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RECEIVED 12 JUL 1938

WESTERN PACIFIC.

SECRET.

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC, SUVA, FIJI,

13th June, 1938.

A F S WORKS

I have recently received from the

Sir,

request.

(Revel ASI)

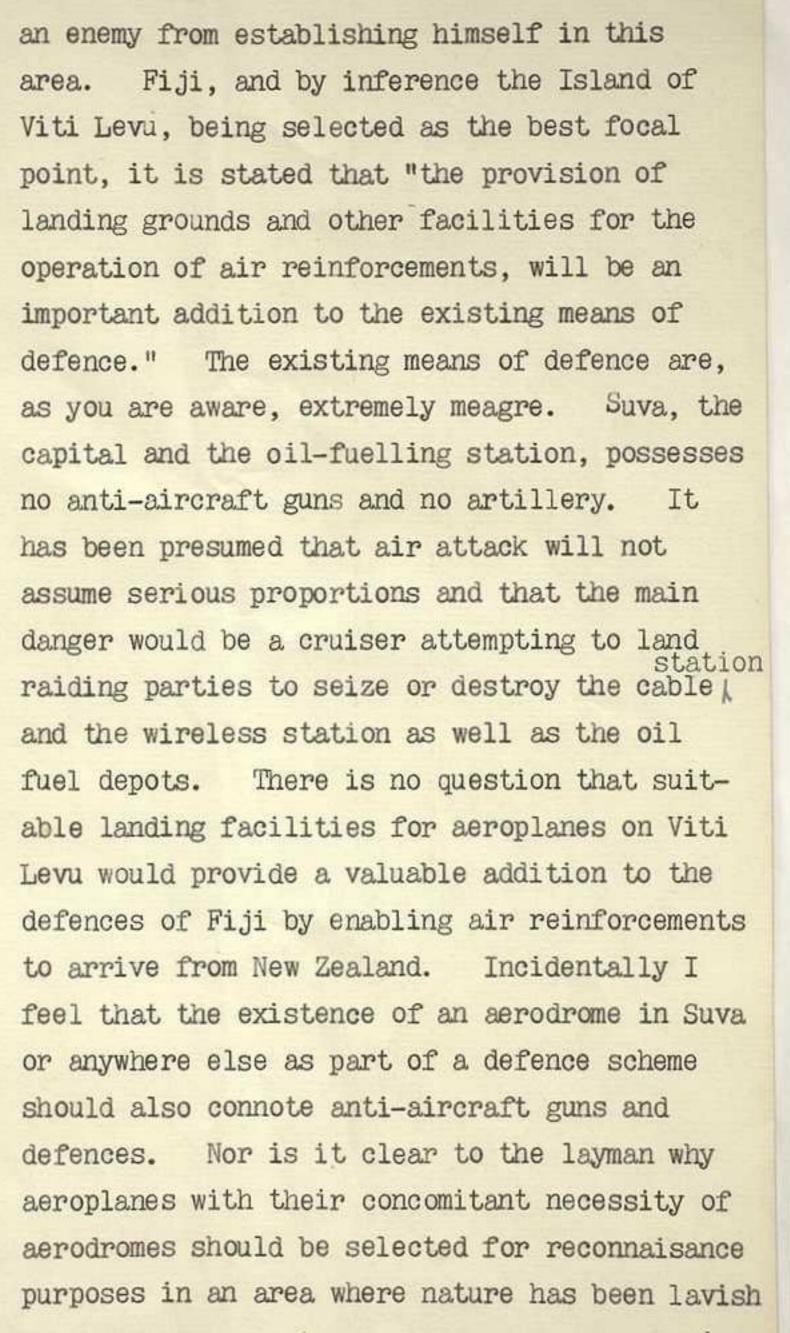
Governor-General of New Zealand a copy of a secret despatch, dated the 20th May, which has been addressed to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, and for your convenience of reference I attach copies to this despatch. You will doubtless wish to receive at an early date any comments which I may wish to make from the point of view of Fiji and the Western Pacific, and I therefore anticipate such a

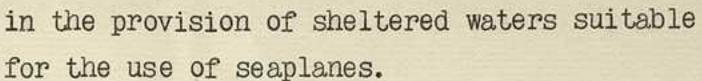
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2. The extent of the future strategic importance of the Pacific Islands to the British Empire is set forth, in paragraph 1 of Lord Galway's despatch, in the quotation from C.I.D. Paper C.O.S. 586. The despatch then proceeds to envisage the Fijian and Tongan Groups as the key to New Zealand, and to draw the conclusion that it is essential to prevent

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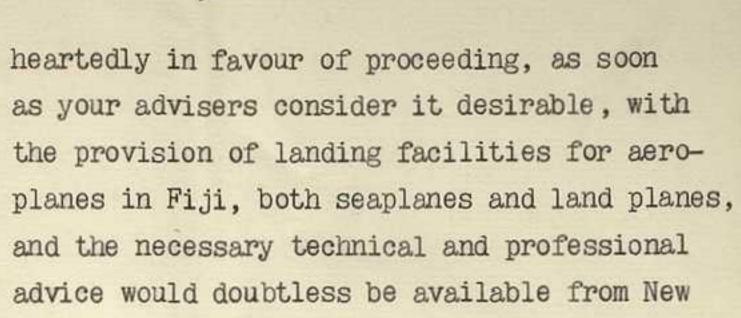




The proposal to use Fiji as a focal 3. point, from which might run a series of aerodromes on the Routes A. B. C. D. seems to me to open up wider possibilities. I gather that the aerodromes are to be undefended indeed they could scarcely be defended in present circumstances - and if that is the case, may they not prove a double-edged weapon? This seems to apply particularly to Route A, which the New Zealand Government proposes to take first. It leads straight from Suva to the Marshall Islands, but it also leads straight from the Marshall Islands to Suva and might facilitate the air attack which, in present circumstances, from ships, is not considered likely to be serious. Whether or not any re-fuelling stores are kept on the route it would remain an inviting and open It is possible that the general improveroad. ment of coordination of wireless services in the Western Pacific, which is now under consideration, and the local scheme for establishing local wireless links throughout the Gilbert and Ellice Islands may obviate some of the need for air reconnaisance in that direction other than by occasional seaplane visits.

> 4. I need hardly say that I am wholeheartedly

Zealand and would be welcome.



the proposals made by the New Zealand Government I shall of course render every possible assistance to the officers detailed to make preliminary surveys. It will be realized that on any save the largest islands the clearance of space necessary for an aerodrome would very seriously affect the living resources of these already over-populated atolls, but if the strategic need is conceded such considerations are relatively minor matters which can be dealt with by some of the measures for transfer of population to other islands of the Pacific which I have now under consideration.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

AH CukaruS

High Commissioner.