

● PSF Safe File: New Zealand

~~SECRET~~

*Safe: New Zealand*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

The Honorable,

The Under Secretary of State.

My dear Mr. Welles:

With reference to your memorandum of February 11, 1942, transmitting a copy of a message with reference to conditions in New Caledonia, forwarded by the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff, to the Chief of the Air Staff in Australia, the following action with reference to the matter has been taken.

I have arranged with General H. H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, to turn over to the New Zealand Government six aircraft (type O-47), which were part of a shipment reported to have arrived in Australia on February 5, 1942.

I believe, after discussion with the New Zealand Minister, that this arrangement will be eminently satisfactory, as far as ameliorating present conditions in New Caledonia.

Very sincerely yours,

DECLASSIFIED  
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.  
By W. J. Stewart Date FEB 7 1972

DECLASSIFIED  
~~SECRET~~  
~~SECRET~~ FEB 7 1972

~~SECRET~~

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

February 11, 1942

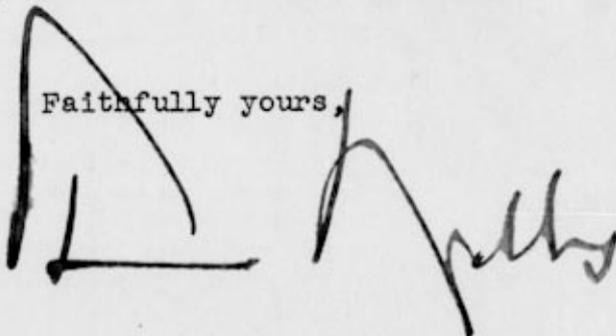
My dear Mr. President:

The New Zealand Minister, Mr. Nash, has sent me today, for my information, a copy of a message regarding New Caledonia which was sent by the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff to the Chief of the Air Staff in Australia.

In the event that this message has not already been brought to your attention, I am enclosing a copy herewith since I believe it may be of interest to you. I have sent a copy thereof to General Marshall.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,  
The White House.

A. V. K.

AIR BOARD MELBOURNE

TO REPEAT NEW ZEALAND AIR ATTACHE WASHINGTON D.C.  
FROM AIR HEADQUARTERS WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND

                      
On my return from recent visit to Noumea I learned that substantial United States garrison was en route from New Caledonia and I therefore refrained from reporting conversation with Admiral Argenlieu. In view of prolonged delay before arrival of United States forces in New Caledonia and after discussion with Admiral Leary I considered you should have following information which I am repeating also to Washington. Admiral Argenlieu said that he was bitterly disappointed about lack of support. New Caledonia had agreed to the building of aerodromes in the belief that aircraft would be stationed there and that the aerodromes would be defended. He now found himself virtually defenceless and considered New Caledonia now much more desirable to the Japanese by virtue of the three aerodromes there. He said that unless he received early assurance of the arrival of defence forces he should not only stop work on the aerodromes but use the machinery here for destroying the aerodromes. I did not feel entitled to give Argenlieu any assurance about the early arrival of American forces and had to content myself with urging him not to do what he proposed but rather to use surplus machinery and labour for preparing fortifications under military direction around the aerodromes. Argenlieu said that he felt very inclined nevertheless to do what he suggested. He also said that such small forces as he had could hardly be deployed at the right place unless he could get early information of the arrival of enemy forces and for this he needed only one or two aircraft and could be content with a civil unarmed type if he could not have a service type.

While in New Caledonia it seemed to me that the ability and will of the French authorities to resist invasion was low and that the principal stay of their morale was the small Australian unit for which they have a very high regard. In view of the foregoing you may wish to represent that some alternative might be found to the present arrangements for sending the convoy carrying United States forces for Caledonia to Brisbane first for reembarkation. You may also wish to send one or two light aircraft which the French

DECLASSIFIED

J.C.S.                      Memo 1-17-73

By RT Date APR 6 1973

A J 97



*Arnold Folder*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 13, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

MAJOR GENERAL H. H. ARNOLD

Will you take up the enclosed with the New Zealand Air Attache?

F. D. R.

February 11, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

The New Zealand Minister, Mr. Nash, has sent me today, for my information, a copy of a message regarding New Caledonia which was sent by the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff to the Chief of the Air Staff in Australia.

In the event that this message has not already been brought to your attention, I am enclosing a copy herewith since I believe it may be of interest to you. I have sent a copy thereof to General Marshall.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

Enc.

The President,  
The White House.

AIR BOARD MELBOURNE

TO REPEAT NEW ZEALAND AIR ATTACHE WASHINGTON, D.C.

FROM AIR HEADQUARTERS WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND

**██████████** EDWARD H. H. ARNOLD

On my return from recent visit to Noumea I learned that substantial United States garrison was en route from New Caledonia and I therefore refrained from reporting conversation with Admiral Argenlieu. In view of prolonged delay before arrival of United States forces in New Caledonia and after discussion with Admiral Leary I considered you should have following information which I am repeating also to Washington. Admiral Argenlieu said that he was bitterly disappointed about lack of support. New Caledonia had agreed to the building of aerodromes in the belief that aircraft would be stationed there and that the aerodromes would be defended. He now found himself virtually defenceless and considered New Caledonia now much more desirable to the Japanese by virtue of the three aerodromes there. He said that unless he received early assurance of the arrival of defence forces he should not only stop work on the aerodromes but use the machinery here for destroying the aerodromes. I did not feel entitled to give Argenlieu any assurance about the early arrival of American forces and had to content myself with urging him not to do what he proposed but rather to use surplus machinery and labour for preparing fortifications under military direction around the aerodromes. Argenlieu said that he felt very inclined nevertheless to do what he suggested. He also said that such small forces as he had could hardly be deployed at the right place unless he could get early information of the arrival of enemy forces and for this he needed only one or two aircraft and could be content with a civil unarmed type if he could not have a service type.

While in New Caledonia it seemed to me that the ability and will of the French authorities to resist invasion was low and that the principal stay of their morale was the small Australian unit for which they have a very high regard. In view of the foregoing you may wish to represent that some alternative might be found to the present arrangements for sending the convoy carrying United States forces for Caledonia to Brisbane first forreembarkation. You may also wish to send one or two light aircraft which the French themselves say they could maintain and fly by way of keeping their spirits up. I personally do not think there would be much advantage in sending a Hudson to New Caledonia from Fiji from time to time for coastal reconnaissances but if you wish any assistance in this way no doubt you will ask for it. Message ends.

The President,

The White House.

DECLASSIFIED

J.C.S. **██████████** Memo 1-17-73

By RT. Date APR 6 1973

~~SECRET~~

*file  
Bost  
Lab file: New Zealand*

WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Reference is made to memorandum from the White House, February 13, 1942, inclosing letter from the Under Secretary of State, dated February 11, 1942, with reference to a communication from the New Zealand Minister, Mr. Nash, concerning conditions in New Caledonia, copy of which is attached.

Arrangements have been made this date with the New Zealand Minister, through Group Captain Isitt, New Zealand Air Attache, to turn over to the New Zealand Government six aircraft (type O-47), for the purpose of alleviating the reported condition in New Caledonia. These aircraft were part of a shipment reported to have arrived in Brisbane, Australia, aboard the S. S. Hammondsport, on February 5, 1942.

It is felt by this office after consultation with the New Zealand Legation that the above arrangements will be eminently satisfactory.

Attached is a letter for your signature to the Under Secretary of State.

*A. A. Arnold*  
Lieutenant General, U.S.A.,  
Chief of the Army Air Forces.

Incl. - memo fr. N.Z. Air Hq.  
draft ltr to Under Sec.State.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

500 111 6200.9 (8/27/58)

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RT, NARS Date APR 6 1973

~~SECRET~~