

Mr. Bevir. 23.1.39.
Mr. Lee 23/1
Mr. Dixon 23/1/39.
Mr. Acheson 23/1/39 at once.

7025/2/39.

PARAPHRASE telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

(Sent 8.0 p.m., 24th January, 1939).

No. 3. Secret.

Please refer to concluding paragraph of your secret telegram No. 10 of 19th January.

The intention is that the proposed conference should deal not only with defence questions but also with the question of civil aviation routes in the Western Pacific, the measures to be taken for re-enforcing our claims to British islands on which the United States Government may have designs, together with questions relating to islands at present unattached e.g. in the Line and Pitcairn group.

2. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have informed His Majesty's Government in New Zealand that they agree generally with their proposals that the discussions on defence of the proposed conference should take the form proposed by His Majesty's Government in New Zealand (vide paragraph 6 below). This will necessitate waiting for consideration by His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom of report of New Zealand Chiefs of Staff. It is feared that, if defence discussions at the conference were to open before about middle of April, there would not be time for adequate study of report as this report cannot be received in United Kingdom until 3rd February, and for framing instructions for the guidance of United Kingdom representatives. His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom desire that the conference should not be too long delayed, especially in so far as it relates to questions connected with the activities of the United States Government in the Pacific, in view of possibility of some early action on their part.

Copy to ~~✓~~ on 86059, 6214/20A - and in due course to Admiralty, E.O., I.M., D.O. - and circ. for conson of sending to Treasury.

3. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand were also informed that it would be very difficult if the conference were held earlier than the middle of April to arrange for adequate United Kingdom representation, having regard to the position as described above as regards representation on the defence side, and also to the fact that your attendance for a lengthy period might be difficult.

4. His Majesty's Government hoped, therefore, that it would be possible for conference to meet as soon as possible after the middle of April, and if so, they would propose that in addition to any special defence representatives who might be appointed after study of report of New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, their representatives at the conference should be the High Commissioner for New Zealand of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom (Sir H. Batterbee) and the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (or a representative). It was suggested, therefore, that His Majesty's Government in New Zealand should communicate with you and with His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia, and should notify His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom arrangements contemplated for meeting of conference as result of such discussions as soon as may be convenient.

5. In view of plans which you may have for visiting the High Commission territories I appreciate that it may be difficult for you to arrange to attend any such conference. If you yourself are unable to attend I should be glad to receive your recommendations as to the representation of Fiji and the Western Pacific.

6. Please inform me if you do not receive detailed proposals for discussion of defence questions as indicated in paragraph 3 above. separately
I will deal with the remainder of your telegram
No. 10 of 19th January.