

*H.E. Kree*

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
August 17th, 1940

No. 737

My Lord,

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I have the honour with reference to my despatch No. 537 of June 12th to transmit to Your Lordship herewith a copy of the Secretary of State's reply to my aide memoire of June 8th. regarding the Pacific Islands.

2. It will be seen that the State Department while welcoming His Majesty's Government's readiness to dispose of this dispute by means of oral discussions and agreeing to the opening of these discussions being postponed until His Majesty's Government have had "some time" in which to prepare the documentation of their case, politely decline to accede to His Majesty's Government's suggestion that they should indicate in advance the grounds on which the United States claim to certain specified islands is based. Nor do the State Department make any reply to the request that they should confirm the correctness of His Majesty's Government's assumption that the United States Government have now tabled the full list of islands the sovereignty over which they wish to discuss. On the contrary the State Department's note says that it is believed that the proposed oral discussions will afford an opportunity for discussing the respective claims of the two Governments, not only to the islands listed but also "to islands in the Phoenix Group as well as to any other islands in the Central Pacific to which either Government asserts claim". In his telegram No. 395 of the 29th October, 1938, Sir Ronald Lindsay foresaw that the United States Government might wish to include their claim to Tonga in any general discussion of Pacific claims, and the present phrase may be designed to keep that possibility open. A memorandum on the United States claim to Tonga was enclosed in the American Department's letter (A 8806/1/45) of the 24th November, 1938 to this Chancery.

*177/85/38*

3. I have given a copy of the Secretary of State's note to the Australian Minister and am sending a copy of this despatch to the Governor of New Zealand and to the United Kingdom High Commissioners at Canberra and Wellington.

I have the honour to be,  
with the highest respect,  
My Lord,  
Your Lordship's most obedient,  
humble servant,  
(For the Ambassador)

(SGD) N. M. BUTLER

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