

Fluency given with Col Knox 1/33



The substance of the Colony of Bermuda's memorandum is that the establishment of a United States naval and air base in Bermuda will adversely affect the economic life of the Colony in proportion to the scale and position of the bases; but that such adverse effects can be reduced if the United States Government will modify its proposal in respect of the sites provisionally selected. The main objections, which are strongly felt by local opinion are to

1. the proposed corridor across the middle of the colony,
2. the islands chosen for the storage of explosives,
3. the creation of a land aerodrome.


The main alternative suggested is the location of the base at the east end of the island.

1. It must be remembered that the Colony of Bermuda is only $19\frac{1}{2}$ square miles in extent. Its population is 32,000 and the density of population is more than 1,600 to the square mile. If the United States forces stationed there number 4,500 men plus some 1,500 members of their families, the population of the island will be increased by 20% and the present over-crowding will be intensified. There will also be the difficult problems which always arise where a large foreign garrison is situated in an overcrowded area mainly peopled by a coloured population.

2. The only economic assets of Bermuda are its attractions as a holiday resort in which visitors from the United States can find quiet charm and pleasant outdoor recreation in an atmosphere whose strongly British

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character they evidently like. The establishment of a considerable new naval and air base in Bermuda would remove forever a part of the Colony's economic assets, if its main feature were an enormous aerodrome cutting the island in two and almost opposite its Capital Hamilton and its most populous district. Access to considerable areas would have to be prohibited to residents and visitors and the attractions of the remaining part would be diminished partly by the increase in overcrowding and partly by the disturbance which a large aerodrome so situated would cause to the quiet and amenity of the island. This would mean the probable ruin of the larger hotels and shops and considerable unemployment. This shrinkage in the Colony's economic assets would be accompanied by a shrinkage in its revenue from the tourist trade and by residents leaving the Colony. On the economic side, the only offsetting factors would be (1) the temporary gain in local employment through construction work on the air and naval bases, and (2) the spending power of the United States garrison with its presumed complement of families, but only in so far as their needs were not provided for by duty free imports by the United States authorities.

3. The force with which these considerations apply is in exact ratio to the situation and the size of the United States bases. If these bases are of the size and position at present contemplated by the United States authorities, the force of these factors is very considerable. It is therefore to be hoped that the United States authorities will keep their bases to the minimum size demanded by the scale of attack which they are likely to be called upon to resist. It is particularly hoped that if a land

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air base is regarded as ultimately necessary, its position can be changed to the Eastern end of the island where an alternative situation has been found.

4. The areas selected by the Board are in the highest degree open to all the objections cited. These areas comprise about 1/13th of the total area of the Colony.

(a) The mainland area is situated in the middle of the Colony.

Its retention is indispensable to the existence of the tourist trade generally and it includes valuable properties, for which there are no possible substitutes elsewhere in the Colony, belonging to some of the most desirable American residents.

It includes a wide corridor from coast to coast dividing the Colony into two parts, and cutting railway and main road communications. This feature would give rise to difficult political and administrative problems of every kind.

Furthermore approximately 1,500 persons would be dispossessed of their homes and their resettlement elsewhere even under poor conditions would present a highly difficult problem. The compensation for damage would be high.

(b) The islands selected by the Board for storage of ammunition and explosives are some of the largest and most beautiful in the Great-Sound. Some have holiday residences and all are extensively used for recreation by local inhabitants as well as visitors. It is presumed that not only the islands but the waters in the vicinity would become prohibited areas.

Furthermore with the coming and going of aircraft, service motor craft and possibly warships, the Great

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