it will be found from New Zealand by voluntary enlistment. This will take time and it is possible that a small force about 4000 strong will be found from the 2nd NZEF in [Italy](#) to carry out six months' occupational duties in [Japan](#). They would then be relieved by the voluntary force from New Zealand. If it is decided to send a force from the 2nd NZEF to [Japan](#) it would probably be found from single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements and from certain officers and specialists to be detailed by name. These men would concentrate and organise in [Italy](#) and would leave here by ship in November or December. After the voyage east the force would stay six months in [Japan](#) and return to New Zealand about July 1946. I will give you detailed news of this project as soon as negotiations between the two Governments are concluded.”

‘I should add,’ said Mr Fraser, ‘that these negotiations are still taking place and, moreover, the British Commonwealth countries concerned are also discussing questions relating to the formation of a [British Commonwealth Force](#).

‘I had intended making a statement in Parliament as soon as I had received confirmation that arrangements had been completed. I can only say at this stage that if a [British Commonwealth Force](#) is to go to [Japan](#) then New Zealand will be represented.

‘In view of the press cable messages received this morning it is necessary that I should now release the following statement which I had intended to make to Parliament:

“When Parliament discussed at the beginning of August the formation of a New Zealand force for service in the [Pacific](#) it was decided to send a two-brigade Division to fight against the Japanese. Before that

decision could be implemented, and when it became clear that **Japan** intended to surrender, Mr Attlee, the Prime Minister of the **United Kingdom**, consulted me regarding the substitution of this combat force by a **British Commonwealth Force** to take part in the occupation of **Japan**.

“The new proposal envisaged a land force composed of brigade groups from various countries of the British Commonwealth, together with a tactical **Air Force** contingent. The New Zealand Government agreed at once that a New Zealand squadron could be made available for the tactical **Air Force**; they agreed also to the continued attachment of New Zealand ships to the **British Pacific Fleet** and they undertook to give consideration to the proposal that a New Zealand brigade group should participate in the proposed British Commonwealth land force.

“I feel sure,” said Mr Fraser, “that the people of New Zealand will agree that this opportunity of proving our unity and solidarity with the Mother Country, and of sharing in the responsibilities of the British Commonwealth in the **Pacific**, should be accepted by the provision of a brigade group as requested by the United Kingdom Government.

“The Government made the fullest inquiries as to the practicability of obtaining from the Division on a voluntary basis a properly balanced brigade group with its essential technical units, but the advice received from **General Freyberg** and from the Chiefs of Staff in New Zealand is that it will not be possible to organise a brigade group on a voluntary basis to be ready in time to form part of the British Commonwealth occupation force entering **Japan**. It has therefore been decided that a brigade group shall be made available for six months' service in **Japan** from the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements of the 2nd NZEF who have seen little or no actual fighting. The men who have already served with the 3rd Division in the **Pacific**, both married and single, will not be included. It will also be necessary for certain officers, NCOs and other key personnel to be drawn from other units of the 2nd NZEF for the Occupation Force.

“It is proposed that the personnel of this brigade group shall be relieved at the end of six months by men from New Zealand. The relief force will be obtained from volunteers, for whom a call will be made at an early date to enable training to be completed and such relief force to be despatched in sufficient time to take over from the brigade group in Japan.

“Despite the repeated efforts of the Government to obtain the highest possible priority in shipping, there appears to be little prospect so far of obtaining transports to bring the men of the later reinforcements back to New Zealand before March or April next. The consequent delay in the return of the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements occasioned by their going to Japan now should, therefore, not result in their being away from New Zealand for more than an additional two or three months.

“It will be generally agreed that New Zealand should undertake this duty, not only because it is in our interests as a Pacific country to do so but also because, in common with the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, we have been invited by the United Kingdom Government to participate. Indeed Mr Attlee said in his original message, ‘We trust that we may rely on your assistance and indeed we regard your assistance as indispensable.’

“It will be generally agreed also that our only enemy in the Pacific is Japan and that her surrender does not of itself ensure freedom from future Japanese aggression. To render this impossible it is necessary to disarm Japan, to dismantle her war industries and, as far as possible, to eradicate the spirit of Japanese militarism.

“The Allied Powers have set themselves in the Potsdam Declaration, in the Armistice terms and in various declarations of policy to implement this policy, which is endorsed by the New Zealand Government.

“It is clearly our duty,” said Mr Fraser, “to undertake our share of

the responsibility for the enforcement of the peace, to the achievement of which our war effort has made a notable contribution. If, moreover, the peace settlement with **Japan** should fail, New Zealand may well be one of the first countries to suffer. Having regard to our resources and the part we have played throughout the war, the Government proposes to limit our commitment for a land force to an initial period of six months. Any extension beyond that period will depend upon the response which is made to the call for volunteers to provide the necessary reliefs.””

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**, the New Zealand Minister in **Washington**, and to **General Freyberg**.

498

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of Australia ¹

1 October 1945

Reference Australian Government's telegram of 21 September. ²

We are most gratified that you have agreed with our suggestion for a joint Commonwealth force for the occupation of **Japan**.

2. We agree with the proposals in your telegram. We should like, however, to be sure that our interpretation of the machinery proposed in your paragraph 6 (v), (vi) and (vii) is correct. ³ In framing our reply we have been very glad to have the benefit of Dr Evatt's advice.

3. We envisage an organisation similar to that of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, which worked so well between ourselves and the Americans. This would mean that our members of the joint organisation would be representatives only and would normally consult the British Chiefs of Staff in **London** before giving their agreement on the questions under consideration. Thus the joint organisation would be, in effect, the combined **United Kingdom**—Australian Chiefs of Staff, the instructions

to the Commander-in-Chief being issued through the Australian Chiefs of Staff. Reference to Governments would therefore be made by the respective Chiefs of Staff to their Governments rather than through the Australian Defence Department, as might be inferred from your paragraph 6 (vii). Inter-governmental discussions, when necessary, would then take place through normal channels as you propose.

4. We suggest that the title 'Joint Chiefs of Staff' may lead to considerable confusion with the American Chiefs of Staff, who are also known by that name. We suggest as an alternative, 'Chiefs of Staff in [Australia](#)'.

5. The British Chiefs of Staff will be communicating with the Australian Chiefs of Staff on detailed questions of organisation and command of the force. When these details are agreed, no doubt you will approach the American Government with our joint proposal.

6. For New Zealand: Please despatch your agreement or comments on the above direct to [Australia](#), repeating to us.

7. We are communicating separately with [India](#).

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

² See [p. 518, note 2](#). This was Mr Chifley's reply advising that his Government was agreeable to participating in a British Commonwealth force.

³ Paragraph 6 (v) defined the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth force to the [United Kingdom](#) and Australian Governments through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Section (vi) dealt with the channels of communication between Governments and between Governments and the Supreme Allied Commander. Section (vii) defined the relationship between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs* ¹

4 October 1945

Your telegram of 1 October.

The New Zealand Government wish to express their satisfaction that arrangements have been concluded for the formation of a **British Commonwealth Force** for service in **Japan** under Australian command. They trust that immediate steps will be taken to conclude discussions with the **United States** authorities and that a public statement will be issued at the earliest possible date.

2. So far as the control organisation is concerned, the **New Zealand Government** are prepared to accept the procedure proposed in paragraph 6 of the Commonwealth telegram to you of 21 September, ² subject of course to any modification as may be agreed upon in the light of your telegram under reference.

3. The New Zealand Government would wish, in view of their contribution to the occupation forces, to arrange that representatives of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff are associated with the organisation it is suggested might be known as the 'Chiefs of Staff in **Australia**'. They hope that this will prove acceptable to both the **United Kingdom** and Commonwealth Governments. It is at present proposed that there would be two representatives of the Chiefs of Staff, one from the Army and the other from the **Air Force**. These would represent the views of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and function as an integral part of the planning and controlling organisation on the Service level for the occupation force.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia** and the New Zealand Minister in **Washington**.

500

*The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs* ¹

[Extract]

12 January 1946

My immediately preceding cablegram. ² Following is the text of the proposed announcement: ³

‘1. As a result of discussion between members of the British Commonwealth, proposals for a joint British Commonwealth force to participate in the occupation of **Japan** were agreed upon and conveyed to the United States Government by the Australian Government, acting on behalf of the British Commonwealth Governments concerned.

‘2. Following recent representations in **Washington** by the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt, the United States Government have now formally accepted the participation of British Commonwealth forces in the occupation of **Japan**. Arrangements are now well advanced for the force to proceed on the following basis.

‘3. The force is drawn from the **United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand** ⁴ and **India**. The Commander-in-Chief of the force is Lieutenant-General J. Northcott, CB, MVO, ⁵ of the Australian Military Forces. His headquarters is fully integrated with representatives drawn from each service and from each Commonwealth country contributing to the force....

‘4. The force comprises:

(Force and base troops drawn from each of the contributing
a) countries.

(A land component organised as a corps of one British Indian

b) division and two independent brigade groups, one each from **Australia** and **New Zealand**.

(An air component comprising squadrons drawn from the **Royal Air Force**, the **Royal Australian Air Force**, the **Royal New Zealand Air Force** and the **Royal Indian Air Force**.

‘5. A squadron of the **British Pacific Fleet** which includes ships of the **Royal Navy**, the **Royal Australian Navy** and the **Royal Indian Navy**

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand and other addressees.

² Not published.

³ This statement was released simultaneously in the **United Kingdom**, **Australia**, **New Zealand** and **India** on 31 January. A similar announcement was made in **Washington** and by General MacArthur in **Tokyo**. This text includes all later amendments.

⁴ The New Zealand contingent was known as J Force. Its first commander was Brig K. L. Stewart. The force sailed from **Naples** on 21 February and arrived at **Kure** on 19 March.

⁵ Gen Sir John Northcott, KCMG, CB, MVO; Chief of the General Staff, Australian Military Forces, 1942–45; C-in-C British Commonwealth Occupation Force, **Japan**, 1945–46.

is stationed in **Pacific** waters under the operational control of the Admiral Commanding the Detachment of the United States Fleet....

‘8. The **British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF)** will form part of the occupation forces in **Japan** under the supreme command of General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP).... Lieutenant-General Northcott as Commander-in-Chief BCOF is entirely responsible for the maintenance and administration of the **British Commonwealth Force** as a whole. He has direct access to General MacArthur on matters of major policy affecting operational

commitments of forces. On policy and administrative matters affecting the force the Commander-in-Chief is responsible to the British Commonwealth Governments concerned through a British Commonwealth organisation set up in **Melbourne** and known as the 'Joint Chiefs of Staff in **Australia**'. Their instructions to the Commander-in-Chief BCOF will be issued by the Australian Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff in **Australia** (JCOSA) comprise the Australian Chiefs of Staff and representatives of the Chiefs of Staff in the **United Kingdom** and New Zealand ¹ and of the Commander-in-Chief in **India**. This organisation is fully associated with the Australian joint service machinery. The Commander-in-Chief BCOF has the right of direct communication with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in **Australia** on administrative matters affecting the force. On matters of Governmental concern affecting the policy and operations of BCOF he will communicate through JCOSA to the Australian Government, who act as the representative of the other Commonwealth Governments concerned.

'9. The BCOF will be initially located in the Hiroshima Prefecture, including the cities of **Kure** and Fukuyama. It will be responsible for the demilitarisation and disposal of Japanese installations and armaments and for exercising military control of the area, but not for its military Government, which remains the responsibility of **United States** agencies....

'11. The British Commonwealth Force may be withdrawn wholly or in part by agreement between the United States Government and the Commonwealth Governments concerned or upon six months' notice by either party. It has also been agreed that progressive reductions in the strength of the force will be made from time to time in conformity with progressive reductions which may be made in the strength of the **United States** occupation forces in **Japan**.... ²

¹ The first New Zealand representative was **Brig G. H. Clifton**, DSO and two bars, MC.

² The New Zealand army component ceased its occupation duties in September 1948.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

476 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

476

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

13 August 1945

1. As soon as the Japanese surrender has been accepted by their Governments, the Allies will be faced with many tasks resulting from the Japanese capitulation. We trust that we may rely on your assistance in these, and indeed we regard your assistance as indispensable. The proposals set out below are to be regarded as replacing the suggestion for a British Commonwealth force dealt with in my telegram of 31 July ¹ and in connected subsequent telegrams.

2. The tasks confronting us are:

(The reoccupation of key areas of occupied territories in order to
a) secure effective control and to enforce the surrender and
disarmament of the Japanese armed forces.

(The earliest release of British and Allied prisoners of war and
b) internees.

(Participation in the occupation of **Japan**.

c)

(Protection of British interests in **China**.

d)

(The ending of our state of war with **Siam**. ²

e)

3. Subject to your agreement, we suggest that plans shall be made on the following assumptions on policy:

(The South-West Pacific area will pass to British and Australian

a) command.

(It is highly important that British Commonwealth forces should
b) accept the surrender of **Hong Kong** at the earliest possible date.

(A British Commonwealth force shall take part in the occupation
c) of **Japan**. We suggest that it should be formed from one brigade group
each of Australian, British, British-Indian, Canadian and New Zealand
troops with a tactical air force contingent. Questions of command
can be dealt with separately.

¹ See *The Defeat of Japan*, No. 468.

² See

May we have your very early agreement in principle to these suggestions?

4. Orders have been given to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, ¹ and the Commander-in-Chief **British Pacific Fleet**, ² to make plans for the following operations:

- (The early reopening of the **Straits of Malacca** and the occupation a) of **Singapore** and the key areas of **Malaya**.
- (The early re-establishment of a British garrison in **Hong Kong**. b) The proposal is that the Commander-in-Chief **British Pacific Fleet** should embark from **Borneo** an Australian force of about one brigade strength and transport it with all possible speed to **Hong Kong**. It will be relieved, as soon as the **Straits of Malacca** are opened, by forces from **South-East Asia Command**.
- (The acceptance of the surrender of Japanese forces in **Java**, c) **Sumatra** and **French Indo-China**, and the preliminary arrangements for handing back these territories to the Dutch and French.
- (The occupation of **Siam**. d)

5. We are asking the Australian authorities to arrange for accepting the surrender of all Japanese troops in **Borneo** and in the territory east thereof. We should welcome the association of Royal New Zealand Air Force squadrons in this operation and, if you agree, I suggest that you communicate with the Australian Government direct on this point. We have undertaken to make some assault and merchant shipping available to this area.

6. We hope that you will agree to the continued attachment of the New Zealand ships to the **British Pacific Fleet**.

7. In view of the time factor, we are informing the United States Chiefs of Staff of the proposals in paragraphs 3 and 4 above and inviting their comments.

¹ **Admiral Mountbatten.**

² **Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser, GCB, KBE (then Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser); Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, 1943–44; C-in-C Eastern Fleet, 1944; C-in-C **British Pacific Fleet**, 1945–46; First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, 1948–51.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

477 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

477

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

16 August 1945

I have been advised of the proposal for a New Zealand brigade group in the British Commonwealth Occupational Force for **Japan**.

It seems clear that the Commonwealth Force will be required to embark for **Japan** as early as possible. Assuming your agreement to the project, it would seem that the New Zealand brigade group could be formed from personnel who are already overseas in the **Mediterranean** area. Alternatively, you might consider sending it direct from New Zealand. In the event of your decision to send it from the **Mediterranean**, presumably you would take men who have been the shortest time overseas. Numerically, the 14th and 15th Reinforcements would be sufficient. There would, however, be certain difficulties to be overcome with officers, NCOs and specialists. Our own problems in organising a brigade group at short notice are such that early notice of your decision in this matter would be most helpful.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

478 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM¹

478

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*¹

21 August 1945

Your telegram of 13 August [**No. 476**].

New Zealand participation in the **British Commonwealth Force** for the occupation of **Japan** is still under consideration by the **New Zealand Government**, and inquiries are now being made as to the possibility of obtaining sufficient men for a brigade group on a volunteer basis from men now with the 2nd New Zealand Division in **Italy**.

2. It is agreed that one New Zealand squadron should be made available for the tactical air force contingent referred to in paragraph 3 (c) of your telegram under reference.

3. While we are agreed to the association of Royal New Zealand Air Force squadrons with the Australian force which is to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops in **Borneo** and the territory to the east thereof, and will make two squadrons available for this purpose, we assume that this mission will be of short duration, and that it will be possible for these two New Zealand squadrons to be relieved and returned to New Zealand when the surrender of **Borneo** and contiguous territories is completed.

4. We agree to the continued attachment of New Zealand ships to the **British Pacific Fleet**.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

479 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON)

479

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

21 August 1945

Your telegram of 16 August [No. 477].

War Cabinet have considered the request from the United Kingdom Government that a New Zealand brigade group should be made available with other British Commonwealth forces to take part in the occupation of **Japan**. While agreeing in principle, it is felt that before coming to a final decision your advice should be sought as to whether or not it would be possible to obtain a properly balanced brigade group of 5000 all ranks from volunteers drawn from the single men at present in the **Middle East** in the 11th to 15th Reinforcements.

It is also proposed, in the event of such a volunteer force being made available, that the strength of the brigade group should be 'turned over' in a period of twelve months by providing from New Zealand on a volunteer basis at quarterly intervals replacement drafts of 1250 men, and that the men in the force with the longest service should be returned to New Zealand first. Future replacements would not be effected under a period of six months. I would be grateful for your earliest comments.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

480 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

480

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

22 August 1945

Your telegram of 21 August.

The total number of single men in the 11th to 15th Reinforcements now in the **Mediterranean** area is only 7500. I am not hopeful of getting 5000 all ranks as volunteers for service in **Japan** from this number. Further, we would not get the correct proportion of officers, NCOs or specialists to form a balanced brigade group. In the circumstances I do not feel that a voluntary system will succeed. I do not wish to call for volunteers unless you so direct, because should we fail, as I feel we should, it would prevent the subsequent detailing of these men as an ordinary military duty. As an alternative plan, I feel there will be no difficulty or hardship should we detail 5000 single men from the 11th to 15th Reinforcements under the conditions set out in your telegram of 21 August. Even so, I feel that certain officers and key personnel outside the 11th to 15th Reinforcements will have to remain until replacements from New Zealand are made available. If you decide to provide the force from our resources in the **Mediterranean** area, I feel that such a course is the only solution to the problem. I realise the reliefs suggested in your telegram will have to be accelerated unless the men are called upon to remain a few months after their present engagement for military service has been completed. ¹ I have consulted [Brigadiers] **Stevens** ² and **Gentry**, ³ who is at present administering command of the Division, and the above also represents their opinion.

¹ Members of the 2nd NZEF enlisted 'for the duration of the war and twelve months thereafter, or until lawfully discharged'. See

² **Maj-Gen W. G. Stevens**, CB, CBE; Officer in Charge of Administration, **2 NZEF**, 1940–45; GOC **2 NZEF**, 22 Nov 1945–6 Jul 1946.

³ **Maj-Gen Sir William Gentry**, KBE, CB, DSO and bar, MC (Gk), Bronze Star (US); comd 6 Bde Sep 1942–Apr 1943; Deputy Chief of General Staff 1943–44; comd NZ Troops in Egypt, 6 NZ Div, and NZ Maadi Camp, Aug 1944–Feb 1945; 9 Bde (**Italy**) 1945; Deputy Chief of General Staff, 1946–47; Adjutant-General, 1949–52; Chief of General Staff, 1952–55.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

481 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON)

481

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

23 August 1945

Thank you for your telegram of 22 August. Would it be possible to obtain the requisite number of volunteers from all categories of men in the 11th to 15th Reinforcements?

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

482 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

482

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

25 August 1945

Reference your telegram of 23 August. While I personally would prefer a voluntary scheme, if the force is to be found from men overseas, I feel that such a course would produce a relatively low number of men. This has been a long war and there is a general war-weariness and desire to get home and make a fresh start. I feel, and in this I am supported by all my brigadiers, that should an occupational force be required from New Zealand troops overseas, the only sure way is for its personnel to be detailed from among the last-joined reinforcements, as indicated in my telegram of 22 August [[No. 480](#)]. An early decision in this [matter] would greatly assist us here.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

483 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND¹

483

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*¹

25 August 1945

Your telegram of 21 August [**No. 478**].

We are grateful for your agreement to make available one Royal New Zealand Air Force squadron for the **Tactical Air Force** contingent and [for the advice] that your ships may continue their attachment to the **British Pacific Fleet**. We also note that you are making inquiries as to the possibility of obtaining sufficient volunteers from men of the 2nd New Zealand Division for a brigade group for the occupational forces in **Japan**.

2. Your paragraph 3. We have already informed the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, that as soon as he is in a position to spare the necessary forces and shipping, it is our intention to instruct him to take over by stages from **Australia** their initial responsibilities in the South-West Pacific area, other than Papua and Australian mandated territories. This arrangement should, subject to unforeseen circumstances, provide relief for your squadrons in **Borneo** as soon as the first priority occupation tasks of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, have been completed.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

484 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER – [EXTRACT]

484

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister
[Extract]

28 August 1945

... ² With regard to the minimum number of men necessary to form one brigade group, I assume that we should conform to the order of battle of the standard operational brigade group with which we are familiar, plus Brigade Army Service Corps company, Brigade Workshops, and sections of Ciphers, Field Security, Provost, Field Hygiene, Ordnance Field Park and Mobile Laundry and Bath Unit. We should require, in addition, Force units, including a small General Hospital and a welfare [service]. Preliminary calculations give a brigade group of 4320, plus Force units 850, total 5170. This figure excludes reinforcements in the theatre: in round numbers, 5000.

² In the text omitted **General Freyberg** gave details of a proposed leave scheme to the **United Kingdom**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

485 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM¹

485

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom*¹

29 August 1945

My telegram of 21 August [**No. 478**] and yours of 13 August [**No. 476**].

After further consideration of the question of New Zealand's participation with other British Commonwealth forces in the occupation of **Japan**, the **New Zealand Government** agree to the provision of one brigade group.

It is proposed that this force should be made available for a period of six months' service in **Japan** and that its subsequent withdrawal or replacement would be subject to review before the expiration of that period. The brigade group will be obtained from single men of later reinforcements of the 2nd NZEF now in the **Mediterranean** area.

¹ Repeated to **General Freyberg** in **London**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

486 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO GENERAL FREYBERG
(LONDON)

486

The Prime Minister of New Zealand to General Freyberg (London)

30 August 1945

As indicated in my telegram of 29 August, the Government have agreed to provide one brigade group for the British Commonwealth force for a period of six months. It is further agreed that the strength of this force should be 5000 all ranks, and that it should be a properly balanced brigade group with the necessary administrative and welfare services.

In the circumstances it is considered that the men required to fill the establishment should be drawn from the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. The Government also consider that suitable volunteers should be accepted from all categories of men outside the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements.

It is at present proposed that the term of service in **Japan should be six months, but if it is decided to retain a New Zealand force there for any greater length of time, volunteers will be sent from New Zealand for the purpose of reliefs.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

487 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON)

487

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg (London)

31 August 1945

Reference my telegram of 30 August.

Owing to the great reluctance of the Government party to agree to the compulsory direction of men for the brigade group from **Europe** to **Japan**, I am compelled to ask you to give consideration again to the possibility of attaining 5000 volunteers for **Japan** in suitable units from all forces under your command, the period of service to be six months. The relief would be from volunteers in New Zealand, of whom 2500 could be trained in New Zealand during three months and be ready to leave New Zealand at the end of that period, if shipping would be available, for the purpose of replacing half the brigade group. Owing to the attitude of a very large minority of the Government party and the consequent great difficulties, I must ask you to explore every possibility of obtaining sufficient suitable volunteers, and would like you again to give the fullest consideration to the matter before a final decision is made either to direct compulsorily or to give instructions to call for volunteers. In the meantime until the matter is further considered and you receive final instructions, please do not take any action on my telegram [**No. 486**] sent earlier.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

488 – GENERAL FREYBERG (LONDON) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

488

General Freyberg (London) to the Prime Minister

30 August 1945 ¹

I have received your telegram [**No. 487**] and realise the difficulties. All necessary and possible arrangements for shipping and movement and organisation of the brigade group have been made. I must now inform the **War Office** that no final decision has been taken about the brigade group, and I will go back to **Italy** on Sunday and cable you after discreet consultation with selected officers. I feel that the shorter term of service in the **Far East** will be more acceptable, but I am not hopeful that any voluntary system will meet with the necessary support. I will cable you as soon as possible next week.

¹The difference in time between New Zealand and the **United Kingdom** and the fact that **No. 487** was despatched shortly after midnight explain the anomaly in the dates of **Nos. 487** and **488**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

489 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

489

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

1 September 1945

Your telegram of 29 August [**No. 485**].

We are very glad to learn that New Zealand can provide a brigade group to take part in the occupation of **Japan**.

We have been considering the position in the light of Australian Government telegrams **Nos. 240** and **245**,¹ and while appreciating Australian wishes in the matter, we still feel strongly that the best interests of us all would be served if a joint Commonwealth force for service in **Japan** could be arranged.

I am therefore sending to the Prime Minister of **Australia** a message, of which the text is being repeated to you in my immediately following telegram,² expressing the hope that **Australia** will agree to the constitution of a single British Commonwealth contingent, to be under an Australian officer as Commander-in-Chief of the whole force.

I hope very much that this suggestion will commend itself to you.

¹ In telegram No. 240, dated 17 August, to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the Australian Government stated that the Australian force to take part in the occupation of **Japan** should operate under an Australian commander and that it should not form part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. In telegram No. 245 of 21 August the Australian Government informed the United Kingdom Government that it had conveyed

a direct request to **Washington** for **United States** concurrence in Australian participation as a principal in the Allied Control Council for **Japan** or any other similar body. The Australian view was that **Australia** should participate in the main act of surrender; that the Australian forces constituting part of the occupation forces in **Japan** should be accepted as independently designated Australian forces, subordinate only to the Supreme Commander; and that **Australia** should take a full part as a member of the Council of Foreign Ministers in relation to all matters affecting or concerning the **Pacific** and **Far East**.

² Not published. In this telegram Mr Attlee said that if **Australia** agreed to a unified British Commonwealth contingent, the United Kingdom Government would welcome the appointment of an Australian officer as inter-service Commander-in-Chief. The Australian Government at first disagreed with this proposal but later reconsidered its decision. On 21 September Mr Chifley advised Mr Attlee that his Government was agreeable to participating in a British Commonwealth force subject to certain conditions.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

490 – GENERAL FREYBERG (ITALY) TO THE PRIME MINISTER

490

General Freyberg (Italy) to the Prime Minister

5 September 1945

Reference your telegram of 31 August [No. 487].

I am now back in **Italy** with the Division and have seen the nine senior officers of the force, including Brigadier **Parkinson**³ from Egypt, where we still have 3000 of the 15th Reinforcements. We have examined the suggested policy of providing the occupational force by voluntary enlistment from the whole of the 2nd NZEF overseas. We have all approached the problem with the greatest desire to make a voluntary force possible. I have spoken individually with these nine officers and have put the best possible case for a voluntary force to them.

My approach has been that with the shortage of shipping at least 9000 of the latest-joined reinforcements will not get back to New Zealand until March or April. These men will therefore remain where they are for at least another six months in the knowledge that there will be little to do to keep up their interest. If they volunteer they will join the occupational force for **Japan**, which will concentrate in **Italy** as soon as possible and, providing the Americans agree to receive the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in **Japan** at that time, will move to **Japan** early in November, arriving there before the end of the year. Under the terms of the scheme they would be back in New Zealand about the end of July 1946, having seen in all probability **Singapore** and **Manila**, as well as **Japan** itself.

Although none of the officers feel that they can with confidence give a definite figure, they all agree that we should not get the required number of volunteers. Their estimates run from 750 to 2500 in the

extreme cases, with the consensus of opinion less than 1500.

I also discussed the problem with a selected group of officers at the War Office, asking them what they would expect to get from a British force of equivalent size and in similar circumstances. They felt that they might get 1000 volunteers. Field Marshal Alexander and his Chief of Staff, General Morgan, ¹ also gave a figure of about 1000. My own opinion is that we might get 1500—which falls far short of the required 5000 for a brigade group. Further, I feel it would not be possible to get the correct grades or numbers of specialist personnel to enable a balanced fighting force to be formed. In reference to your request, I therefore feel, after giving the matter all possible consideration, that a voluntary system from the present 2nd NZEF overseas would not succeed.

I must point out that the fact that the Australian and United States forces are being raised on a voluntary basis does not appear to be analogous with our own case. The Australian Imperial Force is already in the Pacific. The United States troops are to have ninety days' home leave before going to Japan. The two British brigades are already in India and have been fighting the Japanese. We should be the only force which would move direct from the European theatre to the Pacific.

I would suggest as a possibility that the British Government, for the purpose of maintaining the Commonwealth aspect of the force, might consider accepting from us a smaller garrison force capable of carrying out guard duties but not capable of working as an operational brigade group. Such a force of three battalions plus rearward services could be formed from 4000 men. Should this proposal be acceptable, these 4000 could be detailed from the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. Officers and certain additional specialists would have to be detailed from outside these reinforcement categories. As the bulk of the men so detailed have seen little fighting they could not logically have any grievance.

I know from certain definite pointers that opinion here has altered

to a marked degree since VJ Day. All entitled officers and men who volunteered to stay on at Base for the duration of the war against **Japan** have withdrawn their applications to remain and now wish to proceed home at the earliest date. VJ Day meant far less to our men than will the day they leave here for New Zealand. This general desire of everyone to get home and re-established into their new life is most pronounced.

The United Kingdom leave scheme is being kept in mind as a means of relieving the boredom which is bound to follow a long wait in the present surroundings. Such leave, however, could not be given to the men who will leave by the vessel promised for October, nor to those for the occupational brigade. The announcement of the scheme is therefore not being made in the meantime.

At present the tone of the Force both in **Italy** and Egypt is all that is desired, but a considerable prolongation of the present state of waiting is bound to have its effect. As you know, there has already been trouble with the Canadians at **Aldershot** and with the South Africans in **Cairo**.

There is little more we can do here at the moment. There should not be any trouble if we are able in the near future to give the men a detailed statement of the **New Zealand Government's** policy. Although I do appreciate the difficult position in which Cabinet is placed, I am told that such a statement of policy is generally expected by all ranks now that I have returned from England.

³ **Maj-Gen G. B. Parkinson**, CBE, DSO and bar, Legion of Merit (US); CO 4 Fd Regt Jan 1940–Aug 1941; comd 1 NZ Army Tank Bde and 7 Inf Bde Gp (in NZ) 1941–42; 6 Bde Apr 1943–Jun 1944; GOC 2 NZ Div 3–27 Mar 1944; CRA 2 NZ Div Jun–Aug 1944; comd 6 Bde Aug 1944–Jun 1945; NZ Military Liaison Officer, **London**, 1946–49; Commander, Southern Military District, 1949–51.

¹ General Sir William Morgan, GCB, DSO, MC; Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander, **Mediterranean**, 1945; Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 1945–47.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

491 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

491

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

7 September 1945

My telegram of 29 August [**No. 485**].

Advice has now been received from **General Freyberg** that it will not be possible to obtain a sufficient number from the 2nd New Zealand Division on a volunteer basis for the purpose of providing a brigade group for service in **Japan**. We are thus faced with the alternatives of exercising compulsion, which we are most reluctant to do at this stage, or of endeavouring to obtain a sufficient number of volunteers largely from New Zealand, supplemented by others from the Division.

The matter clearly calls for an immediate decision and I should like to take the opportunity tomorrow of discussing the whole question with the Government party and, if possible, of reaching a definite conclusion on the course to follow. Before I raise the matter I wish to know whether or not the **United States** have actually been advised of the proposed British Commonwealth force and, if so, whether they have signified their agreement to this form of participation in the occupation of **Japan**. As you will appreciate, we do not wish, in view of the difficulties already confronting us, to go ahead with our arrangements if the proposal to send a British Commonwealth force should not prove acceptable.

¹ In a telegram on 11 September to the acting High Commissioner for New Zealand in **London** (**Dr R. M. Campbell**) the Prime Minister advised that this telegram should have been

addressed Prime Minister to Prime Minister. Mr Fraser asked Dr Campbell to ensure that this telegram and the Dominions Office reply (No. 492) were seen by Mr Attlee.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

492 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

492

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of
New Zealand*

7 September 1945

Your telegram of 7 September on the proposed British
Commonwealth Occupation Force for **Japan**.

The proposal was mentioned by our Joint Staff Mission in
Washington to the United States Chiefs of Staff on the instructions
described in my telegram of 13 August [**No. 476**], and the United States
Chiefs of Staff replied that they accepted in principle the participation
of British ground forces in the occupation of **Japan**, and that details of
size and composition would be a matter for later determination.
Accordingly, we are making our own plans on the basis that there will be
participation by British Commonwealth ground forces, whether by
separate forces, as proposed by **Australia**, or by a joint force to which, as
you will have seen from my telegram to **Australia** of 31 August, ¹ we
hope the Australian Government will agree. We greatly hope that we
may count on New Zealand participation in either case.

¹ See p. 518, note 2.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

493 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

493

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

12 September 1945

Your telegram of 5 September [**No. 490**].

I am most grateful for your endeavours in connection with the formation of a brigade group for **Japan** on the basis of volunteers. The difficulties are appreciated. I have had an opportunity of discussing the matter with members of the Government party, and I am now negotiating with the Leader of the Opposition party on the basis of New Zealand participation in the manner suggested in your telegram under reference, namely a force of three battalions plus rearward services, composed of single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. I am doing my best to reach an agreed decision as soon as possible. The position has been rendered more difficult in the meantime by the announcement over the **BBC** this morning, in a despatch from Rome, that 5000 single men from the 2nd Division will be called upon to volunteer for garrison duty in the **Pacific**. ²

² This despatch was published in the New Zealand press. On 13 September **General Freyberg** replied that 'considerable annoyance' had been caused by the despatches of the **BBC's** Rome correspondent. He asked, in the absence of military censorship, whether something could be done to stop such announcements.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

494 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

494

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

14 September 1945

I regret to inform you that a decision is not yet possible. The Opposition did not agree that the force should be raised by compulsion. I hope that further discussions after the weekend will enable the Government to reach a satisfactory settlement.

The Leader of the Opposition is laying stress on the statement contained in your telegram of 5 September [[No. 490](#)] that the Australian and [United States](#) forces are being raised on a voluntary basis, and the fact that [United States](#) troops are to have ninety days' home leave before going to [Japan](#). I would be grateful for elucidation of these points, which are being checked here also.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

495 – GENERAL FREYBERG TO THE PRIME MINISTER

495

General Freyberg to the Prime Minister

14 September 1945

Your telegram of 14 September.

1. As far as **United States** and Australian forces are concerned, we depend upon broadcast statements and reports in *Stars and Stripes* and British newspapers for our news, much of which may be inaccurate, and it causes considerable confusion. Based on such reports, our understanding of the long-term policy for the occupation of **Japan** is that immediate occupational forces of the kind referred to in my following paragraph are to be replaced by forces enlisted voluntarily in the **United States** and **Australia**. In the case of the Americans such volunteers, if they are already serving in an overseas theatre, are to receive a period of home leave in the **United States** before going to **Japan**. The paragraph in my previous cable [**No. 490**] was meant to relate only to the raising of a voluntary force, and I did not consider, therefore, that our call for a voluntary force from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force overseas would meet with much success without similar leave in New Zealand.

2. With regard to the employment of Australian, American, and British troops for the immediate occupation of **Japan**, the point that is evident is that these troops were actually being employed in operations against the Japanese or were deployed in the Far Eastern operational area at the time of the Japanese surrender. In carrying out their immediate occupational duties in **Japan** they are doing no more than the New Zealand Division did in **Trieste** and the British are still doing in **Austria**. As we are not called on to do garrison duties in **Europe**, I see no reason

why our short-service personnel, who have seen little or no fighting, should not be used as a temporary garrison force in Japan.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

496 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL FREYBERG

496

The Prime Minister to General Freyberg

25 September 1945

Your telegram of 18 September. ¹

My own statement regarding New Zealand's participation in the occupation force and the initial composition of the brigade group may be delayed for a few more days pending agreement of the **United Kingdom and Australian Governments on broad questions of formation and command of the **British Commonwealth Force**.**

There is no objection meanwhile to you making your own statement as amended and I had assumed that you would have done this.

For your own personal and confidential information, Cabinet are agreed that the force should comprise single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements. It seems clear that it would not be possible to organise the force in time on any other basis.

¹ See Vol. II, No. 479.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

497 – THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS²

497

*The Prime Minister to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs*²

30 September 1945

New Zealand's participation in the occupation of **Japan** was today the subject of a statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. P. Fraser.

'In referring to the Press Association cable regarding **General Freyberg's** statement to the men of the 2nd NZEF, Mr Fraser said the actual text of **General Freyberg's** remarks had been conveyed to the **New Zealand Government** and approved in advance of publication. These were as follows:

"The question of finding a small New Zealand Force to assist in the garrison of **Japan** is still under consideration and subject to negotiations by the British and United States Governments regarding the forces required for the occupation of **Japan**. I can only tell you that eventually it will be found from New Zealand by voluntary enlistment. This will take time and it is possible that a small force about 4000 strong will be found from the 2nd NZEF in **Italy** to carry out six months' occupational duties in **Japan**. They would then be relieved by the voluntary force from New Zealand. If it is decided to send a force from the 2nd NZEF to **Japan** it would probably be found from single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements and from certain officers and specialists to be detailed by name. These men would concentrate and organise in **Italy** and would leave here by ship in November or December. After the voyage east the force would stay six months in **Japan** and return to New Zealand about July 1946. I will give you detailed news of this project as soon as negotiations between the two Governments are concluded."

‘I should add,’ said Mr Fraser, ‘that these negotiations are still taking place and, moreover, the British Commonwealth countries concerned are also discussing questions relating to the formation of a **British Commonwealth Force.**

‘I had intended making a statement in Parliament as soon as I had received confirmation that arrangements had been completed. I can only say at this stage that if a **British Commonwealth Force is to go to **Japan** then New Zealand will be represented.**

‘In view of the press cable messages received this morning it is necessary that I should now release the following statement which I had intended to make to Parliament:

“When Parliament discussed at the beginning of August the formation of a New Zealand force for service in the **Pacific it was decided to send a two-brigade Division to fight against the Japanese. Before that decision could be implemented, and when it became clear that **Japan** intended to surrender, Mr Attlee, the Prime Minister of the **United Kingdom**, consulted me regarding the substitution of this combat force by a **British Commonwealth Force** to take part in the occupation of **Japan**.**

“The new proposal envisaged a land force composed of brigade groups from various countries of the British Commonwealth, together with a tactical **Air Force contingent. The New Zealand Government agreed at once that a New Zealand squadron could be made available for the tactical **Air Force**; they agreed also to the continued attachment of New Zealand ships to the **British Pacific Fleet** and they undertook to give consideration to the proposal that a New Zealand brigade group should participate in the proposed British Commonwealth land force.**

“I feel sure,” said Mr Fraser, “that the people of New Zealand will agree that this opportunity of proving our unity and solidarity with the Mother Country, and of sharing in the responsibilities of the British Commonwealth in the **Pacific, should be accepted by the provision of a**

brigade group as requested by the United Kingdom Government.

“The Government made the fullest inquiries as to the practicability of obtaining from the Division on a voluntary basis a properly balanced brigade group with its essential technical units, but the advice received from **General Freyberg and from the Chiefs of Staff in New Zealand is that it will not be possible to organise a brigade group on a voluntary basis to be ready in time to form part of the British Commonwealth occupation force entering **Japan**. It has therefore been decided that a brigade group shall be made available for six months' service in **Japan** from the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements of the 2nd NZEF who have seen little or no actual fighting. The men who have already served with the 3rd Division in the **Pacific**, both married and single, will not be included. It will also be necessary for certain officers, NCOs and other key personnel to be drawn from other units of the 2nd NZEF for the Occupation Force.**

“It is proposed that the personnel of this brigade group shall be relieved at the end of six months by men from New Zealand. The relief force will be obtained from volunteers, for whom a call will be made at an early date to enable training to be completed and such relief force to be despatched in sufficient time to take over from the brigade group in **Japan.**

“Despite the repeated efforts of the Government to obtain the highest possible priority in shipping, there appears to be little prospect so far of obtaining transports to bring the men of the later reinforcements back to New Zealand before March or April next. The consequent delay in the return of the single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th Reinforcements occasioned by their going to **Japan now should, therefore, not result in their being away from New Zealand for more than an additional two or three months.**

“It will be generally agreed that New Zealand should undertake this duty, not only because it is in our interests as a **Pacific country to do so but also because, in common with the other members of the British**

Commonwealth of Nations, we have been invited by the United Kingdom Government to participate. Indeed Mr Attlee said in his original message, 'We trust that we may rely on your assistance and indeed we regard your assistance as indispensable.'

"It will be generally agreed also that our only enemy in the Pacific is Japan and that her surrender does not of itself ensure freedom from future Japanese aggression. To render this impossible it is necessary to disarm Japan, to dismantle her war industries and, as far as possible, to eradicate the spirit of Japanese militarism.

"The Allied Powers have set themselves in the Potsdam Declaration, in the Armistice terms and in various declarations of policy to implement this policy, which is endorsed by the New Zealand Government.

"It is clearly our duty," said Mr Fraser, "to undertake our share of the responsibility for the enforcement of the peace, to the achievement of which our war effort has made a notable contribution. If, moreover, the peace settlement with Japan should fail, New Zealand may well be one of the first countries to suffer. Having regard to our resources and the part we have played throughout the war, the Government proposes to limit our commitment for a land force to an initial period of six months. Any extension beyond that period will depend upon the response which is made to the call for volunteers to provide the necessary reliefs."

² Repeated to the Prime Minister of Australia, the New Zealand Minister in Washington, and to General Freyberg.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

498 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA¹

498

*The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of
Australia*¹

1 October 1945

Reference Australian Government's telegram of 21 September.²

We are most gratified that you have agreed with our suggestion for a joint Commonwealth force for the occupation of **Japan**.

2. We agree with the proposals in your telegram. We should like, however, to be sure that our interpretation of the machinery proposed in your paragraph 6 (v), (vi) and (vii) is correct.³ In framing our reply we have been very glad to have the benefit of Dr Evatt's advice.

3. We envisage an organisation similar to that of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, which worked so well between ourselves and the Americans. This would mean that our members of the joint organisation would be representatives only and would normally consult the British Chiefs of Staff in **London** before giving their agreement on the questions under consideration. Thus the joint organisation would be, in effect, the combined **United Kingdom**—Australian Chiefs of Staff, the instructions to the Commander-in-Chief being issued through the Australian Chiefs of Staff. Reference to Governments would therefore be made by the respective Chiefs of Staff to their Governments rather than through the Australian Defence Department, as might be inferred from your paragraph 6 (vii). Inter-governmental discussions, when necessary, would then take place through normal channels as you propose.

4. We suggest that the title 'Joint Chiefs of Staff' may lead to

considerable confusion with the American Chiefs of Staff, who are also known by that name. We suggest as an alternative, 'Chiefs of Staff in **Australia**'.

5. The British Chiefs of Staff will be communicating with the Australian Chiefs of Staff on detailed questions of organisation and command of the force. When these details are agreed, no doubt you will approach the American Government with our joint proposal.

6. For New Zealand: Please despatch your agreement or comments on the above direct to **Australia**, repeating to us.

7. We are communicating separately with **India**.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

² See p. 518, note 2. This was Mr Chifley's reply advising that his Government was agreeable to participating in a British Commonwealth force.

³ Paragraph 6 (v) defined the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth force to the **United Kingdom** and Australian Governments through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Section (vi) dealt with the channels of communication between Governments and between Governments and the Supreme Allied Commander. Section (vii) defined the relationship between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

499 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹

499

*The Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs*¹

4 October 1945

Your telegram of 1 October.

The New Zealand Government wish to express their satisfaction that arrangements have been concluded for the formation of a **British Commonwealth Force** for service in **Japan** under Australian command. They trust that immediate steps will be taken to conclude discussions with the **United States** authorities and that a public statement will be issued at the earliest possible date.

2. So far as the control organisation is concerned, the **New Zealand Government** are prepared to accept the procedure proposed in paragraph 6 of the Commonwealth telegram to you of 21 September,² subject of course to any modification as may be agreed upon in the light of your telegram under reference.

3. The New Zealand Government would wish, in view of their contribution to the occupation forces, to arrange that representatives of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff are associated with the organisation it is suggested might be known as the 'Chiefs of Staff in **Australia**'. They hope that this will prove acceptable to both the **United Kingdom** and Commonwealth Governments. It is at present proposed that there would be two representatives of the Chiefs of Staff, one from the Army and the other from the **Air Force**. These would represent the views of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and function as an integral part of the planning

and controlling organisation on the Service level for the occupation force.

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of [Australia](#) and the New Zealand Minister in [Washington](#).

² See [p. 527](#), note 3.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

500 – THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS¹ – [EXTRACT]

500

The Prime Minister of Australia to the Secretary of State for

*Dominion Affairs*¹

[Extract]

12 January 1946

My immediately preceding cablegram.² Following is the text of the proposed announcement:³

'1. As a result of discussion between members of the British Commonwealth, proposals for a joint British Commonwealth force to participate in the occupation of Japan were agreed upon and conveyed to the United States Government by the Australian Government, acting on behalf of the British Commonwealth Governments concerned.

'2. Following recent representations in Washington by the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt, the United States Government have now formally accepted the participation of British Commonwealth forces in the occupation of Japan. Arrangements are now well advanced for the force to proceed on the following basis.

'3. The force is drawn from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand⁴ and India. The Commander-in-Chief of the force is Lieutenant-General J. Northcott, CB, MVO,⁵ of the Australian Military Forces. His headquarters is fully integrated with representatives drawn from each service and from each Commonwealth country contributing to the force....

'4. The force comprises:

(Force and base troops drawn from each of the contributing
a) countries.

(A land component organised as a corps of one British Indian
b) division and two independent brigade groups, one each from **Australia**
and **New Zealand**.

(An air component comprising squadrons drawn from the **Royal Air**
c) **Force**, the **Royal Australian Air Force**, the **Royal New Zealand Air**
Force and the **Royal Indian Air Force**.

‘5. A squadron of the **British Pacific Fleet** which includes ships of
the **Royal Navy**, the **Royal Australian Navy** and the **Royal Indian Navy**

¹ Repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand and other
addressees.

² Not published.

³ This statement was released simultaneously in the **United**
Kingdom, **Australia**, **New Zealand** and **India** on 31 January. A
similar announcement was made in **Washington** and by General
MacArthur in **Tokyo**. This text includes all later amendments.

⁴ The New Zealand contingent was known as J Force. Its first
commander was Brig K. L. Stewart. The force sailed from **Naples**
on 21 February and arrived at **Kure** on 19 March.

⁵ Gen Sir John Northcott, KCMG, CB, MVO; Chief of the
General Staff, Australian Military Forces, 1942–45; C-in-C British
Commonwealth Occupation Force, **Japan**, 1945–46.

is stationed in **Pacific** waters under the operational control of the
Admiral Commanding the Detachment of the United States Fleet....

‘8. The **British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF)** will form
part of the occupation forces in **Japan** under the supreme command of
General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
(SCAP).... Lieutenant-General Northcott as Commander-in-Chief BCOF is

entirely responsible for the maintenance and administration of the **British Commonwealth Force** as a whole. He has direct access to General MacArthur on matters of major policy affecting operational commitments of forces. On policy and administrative matters affecting the force the Commander-in-Chief is responsible to the British Commonwealth Governments concerned through a British Commonwealth organisation set up in **Melbourne** and known as the 'Joint Chiefs of Staff in **Australia**'. Their instructions to the Commander-in-Chief BCOF will be issued by the Australian Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff in **Australia** (JCOSA) comprise the Australian Chiefs of Staff and representatives of the Chiefs of Staff in the **United Kingdom** and New Zealand ¹ and of the Commander-in-Chief in **India**. This organisation is fully associated with the Australian joint service machinery. The Commander-in-Chief BCOF has the right of direct communication with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in **Australia** on administrative matters affecting the force. On matters of Governmental concern affecting the policy and operations of BCOF he will communicate through JCOSA to the Australian Government, who act as the representative of the other Commonwealth Governments concerned.

'9. The BCOF will be initially located in the Hiroshima Prefecture, including the cities of **Kure** and Fukuyama. It will be responsible for the demilitarisation and disposal of Japanese installations and armaments and for exercising military control of the area, but not for its military Government, which remains the responsibility of **United States** agencies....

'11. The British Commonwealth Force may be withdrawn wholly or in part by agreement between the United States Government and the Commonwealth Governments concerned or upon six months' notice by either party. It has also been agreed that progressive reductions in the strength of the force will be made from time to time in conformity with progressive reductions which may be made in the strength of the **United States** occupation forces in **Japan**.... ²

¹ **The first New Zealand representative was Brig G. H. Clifton, DSO and two bars, MC.**

² **The New Zealand army component ceased its occupation duties in September 1948.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

APPENDIX I – VISIT OF MINISTERS FROM DOMINIONS AND OF A REPRESENTATIVE FROM INDIA – APPRECIATION OF PROBABLE JAPANESE POLICY IN THE FAR EAST

Appendix I

Visit of Ministers from Dominions and of a Representative from India

APPRECIATION OF PROBABLE JAPANESE POLICY IN THE FAR EAST

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

I circulate, herewith, for the use of the Ministers of the Dominions and the Representative of India now in London, an appreciation of probable Japanese policy in the Far East.

H[ALIFAX]

Foreign Office

, 15 November 1939

APPRECIATION OF PROBABLE JAPANESE POLICY IN THE

Prior to the signature of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August, Japanese extremists were advocating the conversion of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Italy into a military alliance. There was strong opposition to their views, and it is by no means certain that, in any case, they would have achieved their object, but the Russo-German Pact, which came as a severe shock to Japanese opinion, frustrated their efforts. The Japanese Government resigned as a direct result of the Pact, and, on the outbreak of war in Europe, the new Prime Minister, General Abe, ¹ issued a statement to the effect that Japan would not intervene in the European conflict, but would concentrate

upon a settlement of the **China** incident.

2. Since then the **Japanese Government** have adopted a non-committal attitude in foreign relations. While the Anti-Comintern Pact is obviously a dead letter, **Japan** has not denounced it, and has professed continued friendship for **Germany** and **Italy**. On the other hand, there have been references to a desire to improve relations with Great Britain and the **United States**. At all times, however, emphasis has been laid upon the determination of the Government to bring the **China** incident to a successful conclusion.

3. **Germany** has in the meantime used her endeavours to obtain a Russian–German–Japanese understanding, and there is some reason to suspect that the extremists in **Japan**, who formerly advocated an Anti-Comintern alliance, may now be working for a *rapprochement* with **Russia**, with the object of eliminating British and other foreign influence from **China**. The conclusion of a truce on 16 September, which put an end to the fighting on the Outer Mongolian border, and negotiations for the demarcation of the frontier

¹ General Nobuyuki Abe, Prime Minister of **Japan**, 28 Aug 1939 - 15 Jan 1940.

in that region, together with the release by both sides of fishing vessels which had been detained on charges of trespass and poaching, are not, however, sufficient in themselves to justify the belief that a far-reaching agreement of some kind may result between **Japan** and the **USSR**.

4. It must be remembered that Russian and Japanese aims in the **Far East** are fundamentally opposed to one another. **Japan's** fear of Communism and her distrust of the Soviet Government are deep-rooted and would not easily be overcome. Nor could any political agreement which would allow **Japan** a free hand in **China** and the removal of Soviet support for that country alter the fact, even if such an agreement were honoured, that **Japan** would extend, rather than reduce, the area in

which her interests would be likely to come into conflict with those of the **USSR**. From the point of view of the latter, it is difficult to believe that it would be in her interest to contribute to the reduction of **Japan's** commitments or to the strengthening of a neighbour of whose predatory designs she has had abundant evidence.

5. While, therefore, it may well be in the interests of both parties to reduce the tension which has prevailed for many years and to avoid incidents which achieve no object, the conflict of interest, which is fundamental, and the profound distrust which each has of the other are calculated to prevent the conclusion of any agreement of a durable nature. **Japan** will continue to have her Russian problem and the **USSR** her Japanese problem, even though elements in both countries may not be averse from some limited course of concerted action (such as the supply of raw materials to **Germany**) which might serve to inconvenience or weaken Great Britain. In the meantime, **China** is satisfied that Russian support in her struggle against **Japan** will continue, though it is not clear what price she may have to pay for it.

6. **Japan's** main preoccupation today is the settlement of the **China** incident. This is probably due in part to the effect which its prolongation is bound to have upon her economy (already in a state scarcely to be described as sound), and in part to her desire to present the Powers with a *fait accompli* against the day when they will be free, on the termination of hostilities in **Europe**, to turn their attention once more to the **Far East**.

7. For the present, **Japan** pins her hopes upon the establishment, at an early date, of a Central Government under Wang Ching-wei,¹ with which she will hope to make peace and to which she will accord early recognition. The success of this venture will depend upon the measure of support accorded to the new Government by influential Chinese in the various parts of occupied **China**. This, in its turn, will presumably depend upon the extent to which **Japan** is prepared to allow the exercise of real sovereignty by the new regime. Unfortunately for **Japan**, there is nothing in her history of expansion to show that she is capable of

allowing any real measure of independence or self-government to the peoples of the territories she has subjugated.

8. Until the new regime has been established and in being for some little time, it will be difficult to determine the extent to which **Japan** is likely to succeed in her plan. Until then, she will be unable to rid herself of any of her commitments, and she must for some time remain in doubt as to the reactions of other Powers and, in particular, of the three democracies, to her new venture. The Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs indicated recently that his ruling idea was the attainment of **Japan's aims in China**

¹ Head of the Japanese-sponsored puppet government set up at Nanking in April 1940.

in as friendly an international atmosphere as possible. This does not necessarily mean that **Japan** will be easily diverted from her aims, but it may well be taken to indicate a disinclination for further extended foreign adventures.

9. Occupied with the difficult problems which lie ahead of her in the solution of the **China** incident, it seems highly unlikely that **Japan** could venture upon any scheme of southward expansion, in particular. In the words of His Majesty's Ambassador at **Tokyo**: ' **Japan** has her hands far too full in **China** and is too apprehensive of the **United States** in its present mood to think seriously of any move involving danger to **Australia** and New Zealand, or to territories in which those Dominions are interested.' The hardening of American opinion has been evidenced in recent months by the denunciation of the trade treaty and the recent outspoken speech of the American Ambassador to **Japan**. The treaty expires on 26 January 1940, and **Japan** is left in uncertainty whether the **United States** will negotiate a new agreement or whether, if her complaints are not met, she will institute some kind of embargo. Although it is impossible to forecast the attitude of the United States Government in any given circumstance, **Japan** cannot assume that their

reaction to any act of aggression in the **Pacific** would not be hostile. As long as **Japan** remains uncertain of the attitude of the **United States**, this uncertainty affords a certain measure of security to interests which she might otherwise be tempted to assail. This view is strongly supported by His Majesty's Ambassador at **Washington** in the attached telegram No. 747 of 10 November.

10. There are also other reasons why the Japanese, who are essentially cautious by nature, will hesitate to extend their attack on foreign interests. Our Naval dispositions are different from those in the last war, when, owing to the threat of a strong German Fleet, we were forced to hold the great bulk of our capital ship strength in home waters. Moreover, there is no war in the **Mediterranean**. The increased mobility of the Fleet is a factor which must have an important influence on the minds of any who contemplate threatening British interests in any quarter of the globe.

11. In the event of a German occupation of **Holland**, there is always the possibility that **Japan** might be tempted, either at the instigation of **Germany** or of her own extremists, to make a descent upon the **Netherlands East Indies**. This possibility, however, is conditioned by the same factors outlined above, which govern **Japan's** attitude towards an attack on British possessions in the **Far East**.

12. British policy towards **Japan** has been to endeavour to restore friendly relations and to compose the differences arising out of Japanese action in **China**, provided that this can be done without injury to **China's** vital interests in her struggle with **Japan**. By looking for ways of settling the Tientsin quarrel, and by endeavouring to allay **Japan's** anxiety over her supplies of essential raw materials, which has been aroused by our war effort, progressive improvement in our relations may reasonably be expected. Such readjustments as we may be able to effect must, however, be seen in perspective against the main Japanese preoccupation in **China**.

13. The conclusion is that **Japan** will continue to concentrate all her

efforts on the solution of the **China** incident. She will sit on the fence as far as the war in **Europe** is concerned, keeping her hands free to pick up whatever trade advantages it may offer.

Foreign Office, 13 November 1939.

ANNEX

*The Marquess of Lothian*¹ to Viscount Halifax

(No. 747)

(Telegraphic)

Washington, 10 November 1939

Your telegram No. 716.²

There is not, I think, any particularly strong feeling in the **United States** for **Australia** and New Zealand, though they are popular as young democracies. The action that would be taken by the **United States** in the **Pacific** would be governed in the main by its attitude to **Japan** and the consequences to **America** of Japanese expansion in the **Pacific**. The **United States** has long made up its mind against interference on the mainland in **Asia**, but there is widespread popular resentment against **Japan's** war on **China** and the brutal manner in which it has been conducted, often at the expense of American missions. Three or four years ago public opinion in the **United States** supported the evacuation of the **Philippines** as diminishing their strategic commitments in the **Far East** and therefore lessening the risk of war. The upsurge of pacifist public opinion during the recent neutrality debates has been fundamentally a determination not to be drawn into another war in **Europe**, to which last time they sent two million men. But feeling against **Japan** is quite likely to demand intensification of economic pressure against **Japan** when the question of a *reversal* of the recent denunciation of the trade treaty comes before Congress next January, especially as the **United States** can bring very strong economic pressure against **Japan** owing to the effect of the war on **Japan's** trade with the **British Commonwealth** and **Europe**; if **Japan** began to expand outside

the China Sea zone, in which her supremacy was recognised by the **Washington** treaties, I think there would be a powerful movement to stop her. I do not believe that public opinion would now stand aside if the independence of the **Philippines** were challenged.

If Japanese action left the **Philippines** alone and concentrated on British possessions and the Dutch Islands, other than **Australia** and New Zealand, the reaction of American public opinion would be far slower. But partly because the Central Pacific is now regarded as a kind of American reserve, partly because the expansion of **Japan** overseas would eventually threaten the Monroe Doctrine, and partly because a war with **Japan** would probably not involve sending abroad vast armies of conscripts, I think that long before Japanese action threatened **Australia** or New Zealand, **America** would be at war. This probability is probably enhanced by the fact that the Army and Navy and a great many publicists, though not yet public opinion, recognise clearly that the present form of American security and the Monroe Doctrine is, in the long run, just as dependent upon the British as on the American Navy. If the **United States** is to rely upon Great Britain to prevent totalitarian **Europe** from entering the **Atlantic** through the Straits of Gibraltar and the exits from the North Sea, the **United States** must themselves underwrite the security of the British Empire in the **Pacific** because they cannot afford the weakening of Great Britain itself which would follow the collapse of her dominions in the **Pacific**.

¹ British Ambassador at **Washington**.

² Not published.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

I circulate, herewith, for the use of the Ministers of the Dominions and the Representative of **India** now in **London**, an appreciation of probable Japanese policy in the **Far East**.

H[ALIFAX]
Foreign Office

, 15 November 1939

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

APPRECIATION OF PROBABLE JAPANESE POLICY IN THE FAR EAST

APPRECIATION OF PROBABLE JAPANESE POLICY IN THE

Prior to the signature of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August, Japanese extremists were advocating the conversion of the Anti-Comintern Pact with **Germany** and **Italy** into a military alliance. There was strong opposition to their views, and it is by no means certain that, in any case, they would have achieved their object, but the Russo-German Pact, which came as a severe shock to Japanese opinion, frustrated their efforts. The Japanese Government resigned as a direct result of the Pact, and, on the outbreak of war in **Europe**, the new Prime Minister, General Abe, ¹ issued a statement to the effect that **Japan** would not intervene in the European conflict, but would concentrate upon a settlement of the **China** incident.

2. Since then the **Japanese Government** have adopted a non-committal attitude in foreign relations. While the Anti-Comintern Pact is obviously a dead letter, **Japan** has not denounced it, and has professed continued friendship for **Germany** and **Italy**. On the other hand, there have been references to a desire to improve relations with Great Britain and the **United States**. At all times, however, emphasis has been laid upon the determination of the Government to bring the **China** incident to a successful conclusion.

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Foreign Office, 13 November 1939.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

ANNEX – THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN¹ TO VISCOUNT HALIFAX

ANNEX

The Marquess of Lothian¹ to Viscount Halifax

(No. 747)

(Telegraphic)

Washington, 10 November 1939

Your telegram No. 716.²

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¹ British Ambassador at **Washington**.

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

APPENDIX II – VISIT OF MINISTERS FROM DOMINIONS AND OF A REPRESENTATIVE FROM INDIA – AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND NAVAL DEFENCE (WINTER 1939)

Appendix II

Visit of Ministers from Dominions and of a Representative from India

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND NAVAL DEFENCE (Winter 1939)

Note by the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence

In accordance with the conclusions reached at the meeting between Ministers of the **United Kingdom and of the Dominions, held at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 20 November 1939, I circulate herewith a revised Memorandum on Australian and New Zealand Naval Defence. This Memorandum was approved by the United Kingdom War Cabinet at their meeting on 23 November, 1939, and should be considered as taking the place of the Memorandum previously circulated as Paper No. DMV (39) 3.**

1

C[HATFIELD]

**Richmond Terrace, SW 1,
23 November 1939**

is a fortress armed with five 15-inch guns and garrisoned by nearly 20,000 men. It could only be taken after a siege by an army of at least 50,000 men, who would have to be landed in the marshes and jungle of the Isthmus which connects it with the mainland. As Singapore is as far from **Japan as Southampton is from **New York**, the operation of moving a Japanese army with all its troopships and maintaining it with men and munitions during a siege would be forlorn. Moreover, such a siege, which**

should last at least four or five months, would be liable to be interrupted if at any time Great Britain chose to send a superior fleet to the scene. In this case the besieging army would become prisoners of war. It is not considered possible that the Japanese, who are a prudent people and reserve their strength for the command of the Yellow Seas and **China**, in which they are fully occupied, would embark upon such a mad enterprise.

2. Even less likely is the invasion of **Australia** or New Zealand by **Japan**. To do this **Japan** would have to despatch and subsequently maintain a large army more than 3000 miles from home, with the possibility that at any time a British fleet would arrive to cut the communications; in which case all would be lost. Such an operation in its political aspects would certainly be resented by the **United States**, but as long as there are well-armed Australian and New Zealand military forces and a superior British fleet in being in any part of the world, it is needless to suppose that such an enterprise would be attempted.

It is always possible that a long-range submarine or raiding cruiser might turn up and insult Australian or New Zealand shores by firing a few shells into some seaport city, or cause temporary inconvenience by disturbing the coastal trade. But Japan would hardly be likely to reap any result except resentment from such escapades.

3. The power of a predominant fleet is exercised simultaneously in all quarters of the globe in which it has bases. This is irrespective of the station it occupies at any given moment, provided that it is not permanently tied to that station. At the beginning of the present War, the Admiralty had to contemplate fighting **Italy** in the **Mediterranean** as well as **Germany** and the U-boats in the North Sea and the **Atlantic**. This was thought to be not beyond our strength. In these circumstances the first step obviously was to beat the Italians and recover the command of the **Mediterranean**. With the French Fleet, which is highly efficient and as strong as the Italian, this ought to have been achieved in a few months. Meanwhile, **Singapore**, even if it had been attacked, could have resisted. However, if the result in the **Mediterranean** had been long

delayed, or the German and U-boat pressure had become too severe, the Admiralty could have closed the **Mediterranean** at Gibraltar and at the **Suez Canal**, and, sacrificing our important interests in that area, proceeded to the relief of **Singapore**, or, of course, *a fortiori* to the aid of **Australia** or New Zealand supposing either was the victim of a serious attack.

4. Now, however, that **Italy** is neutral and may even become a friend, the British Fleet has become again entirely mobile. Only a very few capital ships are needed in the North Sea to contain the small German Fleet and support the blockade from **Scotland** to Greenland. All the rest are now ranging freely about the oceans, either on convoy work, or hunting raiders. Although it is not at present within our power to place a superior battle fleet in the Home waters of **Japan**, it would be possible, if it were necessary, to place a squadron of battleships in the **Far East** sufficient to act as a major deterrent on Japanese action so far from home, or to send capital ships to Australian or New Zealand waters from the moment that the danger to either **Singapore**, **Australia** or New Zealand developed in a manner which made their protection a real and practical war need. The Admiralty accepts the full responsibility of defending **Australia**, New Zealand or **Singapore** from a Japanese attack on a large scale, and after containing the German heavy ships they have forces at their disposal for these essential purposes. The chief difficulty would arise from the stringency in destroyer strength; but this situation should improve as our building programmes develop and as the U-boat is mastered by our attack. It is, however, wise to use every vessel we possess to the highest possible advantage in the fighting area, and only to move them to other waters when the War moves thither. The Admiralty are, therefore, most grateful for the loyal and clairvoyant strategy which has to the uninstructed eye denuded **Australia** and New Zealand of naval force. In particular, the assistance of the Australian destroyers is of invaluable aid. But we wish to make it plain that we regard the defence of **Australia** and New Zealand, and of **Singapore** as a stepping stone to these two Dominions, as ranking next to the mastering of the principal fleet to which we are opposed, and that if the choice were presented of defending

them against a serious attack, or sacrificing British interests in the **Mediterranean**, our duty to our kith and kin would take precedence.

It seems very unlikely, however, that this bleak choice will arise during the next year or two, which is what we have to consider at the present time.

5. Hitherto this note has dealt only with the gravest issues of a major attack upon **Singapore** or a serious invasion of **Australia** or New Zealand. However, the question has been raised of an encroachment by **Japan** upon the Dutch Colonies in the East Indies, probably arising out of a German invasion of **Holland**, in which event it might be assumed that we should be involved in a state of war with **Japan**. It seems very unlikely that the **United States** would impassively watch the acquisition by **Japan** of naval bases west and south-west of the **Philippines**. Such an act of Japanese aggression would seriously compromise the whole American position in the **Pacific**, and it cannot be doubted that **Japan** would weigh this consideration with the utmost care before committing herself, having regard especially to the fact that she is already deeply entangled in **China**. The contingency must, therefore, be regarded as highly improbable, unless, of course, Great Britain and **France** are getting the worst of it, when many evils will descend upon us all.

However, should Japanese encroachment begin, or should Great Britain pass into a state of war with **Japan**, the Admiralty would make such preparatory dispositions as would enable them to offer timely resistance either to the serious attack upon **Singapore** or to the invasion of **Australia** and New Zealand. These dispositions would not necessarily take the form of stationing a fleet at **Singapore**, but would be of a character to enable the necessary concentrations to be made to the eastward in ample time to prevent a disaster. With our present limited forces we cannot afford to have any important portion of H.M. Fleet idle. All ships must play their part from day to day, and there are always the hazards of war to be faced, but the Admiralty can be trusted to make the appropriate dispositions to meet events as they emerge from imagination

into reality.

6. Finally, it must be pointed out that we are now at the lowest point of our strength compared to **Germany** and **Japan**. As our new battleships now being built come into service, the relative position should steadily improve.

There are no naval grounds, therefore, always assuming that the **United States** is our friend, which should prevent the despatch of Australian and New Zealand armies to the decisive battlefields, where their name stands so high.

21 November 1939

¹ On the naval defence of **Australia**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

APPENDIX III – VISIT OF MINISTERS FROM DOMINIONS AND OF A REPRESENTATIVE FROM INDIA – ANNEX

Appendix III

Visit of Ministers from Dominions and of a Representative from India

ANNEX

Note of Mr Fraser's Views

New Zealand's concern regarding possible developments in the Far East, is, we believe, very much the same as that of Australia. The matter was discussed in considerable detail at the Pacific Defence Conference¹ in Wellington this year and the general conclusion arrived at was that the most probable scale of attack in any likely contingency would be that of sporadic raids. At the same time a saving clause was unanimously agreed upon that, while this would appear to be the most probable scale of attack, Australia and New Zealand would be well advised to consider preparations against a greater scale of attack.

The present situation as it has in fact now developed is much more favourable than the worst contingencies contemplated in Wellington. To that extent, and from the narrower point of view of the defence of New Zealand and Australia, the problem is at the moment simpler than it might have been. In the light of present circumstances and of Paper No. DMV (39) 3² we have no immediate fear of serious delay or difficulty in despatching a substantial British fleet to Singapore, should hostilities develop in the Far East, nor indeed have we any immediate fear of any such hostilities in the Far East. It is for this reason that the New Zealand Government have decided (of course in the absence of any serious deterioration in the meantime) to despatch by mid-January the

first echelon, consisting of some 6700 men, of the contemplated Division. This decision was taken in the light of the present situation, after consideration of the information supplied to the Honourable Mr Fraser during his present visit to this country, and in the light of the considerations set out in the British Government's summary of the situation on the outbreak of war, in which, it will be remembered, the possibility of despatch of forces from New Zealand was considered under two headings (*a*) **Japan** definitely not hostile, and (*b*) **Japan** either hostile or adopting an attitude of reserve. ³

At the same time, just as facts have proved that it was not possible accurately to predict the parties to the present war or the course of hostilities, so the future is no doubt equally unpredictable. Quite apart from the position that might develop were **Germany** to invade **Holland**, and **Japan** to consider the time opportune for a forward move against Dutch possessions in the East, we feel that we also have to consider other possibilities. At the moment, from the narrower point of view of the defence of New Zealand, the German-Russian pact and the entanglement of **Japan**

¹ See p. 267, note. 2.

² This paper on Australian Naval Defence was replaced by DMV (39) 4—see **Appendix II**.

³ See Vol. I, *Negotiations regarding Participation of New Zealand's Armed Forces*, No. 24.

in the ' **China** incident' would seem to render an attack on New Zealand on any large scale extremely improbable, but it is the part of prudence to consider all the possibilities of the future, and the **New Zealand Government** must obviously pay special attention to the defence of New Zealand (in consonance with the resolutions of successive Imperial Conferences) not only because of its paramount duty of

protecting the people of New Zealand but also as a necessary preliminary to playing its full part in the wider sphere of hostilities. **Japan** may not always be involved in **China**; **Japan** may not always be suspicious of **Russia**; the **United States** may not prove a sufficient deterrent to Japanese action southwards and, indeed, if the Commonwealth and its Allies were to receive a serious knock in the course of hostilities, the whole international situation might become entirely liquid again. These considerations are not absent from the mind of the **New Zealand Government**, who will be guided in their war measures, in the first place, by their desire to play the fullest possible part in the common effort and, secondly, by circumstances as they arise and by the advice from time to time of His Majesty's Government in the **United Kingdom** (which they greatly value), endeavouring at all times to keep a prudent balance between the forces available in New Zealand for the actual defence of the Dominion and a reasonable estimate of the potentialities of the situation from time to time.

Finally, may we take it that the undertaking given to **Australia** in paragraph 4 of the First Lord's Paper (No. DMV (39) 3) may definitely be regarded as applicable to New Zealand also? ¹

Richmond Terrace, SW 1,

20 November 1939

¹ The paper was amended to include the naval defence of New Zealand as well as of **Australia**. See **Appendix II, paragraph 4**.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

APPENDIX IV – APPRECIATION BY THE UNITED KINGDOM CHIEFS OF STAFF ON THE SITUATION IN THE FAR EAST, AUGUST 1940 – THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM (WELLINGTON)

Appendix IV

Appreciation by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff on the Situation in the Far East, August 1940

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom (Wellington)

12 August 1940

Circular telegram.

The following is the summary referred to in my message: ¹

1. The Far Eastern situation was considered in 1937 on the assumptions that:

(Any threat to our interests would be seaborne; and that

a)

(We could send to the Far East within three months a fleet of

b) sufficient strength to protect the Dominions and India and give cover to our communications in the Indian Ocean.

2. The Japanese advance into Southern China and Hainan, the development of communications and aerodromes in Thailand, the situation in Indo-China resulting from the French collapse, and the increased range of aircraft would now enable Japan to develop an overland threat to Malaya, against which even the arrival of the Fleet would only partially guard.

At the same time, the collapse of France, the development of a

direct threat to the **United Kingdom**, and the necessity of retaining in European waters a fleet of sufficient strength to match both the German and Italian fleets have made it temporarily impossible for us to despatch a fleet to the **Far East**. Neither of the two above-mentioned assumptions is therefore now tenable and the defence problem has been reviewed in this light.

¹ See *Relations with Japan, June–October 1940*, No. 12.

General Considerations

3. **Japan's** ultimate aims are the exclusion of Western influence from the **Far East** and the control of raw materials in that area. These could not be secured without the capture of **Singapore**, which will always be a potential threat to her southward expansion so long as the British Fleet remains in being in any part of the world.

Japan's immediate aim is likely to be the exclusion of British influence from **China** and **Hong Kong**.

4. We are advised that **Japan** is determined to bring the **China** war to an end. There have been reports of indirect peace discussions, but there is no reason to suppose that they have produced any result. Even if they did, the termination of the war would bring no early economic relief to **Japan**. On the other hand, with the closing of one after another of the arms routes into **China**, the capacity of **China** to resist is hampered. The war in **China** cannot therefore be relied on to provide a serious deterrent to Japanese activity elsewhere, though the value of Chinese resistance as a deterrent would be increased if the **Burma Road** were to be reopened for military supplies.

5. Fear of Russian action will compel **Japan** to retain certain forces at home and in **Manchuria** despite the present Russian preoccupation in **Europe**. She knows that, if she were in difficulties, **Russia** would take advantage of the situation.

6. An attempt on the formidable **Singapore** defences would involve a combined operation of the first magnitude, and **Japan** must also reckon on the possibility of the collaboration with us of the substantial Dutch forces in the **Netherlands East Indies** against any southward threat.

On the other hand, the forces in **Malaya** are still far short of requirements, particularly aircraft; and **Japan** must know that, in the present circumstances, we could not send an adequate fleet to the **Far East**.

7. **Japan** may gamble on the **United States** not resorting to armed opposition, provided that no direct action is taken against **United States** citizens or possessions, and on the probability that the **United States** fleet would be kept in the **Atlantic** if our position in **Europe** should deteriorate. Though the defended base of **Manila** is not comparable with **Singapore**, and **United States** sea communications with the **Philippines** are more vulnerable than our communications with **Singapore**, nevertheless **Manila** lies on the line of Japanese advance to the south and the Japanese cannot be certain that the **United States** would not intervene and send the fleet to the **Philippines**.

8. The knowledge that further aggression might lead to the rupture of trade relations with the **United States** and the **United Kingdom** must have considerable influence, and the **United States** has already made clear her interest in the *status quo* in the **Netherlands East Indies**.

On the long-term view, **Japan** cannot stand the strain of a break with the **British Empire** and the **Americas**, upon whom she depends for markets and essential raw materials. Only if she could rapidly gain complete control of raw materials, especially the oil, rubber and tin of **Malaya** and the **Netherlands East Indies**, would she have a chance of withstanding **British** and **American** economic pressure. The recent restriction placed by the **United States Government** on the export of petroleum products and, in particular, the embargo on aviation spirit, may influence **Japan** in the direction of seizing alternative sources of supply in the **Netherlands East Indies**.

9. **Japan** may argue that any main advance on her part should be postponed until the outcome of affairs in **Europe** is clearer, and that, if **Germany** succeeded, she could achieve her aims quickly and without risk. Although direct attack upon **Singapore** cannot be ruled out, it would appear more likely that Japanese steps in the near future will be limited to local military action without resort to a formal declaration of war in the hope of evading the far-reaching effects of war with the **British Empire** and possibly the **United States**. This would enable **Japan** to limit her action and 'save face' if local results or wider reactions were unfavourable.

10. To sum up, it appears that, until the issue in **Europe** becomes clearer, **Japan** will probably confine her attempt to the elimination of **British** influence from **China** and **Hong Kong** to the greatest possible extent without incurring a rupture with the **United States** and the **British Empire**.

11. Our own commitments in **Europe** are so great that our policy must be directed towards avoiding an open clash with **Japan**. It is doubtful whether piecemeal concessions will have more than a temporarily alleviating effect, to be followed after an interval by further demands.

It is most desirable that a wide settlement in the **Far East**—including economic concessions to **Japan**—should be concluded as early as possible. The immediate possibility of such a settlement is doubtful, but every effort should be made to this end.

12. Failing a general settlement on satisfactory terms, we should play for time, cede nothing until we must, and build up our defences as soon as we can. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) One aim of our policy should be ultimately to secure full military co-operation with the Dutch. This is dealt with further in telegrams which follow. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)¹

¹ Assumption 3 in the Chiefs of Staff appreciation—as explained in telegram No. 12—was that the **United Kingdom** 'should go to war with **Japan** if she attacked the **Netherlands East Indies** and

provided that the Dutch resisted.'

Defence Problems

13. Our Far Eastern interests are the security of:

(**Australia** and New Zealand.

a)

(**Malaya** and the **Netherlands East Indies**. Both contain essential raw
b) materials, the control of which at the source is now extremely
important. Japanese occupation of either would directly threaten the
security of **Singapore**.

(**Burma**, also of importance on account of its oil resources and in
c) connection with the sea and air communications with **Singapore**.

(Trade routes in the **Indian Ocean**, the South China Sea and the
d) Western Pacific (north of **Australia**), and also in the seas east and
south of **Australia**, including the trans- **Pacific** routes.

(The China trade. Considerable British capital is in the **China**
e) trade, but this trade represents only 2 per cent of total British trade
and its cessation would not affect our ability to continue the war.

(**Hong Kong**, which is an all-important commercial harbour and naval
f) harbour and the focus of British interests in **China**, although its value
has already been considerably curtailed by Japanese action in **China**.

(**Shanghai**, which is important mainly in connection with the **China**
g) trade. The retention of the British garrison is largely a question of
prestige.

14. The territorial integrity of **Australia** and New Zealand depends primarily on the control of the sea communications to them. A similar consideration governs the security of the British colonies in the **Far East**. The foundation of our strategy in the **Far East** is, therefore, still to base on **Singapore** a fleet strong enough to provide cover for our communications in the **Indian Ocean** and South-Western Pacific, and to frustrate any large expeditions which the Japanese may attempt against **Australia**, New Zealand, or Far Eastern possessions. Until, however, we have defeated **Germany** and **Italy** or have drastically reduced their naval strength, we should be forced, in the event of Japanese aggression, to attempt to defend our Far Eastern interests without an adequate fleet.

15. In the absence of a fleet, we could not in such circumstances prevent some damage to our interests in the **Far East**. Our object would, therefore, have to be to limit the extent of the damage and, in the last resort, to retain a footing from which we could eventually retrieve our position when stronger forces become available.

16. **Japan** could make the following forces available for new adventures:

(Naval—10 battleships, 3 to 7 aircraft-carriers with the necessary
a) cruiser and destroyer forces.

(Military—6 to 10 divisions. **Japan** could make this force, and the
b) shipping required for its transport and maintenance, available
without having to carry out any serious withdrawal from her position
in **China**.

(Air—Up to 75 fighters and 206 bombers, carrier-borne. Once
c) **Japan** had established herself ashore, she could dispose of the
following shore-based aircraft: Between 8 and 10 squadrons of
fighters, similar numbers of light bombers and of heavy bombers, and
4 to 6 squadrons of reconnaissance aircraft, giving a total of 28 to 36
squadrons or 336 to 432 aircraft. These forces are clearly large
enough to give **Japan** a very wide choice of objectives.

17. The first course open to the Japanese would be direct attack on British possessions. In this event, her main effort would probably be directed ultimately towards the capture of **Singapore**, which would be necessary to secure her position permanently. In view of the traditional Japanese method of step by step advance, it is thought that her first action would be attack on our garrisons in **China**, including attack on, or at least blockade of, **Hong Kong**, all without declaration of war. The tempo and extent of her subsequent actions would be conditioned by the ease and success of these operations and their wider reactions; it is even possible that, if reactions were unfavourable, no further adventures would take place.

18. Assume, however, the worst case, in which **Japan** proceeded with the object of dominating the whole of the **Far East**. She would have ample naval strength, beyond that required for attack on **Malaya**, to attack British trade. Our China trade, except for the little that might be carried in neutral ships, would cease on the outbreak of war, and our trade

through the **Indian Ocean** with **Australia** and New Zealand and across the **Pacific** would be exposed to the threat of Japanese action.

19. Apart from attacks on trade, no serious threat to **Australia** or New Zealand would be likely until **Japan** had consolidated her position at **Singapore**. Even then, it is unlikely that the Japanese would attempt to invade **Australia** or New Zealand, at least until they had consolidated their position in **China** and the **Far East**, which would take a very considerable time. This argument is expanded later.

20. The strain on **Japan** of war with the British Empire would be very great, even in the absence of the British Fleet, and probably **Japan** would hesitate to undertake this unless she felt certain that the **United Kingdom** was so heavily committed in **Europe** as to be unable to resist her aggression, or until she had liquidated the **China** campaign. It is, however, highly important to be prepared for an assault against **Singapore** and, by increasing our defences, to deter Japanese aggression.

21. The second course open to the Japanese would be penetration of Indo- **China** or **Thailand**, which would provide bases for an attack on **Malaya** and secure substantial rice supplies. Attack on Indo- **China** or **Thailand** would not be a formidable undertaking as Japanese action need only extend to seizing bases and aerodromes and controlling focal points in these countries. It might be effected without the **United States** breaking off economic relations. We could not effectively assist in the defence of Indo- **China** or **Thailand** and it is most unlikely that the Thai Government would oppose Japanese penetration by force, while the French forces in Indo- **China** could not prevent Japanese occupation of ports and railways. If Indo- **China** became hostile to us, it is conceivable that **Japan** might be granted bases in that country.

22. Japanese penetration of **Thailand** would enable them to establish shore bases for aircraft within range of **Singapore**, Penang, the Malacca Straits and the **Rangoon** oil refineries, organise a base for land advance beyond **Malaya** from the north, interfere with the air-mail route to **India** and **Malaya**, and possibly establish an advanced base for submarines and

light craft at the northern entrance to the Malacca Straits.

23. The above action would therefore threaten **Singapore** and make the defence of **Burma** and **Malaya** far more difficult. Nevertheless, it would not seriously endanger our vital sea communications, and therefore *under present conditions* we should not be justified in going to war. For similar reasons we should not under present conditions go to war in the event of Japanese attack on Indo- **China**. Nevertheless, taking into account the probable reluctance of **Japan** to make an open breach with the British Empire and the **United States**, this does not preclude in both the above cases (penetration of Indo- **China** and **Thailand** respectively) unobtrusive measures of an economic character designed to retard the Japanese advance by playing on their uneasiness. It is important to try as far as we can to prevent **Japan** from gaining unhampered one position after another which would increasingly threaten the security of **Malaya** and our communications with **Australia** and New Zealand.

24. The third possible course would be attack on the **Netherlands East Indies**, which would be a more formidable undertaking for **Japan** than an advance into Indo- **China** or **Thailand**. Nevertheless it would probably not involve excessive military effort, especially if undertaken by stages, and occupation would not only provide **Japan** with an advanced base for a subsequent attack on **Singapore** but would secure oil and other urgently required raw materials. The possibility of the Japanese seizing Portuguese Timor as a first step to the above action is considered [group mutilated-remote?]. The security of the **Netherlands East Indies** would be considerably improved if the Dutch could be persuaded to agree to reorganising their defences in co-operation with us.

25. The above course is in a different category from the first and second courses considered above, since if **Japan** established herself in the **Netherlands East Indies**, our whole defence system would be most gravely compromised, our vital sea communications and base at **Singapore** would be endangered, and the air route to **Singapore** and the Commonwealth would be threatened. The security of the **Netherlands**

East Indies is therefore an essential British interest, second only to the integrity of **Australia**, New Zealand and **Singapore**, and their defence is an important part of our Far Eastern defence plans. The establishment of a Japanese foothold in these islands would be so serious that, under normal conditions, the question of war with **Japan** to prevent it would arise. In the present circumstances, however, we could not prevent it by force, even with the full collaboration of the Dutch. The combination of British and Dutch opposition would, however, be a considerable problem for **Japan**. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Every effort should therefore be made to induce the Dutch to resist any territorial demands, and we should offer them all possible support, including both military and economic action against **Japan**. This should be done without the formal declaration of war, since the presentation of a bold front to Japanese demands might cause **Japan** to draw back. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

26. The fourth Japanese course would be the seizure of the **Philippines**. This would remove the threat to Japanese sea communications to the south which the **United States** fleet base at **Manila** provides. It would also afford **Japan** a suitable advanced base for naval forces and a useful air route from **Formosa** to **Borneo**. As, however, this course would involve **Japan** in war with the **United States**, and the **Philippines** would not be of great economic importance to **Japan**, its adoption is unlikely.

It would appear that, unless **Japan** is driven to extreme measures by her extremists or tempted by our apparent weakness, she will try to avoid war with the British Empire and the **United States**, and endeavour to achieve her aims by stages which she might hope would not involve her openly in war. Of these, the move against the **Netherlands East Indies** would afford greater economic and strategic advantages than the advance into Indo- **China** or **Thailand**, but, in Japanese eyes, these might be offset by the prospect of antagonising the **United States**, even if the consequences were confined to the economic sphere. Moreover, should **United States** hostility develop, **Japan's** lines of communication to the **Netherlands East Indies** would be threatened from the **Philippines**. Since the Dutch are our Allies, **Japan** must also assume that attack on

the **Netherlands East Indies** might well involve her in war with us.

27. Therefore, while we must be prepared for sudden attack on the **Netherlands East Indies** or **Singapore**, the most probable Japanese first move would be into Indo- **China** or **Thailand**, possibly followed later by attack on the Dutch East Indies, if conditions at the time were judged favourable for such action, rather than attack on **Singapore** itself.

28. Our untenable position in North China in the event of war with **Japan** has already been recognised by the decision to withdraw our garrisons at **Peking**, Tientsin and **Shanghai**.

29. Our position at **Hong Kong** is different, as this is a British colony. On the one hand, **Hong Kong** is not vital and the garrison could not long withstand a Japanese attack. Moreover, even with a strong fleet in the **Far East**, **Hong Kong** could probably not be held with its present defences now that the Japanese are established on the mainland, and could certainly not be used as an advanced naval base. If, therefore, a general settlement could be negotiated in the **Far East**, the demilitarisation of **Hong Kong** with the best obtainable *quid pro quo* would be in our military interests. Without such a settlement, however, demilitarisation is impossible on account of the loss of prestige which such a course would involve. In the event of war, therefore, **Hong Kong** must be regarded as an outpost and held as long as possible, but we should be unable to reinforce or relieve it, and militarily our position in the **Far East** would be stronger without this unsatisfactory commitment.

30. *Strategy in the Event of War in the **Far East** in the Absence of the Fleet.*

The sea communications most likely to be threatened are:

- (a) **Indian Ocean** (including the west coast of **Australia**).
- (b) The South China Sea and the Western Pacific (north of **Australia**).
- (c) Seas east and south of **Australia**, including the trans- **Pacific** routes.

31. As regards (a), the main routes from the **United Kingdom** to the

Middle East, India, the East Indies, Australia and New Zealand pass through the **Indian Ocean**, which would therefore be the most important area for Japanese action. Although the Malacca Straits might be denied to Japanese naval forces, these forces might use many other passages through the **Netherlands East Indies** for operations against our **Indian Ocean** trade and our lines of communication to the **Middle East** through the **Red Sea**. Although distances from **Japan** are great, there are several potential fuelling bases in the **Indian Ocean**. A force of enemy cruisers, particularly if supported by one or more heavy ships, would provide a most serious threat to our trade, since we could not spare adequate naval forces, either for operations in focal areas or, as would more probably be necessary, for the escort of convoys. Our communications with **Malaya** would be precarious but not necessarily completely severed. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Our ability to use the Dutch islands and to establish depot ships there would act as a deterrent but would not prohibit Japanese access to the **Indian Ocean**. Such action would assist the maintenance of our communications with the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Dutch co-operation would be essential. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

32. As regards (*b*), we could not maintain our sea communications to the north of the Malayan Archipelago (*Assumption 3 begins*) but could maintain local traffic within the Archipelago to a limited extent given Dutch co-operation. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

33. As regards (*c*), the trans- **Pacific** trade routes are important in connection with supplies from **America** to **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Far East**, as well as providing alternative communications with the **United Kingdom** which would increase in importance if difficulties on the Cape route became acute. These routes are also essential to the economic life of the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Although distances from **Japan** are considerable, the Japanese (if not deterred by fear of **United States** action) could establish advanced fuelling bases in the South Sea Islands to facilitate operations in the South-West Pacific. The wide scope for evasive routing would provide a high degree of

security for trans- **Pacific** trade, except in the neighbourhood of the western terminals. Routing, practicable to some extent, and the use of inshore routes would also provide some degree of protection for Australian and New Zealand trade. The danger of attack would be greatest in the approaches to ports, for which local air and naval protection would be required.

34. As regards the defence of **Australia**, New Zealand and the South Pacific islands, as previously stated, no serious threat to the territorial integrity of **Australia** or New Zealand would be likely to arise at least until **Japan** had consolidated her position in **China** and the **Far East**, which would take a considerable period. A Japanese major expedition to **Australia** or New Zealand would be an extremely hazardous operation so long as **Singapore** remained available to us as a base for the Fleet in being on the flank of their long lines of communication. Moreover, the protection of the lines of communication of an expedition of any considerable size over the distance involved would impose a very heavy drain on Japanese naval forces, as every important convoy has to be protected against the maximum scale of attack which we could bring to bear at our own selected moment and would probably therefore require escort by heavy ships. The scale of attack on **Australia** or New Zealand would be likely, therefore, to be limited to cruiser raids, possibly combined with a light scale of seaborne air attack against ports. The Japanese might decide to establish advanced fuelling bases in the South-West Pacific islands to facilitate such operations. There are innumerable potential bases in these islands which could not all be defended against Japanese attack, but their most likely objective would be the capture of a harbour with base facilities, particularly **Suva**. **Suva** is also useful as a potential advanced base for air forces.

35. As regards the defence of **Malaya**, the following are the factors affecting this problem in the absence of the Fleet:

(The necessity for preventing the establishment of shore-bases for
a) aircraft within close range of **Singapore** base.

(Even if the Japanese had not previously established themselves in

b) **Thailand** they would be more likely to attempt a landing up-country in **Malaya** and then operate southward, under cover of shore-bases for aircraft, than to risk direct assault on **Singapore Island**.

(The rice-growing country, on which the native population partly
c) depends, and most Government storage cereals are in the north.

(The necessity for establishing the maximum possible food
d) reserves for the garrison and for the civil population. Though our sea communications with **Malaya** might be precarious, it would be extremely difficult for the Japanese to blockade the Malayan Peninsula completely, and we should expect to get supplies intermittently to our forces, though not necessarily through **Port Singapore**.

The above factors emphasise the necessity for holding the whole of **Malaya** rather than concentrating on the defence of **Singapore Island**. This clearly involves larger land and air forces than when the problem was merely the defence of **Singapore Island**.

36. As regards the defence of **Burma**, the occupation of **Thailand** would enable the Japanese to attack from the air key points such as the **Rangoon** oil refineries and aerodromes on the Burmese section of the **Singapore** air route. Japanese invasion of **Burma** territory is a more distant threat, except in the extreme south, where she could capture aerodromes such as **Victoria Point** and **Mergui**. Establishment of air forces at bases such as **Lashio**, **Rangoon** and **Tavoy**, and the provision of additional troops and air defences would be desirable, but the defence of **Malaya** must have precedence over **Burma**, and the provision of such forces can only be the long-term project. On the shorter view, the problem is to limit the Japanese threat with the resources likely to be available. The air route between **Singapore** and **Rangoon** must be kept open. **Burma** aerodromes as far south as **Tavoy**, and in **Malaya** as far north as **Alor Star**, must therefore be held. If the aerodromes at **Lashio**, **Rangoon** and **Tavoy** are developed, stocked and defended, it may be possible to move air forces from **Malaya** or **India** to assist **Burma** in dealing with a sudden threat from the north. The aerodromes at **Victoria Point** and **Mergui** would be prepared for demolition to ensure that the Japanese could not use them. Both long- and short-term problems of the defence of **Burma** will be reviewed by the Governments of **India** and

37. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Defence of the **Netherlands East Indies** is important for the denial to the Japanese of the use of naval and air bases. Control over the channels through the Netherlands Islands could be exercised by air and light naval forces based on one of the following alternative lines:

(*a*) Northern line of islands from **Singapore** to **New Guinea**, or

(*b*) Southern line from **Sumatra– Java** to Port Darwin.

We could do little to dispute the passage of these channels with the forces at present available. The co-operation of the Dutch would improve the position, but the measure of control would still be very limited. Which line of defence to adopt could only be decided by the local Commanders. To deny bases, invasion must be prevented, which would entail attacks on the expedition during its approach, as the Dutch military forces are limited and mainly concentrated in **Java**. With our naval numerical inferiority, the best form of defence would be shore-bases for air forces in conjunction with submarines, light naval forces and mines. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) The establishment of a British air base in North **Borneo** to give our air forces greater mobility is our long-term aim, but this will take time, and resources which we do not at present possess. It is desirable for such action to be part of a general settlement with the Japanese. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Meanwhile there would be no alternative to relying initially for the defence of this area on the operation of air forces from Dutch bases, of which there are several already established on both lines of defence. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) The Japanese might seize the Portuguese half of Timor as a first step, but owing to the absence of air or naval bases in this part and the risk that it might lead to war with us, such action appears unlikely.

38. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) The whole of the defence problem in the **Far East** would be greatly facilitated if we were certain of Dutch co-operation and could concert plans with them. Our aim should be a scheme of defence ensuring full mutual support, pooling of resources, and

arrangements for the rapid movement of troops to threatened points. The Dutch would probably agree to prepare detailed plans for the defence of the **Netherlands East Indies**, though they might hesitate to assist us in the event of Japanese attack on British territory alone. With our present limited resources in the **Far East** we could not offer the Dutch any effective military support against Japanese military aggression. It is not therefore recommended that Staff conversations should be held with the Dutch immediately. It is most important, however, that plans should be concerted with the Dutch as soon as we have improved our own position in **Malaya**. Meanwhile our Commanders in the **Far East** should consider the problem of combined Anglo-Dutch defence plans, so that conversations may take place immediately the opportunity arises. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

39. If the Japanese attacked **Malaya** without attacking the **Netherlands East Indies**, it is conceivable that Dutch co-operation would be withheld. We should then be faced with a gap in our defensive system and our sea communications in the **Indian Ocean** would be more seriously threatened. It should, however, still be possible, even without Dutch collaboration, to get some supplies into **Malaya** intermittently, but in such circumstances our difficulties in the **Far East** would be greatly increased.

40. *Conclusions.* In the absence of a capital ship fleet we could not fully secure our vital interests in the **Far East**. The problem is therefore the best disposition possible to secure the most important military interests without the cover which a capital ship fleet would provide. If, in addition to defending **Malaya**, we could deny to the Japanese the establishment of bases in the **Netherlands East Indies**, and if the movement of their naval forces through the line of these islands could be impeded, the security of our interests would be considerably improved. Our ultimate aim therefore should be to secure the full military co-operation of the Dutch. In the absence of full Dutch co-operation we should concentrate on **Malaya**.

¹ Air Marshal Sir John Babington, KCB, CBE, DSO; AOC Far East 1938–41.

Defence Requirements and Possibilities of Meeting Them

41. Our policy in the **Far East** until the fleet again becomes available is to rely primarily on air power in conjunction with such military forces as can be made available. Land forces are also essential for the close defence of naval and air bases, for internal security, and for dealing with such enemy land forces as might succeed in gaining a footing in **Malaya** and British **Borneo** despite our air action. The air forces required are outlined below. Their provision must be the long-term programme; and, until they can be provided, their absence must be met as far as possible by the provision of additional land forces.

42. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Our ultimate aim to secure the full military co-operation of the Dutch is of the utmost importance for the denial of bases to the enemy and to enable us to exert some measure of control over the channels through Southern Celebes, thus reducing the threat to our **Indian Ocean** trade and improving communications with **Australia** and New Zealand, whilst not entirely relying on Dutch forces to assist in the defence of **Malaya** itself. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) In assessing our requirements, therefore, Dutch collaboration has not been taken into account. Our requirements are not thereby substantially affected, since, even if the Dutch were co-operating with us, the enemy might carry out diversions against the **Netherlands East Indies**, thereby containing Dutch forces at a critical time.

43. An exact estimate of the strength and disposition of the air forces required must depend on appreciation by the United Kingdom Commanders in the **Far East** in collaboration with the Commonwealth and New Zealand defence authorities. Following is a general indication based on the necessity to meet Japanese attacks in **Malaya** from **Indo-China** or **Thailand**, while at the same time leaving sufficient forces to

deal with the possibility of seaborne invasion on the coast of **Malaya** or attack on Singapore Island itself. It also includes provision for air forces for trade protection in the focal areas of the **Indian Ocean**.... ¹

44. This is a very substantial addition to any previous programme, but in previous estimates:

- (a) The movement of a Battle Fleet to the **Far East** has always been assumed, and our air requirements, both in the **Indian Ocean** and in **Borneo**, were not therefore so great.
- (b) The situation in which the Japanese have virtually overrun South **China**, and Indo- **China** and **Thailand** had become potential bases for Japanese air forces, was not considered.
- (c) The necessity of defending British **Borneo** was not considered.

Moreover, experience has shown that it is unsound to rely upon reinforcements from **India** and **Iraq**. The above is the minimum we should aim at to afford a reasonable degree of air protection to our vital interests in the **Far East** and the **Indian Ocean** in the absence of a Battle Fleet. Some considerable time must elapse before the above requirements can be met from

¹ Details omitted. The total estimate was 336 first-line aircraft.

United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand resources. The date must depend largely upon the progress of the war in **Europe**, on the rate at which our production of aircraft and personnel can be sustained, and on the supply of aircraft from the **United States of America**. Subject to these considerations, our aim will be to complete the above programme by the end of 1941, and as soon as possible, and at any rate by the end of 1940, to reinforce the Far Eastern Command by at least two fighter and two General Reconnaissance land-plane squadrons, and to re-equip and bring up to establishment the existing squadrons.

45. Meanwhile, the air forces in **Malaya** provided by the **United Kingdom**

and the Commonwealth comprise:

Bombers—3 squadrons, 36 aircraft.

Torpedo Bombers—2 squadrons, 24 aircraft, obsolete type.

GR Land Planes—2 squadrons, 24 aircraft.

GR Flying Boats—1 squadron, 4 aircraft, obsolete type.

Total: 88 first-line aircraft.

(Assumption 3 begins.)

Dutch air forces now in the [Netherlands East Indies](#) comprise:

Bombers—9 squadrons, 81 aircraft.

Fighters—2 squadrons, 24 aircraft.

Bombers for reconnaissance—1 squadron, 12 aircraft.

Flying Boats—1 squadron, 27 aircraft.

Total: 144 first-line aircraft.

The Dutch expansion programme will add another 42 fighters about January 1941, and in 1941 a further 48 fighters, 98 bombers and 18 reconnaissance aircraft, bringing the Dutch totals to 346 [350?] first-line aircraft. While these will be a valuable addition to the defence of our common interests in the [Far East](#) against Japanese attack, they can in no way make up for the totally inadequate strength of our own air forces in [Malaya](#). *(Assumption 3 ends.)*

46. Until our very serious deficiency in air strength in the [Far East](#) is at least reduced, we can only hope to provide a deterrent to attack and concentrate on the defence of the foremost of our vital interests, mainly [Singapore](#). Under present conditions and in the immediate future, we cannot hope to secure the defence of British [Borneo](#). For the present,

therefore, it is necessary to make plans for the destruction of the oil and the air facilities. Ultimately we should establish defended bases for the operation of air forces referred to in paragraph 43 (c) ¹ at **Kuching** and **Jesselton**. Only very limited air forces could at present be made available to assist in the protection of trade in the **Indian Ocean**. On special occasions aircraft could be diverted from other tasks to cover the passage of convoys. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Nevertheless the situation is not so black as it may appear. The British and Dutch Air Forces between them now dispose of more than 200 aircraft of a quality equal, and in some respects superior, to those of **Japan**. Experience has shown that to venture a seaborne expedition within range of modern air forces involves grave risks, so that even with our present air forces direct attack on **Singapore** would be a very formidable undertaking. Until, however, a standard of air defence approximating more closely to our estimated requirements can be obtained, everything possible must be done to increase our land forces in **Malaya**. When

¹ Omitted—for the defence of British **Borneo**.

our defence position has improved and it becomes possible to undertake Staff conversations with the Dutch, they should be pressed to station some of their units in **Borneo**, to improve the aerodromes in the islands, and to provide certain additional anti-aircraft defence troops for their security. The development of air routes within the **Netherlands East Indies**, and between the Commonwealth and **Singapore**, for reinforcement purposes is an essential factor for the general defence of the whole area. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

47. As regards land forces, a review of the position regarding the defence of **Burma** by the Governments of **India** and **Burma** is likely to disclose the necessity for extra troops and anti-aircraft equipment, particularly for the defence of air bases.

48. Although bases will eventually be required for four shore-based squadrons in British **Borneo**, and these bases will require troops and

anti-aircraft defences for their protection, some time must elapse before the aerodromes can be completed.

49. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) As it will be necessary to rely for some time on the operation of air forces from Dutch bases for the defence of the Dutch East Indies, the security of these bases is of considerable interest to us. The provision of the necessary troops must be a matter for the Dutch, who have a total of two divisions in **Java** and fourteen garrison battalions at outlying stations. Tarakan, Balik Papan, **Macassar** and **Amboina** each have a garrison battalion. The troops are not thought to be of high quality but are reasonably well equipped, except for a serious lack of anti-aircraft guns. Such guns as are available are in **Java**. The Dutch should be pressed during the Staff conversations to increase their garrisons at certain of the more important air bases. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

50. The minimum garrison required in **Malaya** to hold the whole country and to safeguard the aerodromes required for the operations of our air forces is the equivalent of six brigades with ancillary troops, provided that the air forces mentioned in paragraph [43] are made available. Apart from coast defence and anti-aircraft troops, the present garrison of **Malaya** comprises nine battalions and corps troops. Until the additional air forces referred to in paragraph 43 can be stationed in the **Far East**, the reconnaissance and striking forces available to deal with invasion or seaborne attack are seriously inadequate. The absence of these air forces will involve an increase in the existing land forces by an amount which the General Officer Commanding ¹ estimated as equivalent to three divisions and attached troops. This figure could be progressively reduced as air reinforcements are increased. Since the GOC's estimate was made, the air forces in **Malaya** have already been increased by one squadron, and it is hoped to provide four additional squadrons by the end of 1940. Apart from the possibility of an Australian division going to **Singapore** (which is under separate consideration) it may be possible to make further forces available for the reinforcement of **Malaya** from some other source at a later date. Preparations are therefore being made in **Malaya**

to receive, ultimately, two reinforcing divisions.

51. The provision of anti-aircraft guns for Singapore is much below the approved scale, and anti-aircraft requirements for air bases in Malaya, British Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies will need careful examination. It is not possible to state at this stage exactly what the total requirements will be.

¹ Lt-Gen Sir Lionel Bond, KBE, CB; GOC Malaya, Aug 1939–May 1941.

52. Naval forces now on China, Australia and New Zealand stations are:

One 8-inch cruiser.

Two modern 6-inch cruisers.

Four old 6-inch cruisers.

Six armed merchant cruisers.

Five old destroyers.

Three anti-submarine escorts.

Eight motor-torpedo boats.

These are entirely inadequate for war in the Far East.

The Dutch forces in the Far East are:

Two cruisers.

Seven destroyers.

Sixteen submarines.

Until the naval situation in European waters is materially improved, it may be necessary to face a serious threat to our Far Eastern trade, as

fully adequate forces for its protection could not be made available in the event of determined action against it by Japanese forces, particularly if they used heavy ships. Everything possible will be done by the United Kingdom Government to press on with future naval construction programmes to the maximum extent possible; this is a long-term project and no naval building programme has ever allowed for a war in which the British Empire alone would be fighting **Germany, Italy and Japan. Our best hope of being able to supply naval forces for the **Far East** in the near future lies in early and successful action against Italian naval forces in the **Mediterranean**, which we are doing everything possible to bring about.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

12 AUGUST 1940

12 August 1940

Circular telegram.

The following is the summary referred to in my message: ¹

1. The Far Eastern situation was considered in 1937 on the assumptions that:

(Any threat to our interests would be seaborne; and that

a)

(We could send to the Far East within three months a fleet of

b) sufficient strength to protect the Dominions and India and give cover to our communications in the Indian Ocean.

2. The Japanese advance into Southern China and Hainan, the development of communications and aerodromes in Thailand, the situation in Indo-China resulting from the French collapse, and the increased range of aircraft would now enable Japan to develop an overland threat to Malaya, against which even the arrival of the Fleet would only partially guard.

At the same time, the collapse of France, the development of a direct threat to the United Kingdom, and the necessity of retaining in European waters a fleet of sufficient strength to match both the German and Italian fleets have made it temporarily impossible for us to despatch a fleet to the Far East. Neither of the two above-mentioned assumptions is therefore now tenable and the defence problem has been reviewed in this light.

¹ See *Relations with Japan, June–October 1940*, No. 12.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

General Considerations

3. **Japan's** ultimate aims are the exclusion of Western influence from the **Far East** and the control of raw materials in that area. These could not be secured without the capture of **Singapore**, which will always be a potential threat to her southward expansion so long as the British Fleet remains in being in any part of the world.

Japan's immediate aim is likely to be the exclusion of British influence from **China** and **Hong Kong**.

4. We are advised that **Japan** is determined to bring the **China** war to an end. There have been reports of indirect peace discussions, but there is no reason to suppose that they have produced any result. Even if they did, the termination of the war would bring no early economic relief to **Japan**. On the other hand, with the closing of one after another of the arms routes into **China**, the capacity of **China** to resist is hampered. The war in **China** cannot therefore be relied on to provide a serious deterrent to Japanese activity elsewhere, though the value of Chinese resistance as a deterrent would be increased if the **Burma Road** were to be reopened for military supplies.

5. Fear of Russian action will compel **Japan** to retain certain forces at home and in **Manchuria** despite the present Russian preoccupation in **Europe**. She knows that, if she were in difficulties, **Russia** would take advantage of the situation.

6. An attempt on the formidable **Singapore** defences would involve a combined operation of the first magnitude, and **Japan** must also reckon on the possibility of the collaboration with us of the substantial Dutch forces in the **Netherlands East Indies** against any southward threat.

On the other hand, the forces in **Malaya** are still far short of requirements, particularly aircraft; and **Japan** must know that, in the present circumstances, we could not send an adequate fleet to the **Far East**.

7. **Japan** may gamble on the **United States** not resorting to armed opposition, provided that no direct action is taken against **United States** citizens or possessions, and on the probability that the **United States** fleet would be kept in the **Atlantic** if our position in **Europe** should deteriorate. Though the defended base of **Manila** is not comparable with **Singapore**, and **United States** sea communications with the **Philippines** are more vulnerable than our communications with **Singapore**, nevertheless **Manila** lies on the line of Japanese advance to the south and the Japanese cannot be certain that the **United States** would not intervene and send the fleet to the **Philippines**.

8. The knowledge that further aggression might lead to the rupture of trade relations with the **United States** and the **United Kingdom** must have considerable influence, and the **United States** has already made clear her interest in the *status quo* in the **Netherlands East Indies**.

On the long-term view, **Japan** cannot stand the strain of a break with the **British Empire** and the **Americas**, upon whom she depends for markets and essential raw materials. Only if she could rapidly gain complete control of raw materials, especially the oil, rubber and tin of **Malaya** and the **Netherlands East Indies**, would she have a chance of withstanding **British** and **American** economic pressure. The recent restriction placed by the **United States Government** on the export of petroleum products and, in particular, the embargo on aviation spirit, may influence **Japan** in the direction of seizing alternative sources of supply in the **Netherlands East Indies**.

9. **Japan** may argue that any main advance on her part should be postponed until the outcome of affairs in **Europe** is clearer, and that, if **Germany** succeeded, she could achieve her aims quickly and without risk. Although direct attack upon **Singapore** cannot be ruled out, it

would appear more likely that Japanese steps in the near future will be limited to local military action without resort to a formal declaration of war in the hope of evading the far-reaching effects of war with the British Empire and possibly the **United States**. This would enable **Japan** to limit her action and 'save face' if local results or wider reactions were unfavourable.

10. To sum up, it appears that, until the issue in **Europe** becomes clearer, **Japan** will probably confine her attempt to the elimination of British influence from **China** and **Hong Kong** to the greatest possible extent without incurring a rupture with the **United States** and the British Empire.

11. Our own commitments in **Europe** are so great that our policy must be directed towards avoiding an open clash with **Japan**. It is doubtful whether piecemeal concessions will have more than a temporarily alleviating effect, to be followed after an interval by further demands.

It is most desirable that a wide settlement in the **Far East**—including economic concessions to **Japan**—should be concluded as early as possible. The immediate possibility of such a settlement is doubtful, but every effort should be made to this end.

12. Failing a general settlement on satisfactory terms, we should play for time, cede nothing until we must, and build up our defences as soon as we can. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) One aim of our policy should be ultimately to secure full military co-operation with the Dutch. This is dealt with further in telegrams which follow. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) ¹

¹ Assumption 3 in the Chiefs of Staff appreciation—as explained in telegram No. 12—was that the **United Kingdom** 'should go to war with **Japan** if she attacked the **Netherlands East Indies** and provided that the Dutch resisted.'

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

DEFENCE PROBLEMS

Defence Problems

13. Our Far Eastern interests are the security of:

(**Australia** and New Zealand.

a)

(**Malaya** and the **Netherlands East Indies**. Both contain essential raw
b) materials, the control of which at the source is now extremely
important. Japanese occupation of either would directly threaten the
security of **Singapore**.

(**Burma**, also of importance on account of its oil resources and in
c) connection with the sea and air communications with **Singapore**.

(Trade routes in the **Indian Ocean**, the South China Sea and the
d) Western Pacific (north of **Australia**), and also in the seas east and
south of **Australia**, including the trans- **Pacific** routes.

(The China trade. Considerable British capital is in the **China**
e) trade, but this trade represents only 2 per cent of total British trade
and its cessation would not affect our ability to continue the war.

(**Hong Kong**, which is an all-important commercial harbour and naval
f) harbour and the focus of British interests in **China**, although its value
has already been considerably curtailed by Japanese action in **China**.

(**Shanghai**, which is important mainly in connection with the **China**
g) trade. The retention of the British garrison is largely a question of
prestige.

14. The territorial integrity of **Australia** and New Zealand depends
primarily on the control of the sea communications to them. A similar
consideration governs the security of the British colonies in the **Far
East**. The foundation of our strategy in the **Far East** is, therefore, still to
base on **Singapore** a fleet strong enough to provide cover for our
communications in the **Indian Ocean** and South-Western Pacific, and to
frustrate any large expeditions which the Japanese may attempt against
Australia, New Zealand, or Far Eastern possessions. Until, however, we
have defeated **Germany** and **Italy** or have drastically reduced their naval

strength, we should be forced, in the event of Japanese aggression, to attempt to defend our Far Eastern interests without an adequate fleet.

15. In the absence of a fleet, we could not in such circumstances prevent some damage to our interests in the **Far East**. Our object would, therefore, have to be to limit the extent of the damage and, in the last resort, to retain a footing from which we could eventually retrieve our position when stronger forces become available.

16. **Japan** could make the following forces available for new adventures:

(Naval—10 battleships, 3 to 7 aircraft-carriers with the necessary a) cruiser and destroyer forces.

(Military—6 to 10 divisions. **Japan** could make this force, and the b) shipping required for its transport and maintenance, available without having to carry out any serious withdrawal from her position in **China**.

(Air—Up to 75 fighters and 206 bombers, carrier-borne. Once c) **Japan** had established herself ashore, she could dispose of the following shore-based aircraft: Between 8 and 10 squadrons of fighters, similar numbers of light bombers and of heavy bombers, and 4 to 6 squadrons of reconnaissance aircraft, giving a total of 28 to 36 squadrons or 336 to 432 aircraft. These forces are clearly large enough to give **Japan** a very wide choice of objectives.

17. The first course open to the Japanese would be direct attack on British possessions. In this event, her main effort would probably be directed ultimately towards the capture of **Singapore**, which would be necessary to secure her position permanently. In view of the traditional Japanese method of step by step advance, it is thought that her first action would be attack on our garrisons in **China**, including attack on, or at least blockade of, **Hong Kong**, all without declaration of war. The tempo and extent of her subsequent actions would be conditioned by the ease and success of these operations and their wider reactions; it is even possible that, if reactions were unfavourable, no further adventures would take place.

18. Assume, however, the worst case, in which **Japan** proceeded with the object of dominating the whole of the **Far East**. She would have ample

naval strength, beyond that required for attack on **Malaya**, to attack British trade. Our China trade, except for the little that might be carried in neutral ships, would cease on the outbreak of war, and our trade through the **Indian Ocean** with **Australia** and New Zealand and across the **Pacific** would be exposed to the threat of Japanese action.

19. Apart from attacks on trade, no serious threat to **Australia** or New Zealand would be likely until **Japan** had consolidated her position at **Singapore**. Even then, it is unlikely that the Japanese would attempt to invade **Australia** or New Zealand, at least until they had consolidated their position in **China** and the **Far East**, which would take a very considerable time. This argument is expanded later.

20. The strain on **Japan** of war with the British Empire would be very great, even in the absence of the British Fleet, and probably **Japan** would hesitate to undertake this unless she felt certain that the **United Kingdom** was so heavily committed in **Europe** as to be unable to resist her aggression, or until she had liquidated the **China** campaign. It is, however, highly important to be prepared for an assault against **Singapore** and, by increasing our defences, to deter Japanese aggression.

21. The second course open to the Japanese would be penetration of Indo- **China** or **Thailand**, which would provide bases for an attack on **Malaya** and secure substantial rice supplies. Attack on Indo- **China** or **Thailand** would not be a formidable undertaking as Japanese action need only extend to seizing bases and aerodromes and controlling focal points in these countries. It might be effected without the **United States** breaking off economic relations. We could not effectively assist in the defence of Indo- **China** or **Thailand** and it is most unlikely that the Thai Government would oppose Japanese penetration by force, while the French forces in Indo- **China** could not prevent Japanese occupation of ports and railways. If Indo- **China** became hostile to us, it is conceivable that **Japan** might be granted bases in that country.

22. Japanese penetration of **Thailand** would enable them to establish shore bases for aircraft within range of **Singapore**, Penang, the Malacca

Straits and the **Rangoon** oil refineries, organise a base for land advance beyond **Malaya** from the north, interfere with the air-mail route to **India** and **Malaya**, and possibly establish an advanced base for submarines and light craft at the northern entrance to the Malacca Straits.

23. The above action would therefore threaten **Singapore** and make the defence of **Burma** and **Malaya** far more difficult. Nevertheless, it would not seriously endanger our vital sea communications, and therefore *under present conditions* we should not be justified in going to war. For similar reasons we should not under present conditions go to war in the event of Japanese attack on Indo- **China**. Nevertheless, taking into account the probable reluctance of **Japan** to make an open breach with the British Empire and the **United States**, this does not preclude in both the above cases (penetration of Indo- **China** and **Thailand** respectively) unobtrusive measures of an economic character designed to retard the Japanese advance by playing on their uneasiness. It is important to try as far as we can to prevent **Japan** from gaining unhampered one position after another which would increasingly threaten the security of **Malaya** and our communications with **Australia** and New Zealand.

24. The third possible course would be attack on the **Netherlands East Indies**, which would be a more formidable undertaking for **Japan** than an advance into Indo- **China** or **Thailand**. Nevertheless it would probably not involve excessive military effort, especially if undertaken by stages, and occupation would not only provide **Japan** with an advanced base for a subsequent attack on **Singapore** but would secure oil and other urgently required raw materials. The possibility of the Japanese seizing Portuguese Timor as a first step to the above action is considered [group mutilated-remote?]. The security of the **Netherlands East Indies** would be considerably improved if the Dutch could be persuaded to agree to reorganising their defences in co-operation with us.

25. The above course is in a different category from the first and second courses considered above, since if **Japan** established herself in the **Netherlands East Indies**, our whole defence system would be most gravely compromised, our vital sea communications and base at

Singapore would be endangered, and the air route to **Singapore** and the Commonwealth would be threatened. The security of the **Netherlands East Indies** is therefore an essential British interest, second only to the integrity of **Australia**, New Zealand and **Singapore**, and their defence is an important part of our Far Eastern defence plans. The establishment of a Japanese foothold in these islands would be so serious that, under normal conditions, the question of war with **Japan** to prevent it would arise. In the present circumstances, however, we could not prevent it by force, even with the full collaboration of the Dutch. The combination of British and Dutch opposition would, however, be a considerable problem for **Japan**. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Every effort should therefore be made to induce the Dutch to resist any territorial demands, and we should offer them all possible support, including both military and economic action against **Japan**. This should be done without the formal declaration of war, since the presentation of a bold front to Japanese demands might cause **Japan** to draw back. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

26. The fourth Japanese course would be the seizure of the **Philippines**. This would remove the threat to Japanese sea communications to the south which the **United States** fleet base at **Manila** provides. It would also afford **Japan** a suitable advanced base for naval forces and a useful air route from **Formosa** to **Borneo**. As, however, this course would involve **Japan** in war with the **United States**, and the **Philippines** would not be of great economic importance to **Japan**, its adoption is unlikely.

It would appear that, unless **Japan** is driven to extreme measures by her extremists or tempted by our apparent weakness, she will try to avoid war with the British Empire and the **United States**, and endeavour to achieve her aims by stages which she might hope would not involve her openly in war. Of these, the move against the **Netherlands East Indies** would afford greater economic and strategic advantages than the advance into Indo- **China** or **Thailand**, but, in Japanese eyes, these might be offset by the prospect of antagonising the **United States**, even if the consequences were confined to the economic sphere. Moreover, should **United States** hostility develop, **Japan**'s lines of communication

to the **Netherlands East Indies** would be threatened from the **Philippines**. Since the Dutch are our Allies, **Japan** must also assume that attack on the **Netherlands East Indies** might well involve her in war with us.

27. Therefore, while we must be prepared for sudden attack on the **Netherlands East Indies** or **Singapore**, the most probable Japanese first move would be into Indo- **China** or **Thailand**, possibly followed later by attack on the Dutch East Indies, if conditions at the time were judged favourable for such action, rather than attack on **Singapore** itself.

28. Our untenable position in North China in the event of war with **Japan** has already been recognised by the decision to withdraw our garrisons at **Peking**, Tientsin and **Shanghai**.

29. Our position at **Hong Kong** is different, as this is a British colony. On the one hand, **Hong Kong** is not vital and the garrison could not long withstand a Japanese attack. Moreover, even with a strong fleet in the **Far East**, **Hong Kong** could probably not be held with its present defences now that the Japanese are established on the mainland, and could certainly not be used as an advanced naval base. If, therefore, a general settlement could be negotiated in the **Far East**, the demilitarisation of **Hong Kong** with the best obtainable *quid pro quo* would be in our military interests. Without such a settlement, however, demilitarisation is impossible on account of the loss of prestige which such a course would involve. In the event of war, therefore, **Hong Kong** must be regarded as an outpost and held as long as possible, but we should be unable to reinforce or relieve it, and militarily our position in the **Far East** would be stronger without this unsatisfactory commitment.

30. *Strategy in the Event of War in the **Far East** in the Absence of the Fleet.*

The sea communications most likely to be threatened are:

- (a) **Indian Ocean** (including the west coast of **Australia**).
- (b) The South China Sea and the Western Pacific (north of **Australia**).
- (c) Seas east and south of **Australia**, including the trans- **Pacific** routes.

31. As regards (a), the main routes from the **United Kingdom** to the **Middle East**, **India**, the East Indies, **Australia** and New Zealand pass through the **Indian Ocean**, which would therefore be the most important area for Japanese action. Although the Malacca Straits might be denied to Japanese naval forces, these forces might use many other passages through the **Netherlands East Indies** for operations against our **Indian Ocean** trade and our lines of communication to the **Middle East** through the **Red Sea**. Although distances from **Japan** are great, there are several potential fuelling bases in the **Indian Ocean**. A force of enemy cruisers, particularly if supported by one or more heavy ships, would provide a most serious threat to our trade, since we could not spare adequate naval forces, either for operations in focal areas or, as would more probably be necessary, for the escort of convoys. Our communications with **Malaya** would be precarious but not necessarily completely severed. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Our ability to use the Dutch islands and to establish depot ships there would act as a deterrent but would not prohibit Japanese access to the **Indian Ocean**. Such action would assist the maintenance of our communications with the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Dutch co-operation would be essential. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

32. As regards (b), we could not maintain our sea communications to the north of the Malayan Archipelago (*Assumption 3 begins*) but could maintain local traffic within the Archipelago to a limited extent given Dutch co-operation. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

33. As regards (c), the trans- **Pacific** trade routes are important in connection with supplies from **America** to **Australia**, New Zealand and the **Far East**, as well as providing alternative communications with the **United Kingdom** which would increase in importance if difficulties on the Cape route became acute. These routes are also essential to the economic life of the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Although distances from **Japan** are considerable, the Japanese (if not deterred by fear of **United States** action) could establish advanced fuelling bases in the South Sea Islands to facilitate operations in the South-West Pacific.

The wide scope for evasive routing would provide a high degree of security for trans- **Pacific** trade, except in the neighbourhood of the western terminals. Routing, practicable to some extent, and the use of inshore routes would also provide some degree of protection for Australian and New Zealand trade. The danger of attack would be greatest in the approaches to ports, for which local air and naval protection would be required.

34. As regards the defence of **Australia**, New Zealand and the South Pacific islands, as previously stated, no serious threat to the territorial integrity of **Australia** or New Zealand would be likely to arise at least until **Japan** had consolidated her position in **China** and the **Far East**, which would take a considerable period. A Japanese major expedition to **Australia** or New Zealand would be an extremely hazardous operation so long as **Singapore** remained available to us as a base for the Fleet in being on the flank of their long lines of communication. Moreover, the protection of the lines of communication of an expedition of any considerable size over the distance involved would impose a very heavy drain on Japanese naval forces, as every important convoy has to be protected against the maximum scale of attack which we could bring to bear at our own selected moment and would probably therefore require escort by heavy ships. The scale of attack on **Australia** or New Zealand would be likely, therefore, to be limited to cruiser raids, possibly combined with a light scale of seaborne air attack against ports. The Japanese might decide to establish advanced fuelling bases in the South-West Pacific islands to facilitate such operations. There are innumerable potential bases in these islands which could not all be defended against Japanese attack, but their most likely objective would be the capture of a harbour with base facilities, particularly **Suva**. **Suva** is also useful as a potential advanced base for air forces.

35. As regards the defence of **Malaya**, the following are the factors affecting this problem in the absence of the Fleet:

(The necessity for preventing the establishment of shore-bases for
a) aircraft within close range of **Singapore** base.

(Even if the Japanese had not previously established themselves in
b) **Thailand** they would be more likely to attempt a landing up-country
in **Malaya** and then operate southward, under cover of shore-bases for
aircraft, than to risk direct assault on **Singapore Island**.

(The rice-growing country, on which the native population partly
c) depends, and most Government storage cereals are in the north.

(The necessity for establishing the maximum possible food
d) reserves for the garrison and for the civil population. Though our sea
communications with **Malaya** might be precarious, it would be
extremely difficult for the Japanese to blockade the Malayan
Peninsula completely, and we should expect to get supplies
intermittently to our forces, though not necessarily through **Port
Singapore**.

The above factors emphasise the necessity for holding the whole of
Malaya rather than concentrating on the defence of **Singapore Island**.
This clearly involves larger land and air forces than when the problem
was merely the defence of **Singapore Island**.

36. As regards the defence of **Burma**, the occupation of **Thailand** would
enable the Japanese to attack from the air key points such as the
Rangoon oil refineries and aerodromes on the Burmese section of the
Singapore air route. Japanese invasion of **Burma** territory is a more
distant threat, except in the extreme south, where she could capture
aerodromes such as **Victoria Point** and **Mergui**. Establishment of air
forces at bases such as **Lashio**, **Rangoon** and **Tavoy**, and the provision of
additional troops and air defences would be desirable, but the defence of
Malaya must have precedence over **Burma**, and the provision of such
forces can only be the long-term project. On the shorter view, the
problem is to limit the Japanese threat with the resources likely to be
available. The air route between **Singapore** and **Rangoon** must be kept
open. **Burma** aerodromes as far south as **Tavoy**, and in **Malaya** as far
north as **Alor Star**, must therefore be held. If the aerodromes at **Lashio**,
Rangoon and **Tavoy** are developed, stocked and defended, it may be
possible to move air forces from **Malaya** or **India** to assist **Burma** in
dealing with a sudden threat from the north. The aerodromes at **Victoria
Point** and **Mergui** would be prepared for demolition to ensure that the
Japanese could not use them. Both long- and short-term problems of the

defence of **Burma** will be reviewed by the Governments of **India** and **Burma** in consultation with the Air Officer Commanding in the **Far East**.

1

37. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Defence of the **Netherlands East Indies** is important for the denial to the Japanese of the use of naval and air bases. Control over the channels through the Netherlands Islands could be exercised by air and light naval forces based on one of the following alternative lines:

(*a*) Northern line of islands from **Singapore** to **New Guinea**, or

(*b*) Southern line from **Sumatra– Java** to Port Darwin.

We could do little to dispute the passage of these channels with the forces at present available. The co-operation of the Dutch would improve the position, but the measure of control would still be very limited. Which line of defence to adopt could only be decided by the local Commanders. To deny bases, invasion must be prevented, which would entail attacks on the expedition during its approach, as the Dutch military forces are limited and mainly concentrated in **Java**. With our naval numerical inferiority, the best form of defence would be shore-bases for air forces in conjunction with submarines, light naval forces and mines. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) The establishment of a British air base in North **Borneo** to give our air forces greater mobility is our long-term aim, but this will take time, and resources which we do not at present possess. It is desirable for such action to be part of a general settlement with the Japanese. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Meanwhile there would be no alternative to relying initially for the defence of this area on the operation of air forces from Dutch bases, of which there are several already established on both lines of defence. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) The Japanese might seize the Portuguese half of Timor as a first step, but owing to the absence of air or naval bases in this part and the risk that it might lead to war with us, such action appears unlikely.

38. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) The whole of the defence problem in the **Far East** would be greatly facilitated if we were certain of Dutch co-operation and could concert plans with them. Our aim should be a scheme of

defence ensuring full mutual support, pooling of resources, and arrangements for the rapid movement of troops to threatened points. The Dutch would probably agree to prepare detailed plans for the defence of the **Netherlands East Indies**, though they might hesitate to assist us in the event of Japanese attack on British territory alone. With our present limited resources in the **Far East** we could not offer the Dutch any effective military support against Japanese military aggression. It is not therefore recommended that Staff conversations should be held with the Dutch immediately. It is most important, however, that plans should be concerted with the Dutch as soon as we have improved our own position in **Malaya**. Meanwhile our Commanders in the **Far East** should consider the problem of combined Anglo-Dutch defence plans, so that conversations may take place immediately the opportunity arises. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

39. If the Japanese attacked **Malaya** without attacking the **Netherlands East Indies**, it is conceivable that Dutch co-operation would be withheld. We should then be faced with a gap in our defensive system and our sea communications in the **Indian Ocean** would be more seriously threatened. It should, however, still be possible, even without Dutch collaboration, to get some supplies into **Malaya** intermittently, but in such circumstances our difficulties in the **Far East** would be greatly increased.

40. *Conclusions.* In the absence of a capital ship fleet we could not fully secure our vital interests in the **Far East**. The problem is therefore the best disposition possible to secure the most important military interests without the cover which a capital ship fleet would provide. If, in addition to defending **Malaya**, we could deny to the Japanese the establishment of bases in the **Netherlands East Indies**, and if the movement of their naval forces through the line of these islands could be impeded, the security of our interests would be considerably improved. Our ultimate aim therefore should be to secure the full military co-operation of the Dutch. In the absence of full Dutch co-operation we should concentrate on **Malaya**.

¹ **Air Marshal Sir John Babington, KCB, CBE, DSO; AOC Far East
1938–41.**

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

DEFENCE REQUIREMENTS AND POSSIBILITIES OF MEETING THEM

Defence Requirements and Possibilities of Meeting Them

41. Our policy in the **Far East** until the fleet again becomes available is to rely primarily on air power in conjunction with such military forces as can be made available. Land forces are also essential for the close defence of naval and air bases, for internal security, and for dealing with such enemy land forces as might succeed in gaining a footing in **Malaya** and British **Borneo** despite our air action. The air forces required are outlined below. Their provision must be the long-term programme; and, until they can be provided, their absence must be met as far as possible by the provision of additional land forces.

42. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Our ultimate aim to secure the full military co-operation of the Dutch is of the utmost importance for the denial of bases to the enemy and to enable us to exert some measure of control over the channels through Southern Celebes, thus reducing the threat to our **Indian Ocean** trade and improving communications with **Australia** and New Zealand, whilst not entirely relying on Dutch forces to assist in the defence of **Malaya** itself. (*Assumption 3 ends.*) In assessing our requirements, therefore, Dutch collaboration has not been taken into account. Our requirements are not thereby substantially affected, since, even if the Dutch were co-operating with us, the enemy might carry out diversions against the **Netherlands East Indies**, thereby containing Dutch forces at a critical time.

43. An exact estimate of the strength and disposition of the air forces required must depend on appreciation by the United Kingdom Commanders in the **Far East** in collaboration with the Commonwealth and New Zealand defence authorities. Following is a general indication based on the necessity to meet Japanese attacks in **Malaya** from Indo-

China or Thailand, while at the same time leaving sufficient forces to deal with the possibility of seaborne invasion on the coast of **Malaya** or attack on Singapore Island itself. It also includes provision for air forces for trade protection in the focal areas of the **Indian Ocean**.... ¹

44. This is a very substantial addition to any previous programme, but in previous estimates:

- (a) The movement of a Battle Fleet to the **Far East** has always been assumed, and our air requirements, both in the **Indian Ocean** and in **Borneo**, were not therefore so great.
- (b) The situation in which the Japanese have virtually overrun South **China**, and Indo- **China** and **Thailand** had become potential bases for Japanese air forces, was not considered.
- (c) The necessity of defending British **Borneo** was not considered.

Moreover, experience has shown that it is unsound to rely upon reinforcements from **India** and **Iraq**. The above is the minimum we should aim at to afford a reasonable degree of air protection to our vital interests in the **Far East** and the **Indian Ocean** in the absence of a Battle Fleet. Some considerable time must elapse before the above requirements can be met from

¹ Details omitted. The total estimate was 336 first-line aircraft.

United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand resources. The date must depend largely upon the progress of the war in **Europe**, on the rate at which our production of aircraft and personnel can be sustained, and on the supply of aircraft from the **United States of America**. Subject to these considerations, our aim will be to complete the above programme by the end of 1941, and as soon as possible, and at any rate by the end of 1940, to reinforce the Far Eastern Command by at least two fighter and two General Reconnaissance land-plane squadrons, and to re-equip and bring up to establishment the existing squadrons.

45. Meanwhile, the air forces in **Malaya provided by the **United Kingdom** and the **Commonwealth** comprise:**

Bombers—3 squadrons, 36 aircraft.

Torpedo Bombers—2 squadrons, 24 aircraft, obsolete type.

GR Land Planes—2 squadrons, 24 aircraft.

GR Flying Boats—1 squadron, 4 aircraft, obsolete type.

Total: 88 first-line aircraft.

(Assumption 3 begins.)

Dutch air forces now in the **Netherlands East Indies comprise:**

Bombers—9 squadrons, 81 aircraft.

Fighters—2 squadrons, 24 aircraft.

Bombers for reconnaissance—1 squadron, 12 aircraft.

Flying Boats—1 squadron, 27 aircraft.

Total: 144 first-line aircraft.

The Dutch expansion programme will add another 42 fighters about January 1941, and in 1941 a further 48 fighters, 98 bombers and 18 reconnaissance aircraft, bringing the Dutch totals to 346 [350?] first-line aircraft. While these will be a valuable addition to the defence of our common interests in the **Far East against Japanese attack, they can in no way make up for the totally inadequate strength of our own air forces in **Malaya**. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)**

46. Until our very serious deficiency in air strength in the **Far East is at least reduced, we can only hope to provide a deterrent to attack and concentrate on the defence of the foremost of our vital interests, mainly **Singapore**. Under present conditions and in the immediate future, we**

cannot hope to secure the defence of British **Borneo**. For the present, therefore, it is necessary to make plans for the destruction of the oil and the air facilities. Ultimately we should establish defended bases for the operation of air forces referred to in paragraph 43 (c) ¹ at **Kuching** and **Jesselton**. Only very limited air forces could at present be made available to assist in the protection of trade in the **Indian Ocean**. On special occasions aircraft could be diverted from other tasks to cover the passage of convoys. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) Nevertheless the situation is not so black as it may appear. The British and Dutch Air Forces between them now dispose of more than 200 aircraft of a quality equal, and in some respects superior, to those of **Japan**. Experience has shown that to venture a seaborne expedition within range of modern air forces involves grave risks, so that even with our present air forces direct attack on **Singapore** would be a very formidable undertaking. Until, however, a standard of air defence approximating more closely to our estimated requirements can be obtained, everything possible must be done to increase our land forces in **Malaya**. When

¹ Omitted—for the defence of British **Borneo**.

our defence position has improved and it becomes possible to undertake Staff conversations with the Dutch, they should be pressed to station some of their units in **Borneo**, to improve the aerodromes in the islands, and to provide certain additional anti-aircraft defence troops for their security. The development of air routes within the **Netherlands East Indies**, and between the Commonwealth and **Singapore**, for reinforcement purposes is an essential factor for the general defence of the whole area. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

47. As regards land forces, a review of the position regarding the defence of **Burma** by the Governments of **India** and **Burma** is likely to disclose the necessity for extra troops and anti-aircraft equipment, particularly for the defence of air bases.

48. Although bases will eventually be required for four shore-based

squadrons in British **Borneo**, and these bases will require troops and anti-aircraft defences for their protection, some time must elapse before the aerodromes can be completed.

49. (*Assumption 3 begins.*) As it will be necessary to rely for some time on the operation of air forces from Dutch bases for the defence of the Dutch East Indies, the security of these bases is of considerable interest to us. The provision of the necessary troops must be a matter for the Dutch, who have a total of two divisions in **Java** and fourteen garrison battalions at outlying stations. Tarakan, Balik Papan, **Macassar** and **Amboina** each have a garrison battalion. The troops are not thought to be of high quality but are reasonably well equipped, except for a serious lack of anti-aircraft guns. Such guns as are available are in **Java**. The Dutch should be pressed during the Staff conversations to increase their garrisons at certain of the more important air bases. (*Assumption 3 ends.*)

50. The minimum garrison required in **Malaya** to hold the whole country and to safeguard the aerodromes required for the operations of our air forces is the equivalent of six brigades with ancillary troops, provided that the air forces mentioned in paragraph [43] are made available. Apart from coast defence and anti-aircraft troops, the present garrison of **Malaya** comprises nine battalions and corps troops. Until the additional air forces referred to in paragraph 43 can be stationed in the **Far East**, the reconnaissance and striking forces available to deal with invasion or seaborne attack are seriously inadequate. The absence of these air forces will involve an increase in the existing land forces by an amount which the General Officer Commanding ¹ estimated as equivalent to three divisions and attached troops. This figure could be progressively reduced as air reinforcements are increased. Since the GOC's estimate was made, the air forces in **Malaya** have already been increased by one squadron, and it is hoped to provide four additional squadrons by the end of 1940. Apart from the possibility of an Australian division going to **Singapore** (which is under separate consideration) it may be possible to make further forces available for the reinforcement of **Malaya** from some other

source at a later date. Preparations are therefore being made in **Malaya** to receive, ultimately, two reinforcing divisions.

51. The provision of anti-aircraft guns for **Singapore** is much below the approved scale, and anti-aircraft requirements for air bases in **Malaya**, **British Borneo** and the **Netherlands East Indies** will need careful examination. It is not possible to state at this stage exactly what the total requirements will be.

¹ Lt-Gen Sir Lionel Bond, KBE, CB; GOC Malaya, Aug 1939–May 1941.

52. Naval forces now on **China**, **Australia** and New Zealand stations are:

One 8-inch cruiser.

Two modern 6-inch cruisers.

Four old 6-inch cruisers.

Six armed merchant cruisers.

Five old destroyers.

Three anti-submarine escorts.

Eight motor-torpedo boats.

These are entirely inadequate for war in the **Far East**.

The Dutch forces in the **Far East** are:

Two cruisers.

Seven destroyers.

Sixteen submarines.

Until the naval situation in European waters is materially improved, it

may be necessary to face a serious threat to our Far Eastern trade, as fully adequate forces for its protection could not be made available in the event of determined action against it by Japanese forces, particularly if they used heavy ships. Everything possible will be done by the United Kingdom Government to press on with future naval construction programmes to the maximum extent possible; this is a long-term project and no naval building programme has ever allowed for a war in which the British Empire alone would be fighting **Germany, Italy and Japan**. Our best hope of being able to supply naval forces for the **Far East** in the near future lies in early and successful action against Italian naval forces in the **Mediterranean**, which we are doing everything possible to bring about.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

APPENDIX V – MAJOR-GENERAL H. E. BARROWCLOUGH'S CHARTER

Appendix V

Major-General H. E. Barrowclough's Charter

DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND

Prime Minister's Office,
WELLINGTON

5 November 1942

To: The General Officer Commanding,

2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Pacific.

- 1. You have been appointed to command the 2nd NZEF in Pacific now about to proceed overseas from New Zealand.**
- 2. You are to proceed with your Force to New Caledonia in accordance with separate orders which will be issued to you by Army Headquarters in New Zealand.**
- 3. On arrival at New Caledonia you will come under the operational command (but subject to the reservations hereinafter mentioned) of the United States General Commanding the Forces in that Island. Thereafter, and again subject to the reservations hereinafter mentioned, you will act in accordance with the operational instructions of the Commander (whether American or British and whether Naval or Military) under whose operational command you may from time to time be placed.**
- 4. Your immediate role is the defence of the whole or such portion of the Island of New Caledonia as may be allotted to you by the General Commanding the Forces there and you will not, except in grave emergency or in special circumstances of which you must be the sole**

judge, and then only if you are unable to refer the matter to the **New Zealand Government**, employ your force or permit its employment in any other role or in any other theatre without first referring the matter to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

5. You are expressly authorised to make representations to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand regarding the proposed employment of your troops if in your opinion the operations you are required to undertake might unjustifiably imperil your command.

6. You will be at liberty from time to time to detach and place under the command of **United States** officers such portions of your force as you may think expedient, and any part of your force so detached will during the period of such detachment be subject to the orders and directions of the **United States** officer under whose command they may be placed, in all respects as if that officer were a New Zealand officer serving under your command. Similarly you and any officer under your command are hereby authorised to exercise command over any **United States** troops which may from time to time be placed under your or their command by competent **United States** authority.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, you will at all times endeavour to keep to a minimum detachments from your force.

7. Administratively and for all purposes other than operational you are directly and solely responsible to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

8. Generally it is the desire of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand that your force should be employed in the closest possible collaboration with the Forces of the Allied Nations and to that end you are to use your utmost endeavours to comply with the requirements and carry out the instructions of the Commander under whose operational command you may for the time being be serving.

(Sgd) P. FRASER

DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND

Prime Minister's Office,
WELLINGTON

5 November 1942

To: The General Officer Commanding,

2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Pacific.

1. In addition to the powers and authorities vested in you as General Officer Commanding the 2nd NZEF in **Pacific** by virtue of any relevant statute or regulations, you are hereby vested with the following powers, all of which may be exercised from time to time as occasion demands:

- (**Power to increase or vary the scale of rations if in your opinion**
a) **this should seem necessary in the interests of the health of your troops but subject to supplies being available locally or from American or New Zealand sources.**
- (**Power to purchase equipment and material (in accordance with**
b) **appropriate war equipment tables) which cannot be obtained or which cannot without unreasonable delay be obtained from normal sources.**
- (**Power to incur expenditure which cannot be foreseen at present**
c) **and which you in your discretion may think necessary for the protection, safety and health of your troops.**
- (**Power to incur expenditure, not exceeding £250 for any one**
d) **transaction, for the provision of recreation and other amenities for your troops.**
- (**Power to disburse at your discretion from an entertainment fund**
e) **which will be provided amounts not exceeding in the aggregate £500 per annum.**
- (**To establish such administration headquarters and base and line**
f) **of communication units as are necessary for the functions of command, organisation and administration with which you have been vested, and to fix and determine the establishments and war equipment tables of such headquarters and units, provided the same are in conformity with the establishments and equipment tables**

customarily adopted in British military practice.

(**To fix, determine and alter the establishments, equipment tables g) and composition of existing units and formations as the exigencies of the service may in your opinion from time to time require.**

(**To make promotions and appointments of officers, warrant h) officers and non-commissioned officers within establishments. (All appointments and promotions of officers to be subject to confirmation by the Governor-General and published in the *New Zealand Gazette*.)**

Provided in respect of the foregoing paragraphs (a) to (h) that additional demands on New Zealand manpower and equipment are not thereby created and that the ranks laid down in British or New Zealand War Establishments are not exceeded, and in the case of appointments provided otherwise than in War Establishments that the ranks authorised for such appointments are NOT exceeded.

2. You will be directly responsible to the *New Zealand Government* for the discipline and internal administration of the troops under your command, but you will at all times conform with any local orders of the Commander under whose command you may from time to time be serving in respect of general discipline and administration so far as the same can reasonably be made applicable to your force, and in the event of any difference between you and such commander in respect of any of these matters you are authorised to make representations thereon to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

3. Your normal channel of communication with His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will be through Army Headquarters in New Zealand but in exceptional circumstances (or for special reasons) you are to have the right of direct communication with the *New Zealand Government*.

(*Sgd*) P. FRASER

Prime Minister

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND

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5 November 1942

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- 4. Your immediate role is the defence of the whole or such portion of the Island of **New Caledonia** as may be allotted to you by the General Commanding the Forces there and you will not, except in grave emergency or in special circumstances of which you must be the sole judge, and then only if you are unable to refer the matter to the **New Zealand Government**, employ your force or permit its employment in any other role or in any other theatre without first referring the matter to**

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

5. You are expressly authorised to make representations to His Majesty's Government in New Zealand regarding the proposed employment of your troops if in your opinion the operations you are required to undertake might unjustifiably imperil your command.

6. You will be at liberty from time to time to detach and place under the command of **United States officers such portions of your force as you may think expedient, and any part of your force so detached will during the period of such detachment be subject to the orders and directions of the **United States** officer under whose command they may be placed, in all respects as if that officer were a New Zealand officer serving under your command. Similarly you and any officer under your command are hereby authorised to exercise command over any **United States** troops which may from time to time be placed under your or their command by competent **United States** authority.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, you will at all times endeavour to keep to a minimum detachments from your force.

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8. Generally it is the desire of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand that your force should be employed in the closest possible collaboration with the Forces of the Allied Nations and to that end you are to use your utmost endeavours to comply with the requirements and carry out the instructions of the Commander under whose operational command you may for the time being be serving.

(Sgd) P. FRASER

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-45: VOLUME III

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- (Power to increase or vary the scale of rations if in your opinion
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- (Power to purchase equipment and material (in accordance with
b) appropriate war equipment tables) which cannot be obtained or which cannot without unreasonable delay be obtained from normal sources.
- (Power to incur expenditure which cannot be foreseen at present
c) and which you in your discretion may think necessary for the protection, safety and health of your troops.
- (Power to incur expenditure, not exceeding £250 for any one
d) transaction, for the provision of recreation and other amenities for your troops.
- (Power to disburse at your discretion from an entertainment fund
e) which will be provided amounts not exceeding in the aggregate £500 per annum.
- (To establish such administration headquarters and base and line
f) of communication units as are necessary for the functions of command, organisation and administration with which you have been vested, and to fix and determine the establishments and war

equipment tables of such headquarters and units, provided the same are in conformity with the establishments and equipment tables customarily adopted in British military practice.

(To fix, determine and alter the establishments, equipment tables g) and composition of existing units and formations as the exigencies of the service may in your opinion from time to time require.

(To make promotions and appointments of officers, warrant h) officers and non-commissioned officers within establishments. (All appointments and promotions of officers to be subject to confirmation by the Governor-General and published in the *New Zealand Gazette*.)

Provided in respect of the foregoing paragraphs (a) to (h) that additional demands on New Zealand manpower and equipment are not thereby created and that the ranks laid down in British or New Zealand War Establishments are not exceeded, and in the case of appointments provided otherwise than in War Establishments that the ranks authorised for such appointments are NOT exceeded.

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3. Your normal channel of communication with His Majesty's Government in New Zealand will be through Army Headquarters in New Zealand but in exceptional circumstances (or for special reasons) you are to have the right of direct communication with the **New Zealand Government**.

(Sgd) P. FRASER

Prime Minister

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