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BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 22nd, 1940

3189 of
December 20th

Addressed to Foreign Office tel. No. 5189 of December 20th repeated by air mail to Bermuda, The Bahamas, Jamaica, Windward Islands, Leeward Islands, British Guiana, Trinidad, Newfoundland, Commander-in-Chief West Indies.

Your telegram No. 3119.

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Secretary of State has now sent me letter replying to my letter of November 22nd in which I forwarded a list of the areas which His Majesty's Government had agreed should be leased to the United States Government (copy of my letter was enclosed in my despatch No. 1600 of November 22nd.) Although I had been given to understand that the definition of these areas was, with the exception of one paragraph regarding Bermuda and one paragraph concerning British Guiana, acceptable to the Navy Department, State Department now request that the following alterations be made:-

(a) Bermuda. In addition to pointing out that the question, which is still under discussion, of the granting of facilities in the Great Sound cannot be regarded as one connected with the grant of "minor facilities", the State Department suggest that reference in sub-paragraph (a) to "Rofe's Bay" should be changed to "Richardson's Bay" and reference in sub-paragraph (b) to "Higg's Bay" should be changed to "Higg's Bay" (see in this connexion your telegram No. 3071).

(b) The Bahamas. State Department suggest that in order to provide for the inclusion in the leased area of 1 1/2 square miles which it is desired to use for a landing field, the following statement be added to the schedule "an area of about 1 1/2 square miles for use as a landing field, to be located after an engineering reconnaissance".

(c) Jamaica. In sub-paragraph (b) the word "of" after 'Cays' should be changed to "and" so as to make the sentence run as follows: "Land area to include Goat Island and the adjacent Cays, and approximately 33 square miles in and east of Gallean Harbour". In sub-paragraph/

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sub-paragraph (c) the word "Bight" should be changed to "Ridge" and "Portland Island" should be changed to "Pigeon Island". In sub-paragraph (d) the figure "100" acres should be changed to "225 acres"

(d) British Guiana. Sub-paragraph (a) should run "An aerodrome on the Bank of the River Demerara 25 miles up, with emergency patrol plane facilities."

The proposed re-wording for British Guiana has already been approved (see your telegram No. 3263) and the State Department's first point regarding Bermuda can be dealt with in the discussions about the Great Sound which we hope shortly to have with the American Interdepartmental Committee. I should, however be glad to know whether these remaining geographical suggestions made by the State Department can be agreed to.

Secretary of State's letter goes on to say that it is his understanding that the statement in my letter of November 22nd that the British authorities agreed that work should be begun without further delay on all the sites, the locations of which had been agreed upon, "is a formal assurance that work can be commenced immediately on the above-mentioned sites without waiting for the signature of the leases for the property involved, and that this statement further constitutes a formal assurance that the British authorities concerned will acquire the properties on which the construction is started and will subsequently lease them to the United States Government in accordance with the provisions of the basic exchange of notes of September 2nd, 1940.

It is further my understanding that if condemnation proceedings are required in any of the areas designated the appropriate British authorities immediately will institute such proceedings. It is understood that meanwhile the United States authorities shall be free to proceed with construction without delay".

This procedure seems to be in accordance with that set out in your telegram No. 3072, but I should be glad to know if I can inform Secretary of State that his assumptions are correct, on the understanding that United States Government will be prepared to pay the cost incurred in the acquisition of private lands.

Mr. Hull's letter than confirms the information already given by the Navy Department that no difficulties are likely to occur in respect of Antigua - see my telegram No. 2192.