PSF AUSTRALIA 1939-Aug. 1942

PSF: Australia

file personal

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

November 28, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

The British Ambassador this morning left with me a sealed envelope addressed to you by the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Robert G. Menzies. At the same time the Ambassador left a memorandum citing the intention of the Australian Government to establish a Legation at Washington. I enclose for your information a copy of the memorandum, together with a copy of my reply in which I expressed pleasure at the move and indicated that we would at once take steps preparatory to the establishment of a Legation at Canberra. I added, however, that the Legation would not be officially opened until a Minister had been duly appointed and confirmed by the Senate. As the Australian Minister will only be appointed two or three months hence, the arrival of an American Minister at Canberra should,

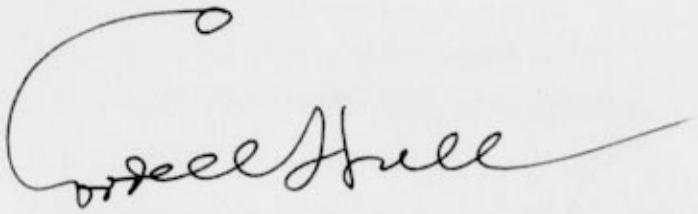
in

The President,

The White House.

in general, synchronize with the arrival of an Australian Minister in Washington.

Faithfully yours,



Enclosures:

1. Sealed envelope to the President.
2. Memorandum from the British Embassy.
3. Memorandum in reply to the British Embassy.

# Department of State

BUREAU
DIVISION } Eu

## ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted

ADDRESSED TO

The President.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1033

At the instance of His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia I have been instructed to ascertain informally whether the establishment of an Australian Legation in Washington would be agreeable to the Government of the United States, and, in the event of the answer being in the affirmative, whether the United States Government would have any objection to an Australian Legation being opened under the direction of a Chargé d'Affaires pending the arrival of a Minister whose appointment His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia would propose to defer for some two or three months.

I have been instructed to intimate that His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia would welcome the simultaneous establishment of a United States Legation at Canberra.

MEMORANDUM

The Secretary of State was delighted to learn through the British Ambassador of the intention of the Australian Government to establish a Legation in Washington. This move is most welcome to the Government of the United States, and no objection is perceived to the Legation being opened under the direction of a Chargé d'Affaires pending the appointment of a Minister some two to three months hence.

For its part, the Government of the United States will promptly take steps preparatory to the establishment of an American Legation at Canberra. In all probability, however, the Legation will not be officially opened until an American Minister to Australia has been duly appointed and confirmed by the Senate. The Secretary of State hopes that the arrival of an American Minister in Australia will in general synchronize with the arrival of an Australian Minister to the United States.

Department of State,

Washington, November 28 1939

Mr. Prime Minister:

I was glad to receive on May 26th your personal message, which I have read with interest and considered with care.

I fully realize that the Allies are facing a critical situation in Europe, and I of course understand and appreciate the motives which prompted you to send me this message. I do not think that there are many people in the United States, and certainly none in the Executive Branch of our Government, who fail to appreciate the implications and dangers to the whole world of the triumph of those forces against which your country is struggling, and I want you to know that, subject to the necessary limitations of the position of this country, the production facilities of the United States are available in their entirety to the Allies.

With

With regard to your specific suggestion concerning the need of planes by the Allied Governments, I may say that a large number of planes have been ordered in this country by those Governments, and sizable quantities have already been delivered. We do not expect that the armaments program of the United States will interfere in any way with the speedy delivery of planes for the Allied Governments. When I sent a message to Congress on May 16th dealing with the necessity for increasing the armaments of the United States, you may have noted that I made the following statement:

> "For the permanent record, I ask the Congress not to take any action which would in any way hamper or delay the delivery of American-made planes to foreign nations which have ordered them, or seek to purchase more planes. That, from the point of view of our own national defense, would be extremely shortsighted."

I deeply appreciate and cordially reciprocate your friendly references to me and to the United States.

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 26th, 1940

Mr. President,

In the absence of Mr. Casey from Washington, I transmit herewith the following message from Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia, which he has instructed should be handed to you personally as soon as possible.

Keith Officer

[5-26-40]

MR. PRESIDENT:

In this hour of great emergency not only for Great Britain and France but also for Australia and the other British Dominions, I desire to put before you certain considerations.

Though we are determined to win and are by no means anticipating defeat, it is still obviously possible that France may be defeated and that in such an event Great Britain's power to resist Germany will depend on her navy and her ability to resist or prevent an attack.

This would mean that air strength would become vital and I do not need to point out to you that Germany has great numerical preponderance. Successful attacks upon factories interrupting production might be decisive.

I hope that you will not find me unduly unconventional if I say to you as the head of the greatest but most friendly neutral power that to prevent the British fleet falling into German hands must be of the greatest importance to the U.S.A. and that I cannot believe the U.S.A. can view with anything but acute anxiety a Europe completely dominated by Germany and a victorious Germany exercising undisputed power in the Eastern Atlantic and adjoining seas. One must also remember that in the event of a defeat to Great Britain the possession of West Indian islands would undoubtedly be demanded by Germany.

I believe that your great country has it in its power to make a decisive contribution without actually participating. The one country that can rapidly and substantially increase British air power is U.S.A. and even if this means despatch to Great Britain of machines already in commission in or designed for your own Air Force, I would most earnestly urge you to follow that course.

I am quite confident of British capacity to meet all attacks against the United Kingdom and in turn to inflict such damage upon Germany as to produce her defeat - provided the United States can supply the additional aeroplanes which are needed. But quite plainly - and I know that you would wish me to speak plainly - without most prompt assistance from the United States there must be a grave danger of a state of affairs ~~quickly~~ developing, more or less quickly, in which the power of Great Britain to defend liberty and free institutions is destroyed and in which we, your English-speaking neighbours across the Pacific basin, must find our own independence, it seems, imperilled.

There is in Australia a great belief in your friendliness and goodwill. We feel that we are fighting for immortal things which you value as we do and on behalf of my own people I beg for your earnest consideration and swift action.

R. G. MENZIES.

Mr. Prime Minister:

I acknowledge with appreciation your personal message, which I received through Mr. Casey, the Australian Minister in Washington.

I fully realize that the Allies are facing a critical situation in Europe, and I understand and appreciate the motives which prompted you to send me this message. I am convinced that nearly everyone in the United States fully understands the implications and dangers to the whole world of a triumph of those forces against which your country is struggling, and I want you to know that, subject to the necessary limitations of the position of this country, the production facilities of the United States are available in their entirety to the Allies.

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 27th, 1940

Mr. President:

Mr. Casey has been instructed by the Prime Minister of Australia to pass to you the enclosed message at the request of and on behalf of the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

In Mr. Casey's absence in Wisconsin I convey to you the message herewith.

Keith Officer

[5-26-40]

MR. PRESIDENT:

In view of the very critical situation that has developed on the Western front, I have felt I might be justified in addressing you, Mr. President, directly and personally. The people of New Zealand look upon the United States of America as one of the great and powerful nations not engaged in the present struggle which is still a bulwark of freedom, justice and democracy, all of which are today in such deadly peril.

It is far from my thoughts to endeavour to persuade you or the American people to a cause which is not entirely in consonance with American interests and American policy, but we feel you as well as ourselves are vitally concerned that democracy shall not perish from the earth and we should like you to know how greatly at this juncture we should welcome any support which the United States might think it possible to extend to help the British Commonwealth and its Allies in the desperate fight we are waging.

P. FRASER.

File personal confidential Australia 4

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

August 21, 1940.

My dear Mr. President:

The Australian Minister gave me this afternoon a copy of a telegram dated August 19 which he has received from Mr. Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner in London. I am enclosing a copy herewith for your information.

The facts as set forth by Mr. Bruce would seem to show that the situation is more encouraging than we had even hoped. I am inclined to take these figures as accurate because, as you know, Mr. Bruce has been excessively pessimistic from the beginning of the war with regard to the British position.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure.

The President,

The White House.

[2-19-40]

Copy

After ten days of intensive air melée, the German losses are far greater and the British far less than anyone anticipated. For the period August 8th to August 18th the German losses are 639 planes certain and 251 more probable. Whilst serious German losses might have been worthwhile, if they had

(1) Inflicted equivalent losses or

(2) Caused crippling dislocation and damage or

(3) Undermined British morale

the position actually is

(1) That the British fighter losses amounted only to 137, with a high proportion of pilots saved (in addition, 36 bombers were lost). The destruction of planes on the ground was immaterial apart from one loss of 47 some of which were trainers.

(2) A senior air officer summed up the position as follows: that "the defence was not embarrassed, only a little inconvenienced."

(3) With regard to (3) above, morale and determination have been strengthened.

At a conservative estimate the Germans have lost 2,000 trained air personnel. In short, the position is far more satisfactory than the most optimistic anticipated.

Australia 4

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

November 12, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Casey handed me the attached message for you this morning, to which suitable acknowledgment will be made here.

File Personal

CH

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

November 9th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I have been instructed by the Prime Minister to convey to you the enclosed message.

R. G. Menzies

Yours faithfully,

R G Casey

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I offer you my warmest personal congratulations on the signal honour conferred upon you by your people. It is a striking recognition of your great services and outstanding courage.

9th November, 1940.

May 3, 1941.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE ROBERT GORDON MENZIES

Mr. Menzies was born at Jeparit, Victoria, a small village in the heart of the wheat-growing district of Australia. After graduation from the University of Melbourne, he was very successful at the bar and became King's Counsel at the age of thirty-four. After five years, he entered federal politics as Attorney General. In 1939, on the death of Mr. Lyons, he became Prime Minister. His Prime Ministership has been turbulent politically and at present his Government (coalition between the United Australia Party and the County Party) has a majority of one, although the Labor Party, which comprises the opposition, has been cooperating with the Government through the Advisory War Council which has members of all parties.

Mr. Menzies left Australia in January 1941 for a visit to the units of the Australian forces in the Middle East and for England. He also visited Mr. de Valera in Dublin a few weeks ago.

The Prime Minister is still young, being only 46 years of age. Although generally described as a conservative, he is very liberal in his political outlook. He is not popular with the general public in Australia, but his Prime Ministership is accepted on account of his outstanding ability and intellectual equipment.

He visited the United States in 1935, when he was received by the President, and visited England in that

year

year and again in 1936 and 1938. He is married and has three children. His father-in-law, Senator Leckie, is a member of his administration.

Mr. Menzies once remarked to our Minister, Mr. Gauss, that Mr. Gauss "would not find the average Australian naturally friendly to the United States but friendly because he wants or expects something" from the United States. Mr. Gauss believes that this is a substantially accurate statement and that, furthermore, Mr. Menzies would regard himself as an "average Australian" in this respect, who expects ultimate and perhaps early American participation in the war and prompt and positive action if hostilities should extend to the Pacific.

Eu:Ackerson:RIC
Stewart:LG

PSF Australia

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

May 8, 1941

VISIT OF UNITED STATES NAVAL DETACHMENT TO AUSTRALIA
MARCH 20 TO MARCH 28, 1941

On March 20 to March 28, 1941 a United States Naval Detachment from the Pacific Fleet visited the Australian ports of Sydney and Brisbane. The reception accorded the personnel of this Detachment was a very warm one indeed. The American Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, Mr. Minter, has reported his impressions of the visit to Rear Admiral John Henry Newton, USN as follows:

"(a) The demonstration made in the streets of Sydney at the time of the parade of your ratings down Martin Place and along George Street up to the Town Hall was probably not any more spectacular or spontaneous than many which you have seen in the past. It was, indeed, a stupendous effort, but it is made all the more striking by the fact that the Australian, by his very nature, is easy-going and undemonstrative. It has been often said to me since that day that the demonstration was far greater than that accorded the Australian cruiser Sydney upon its recent return from exploits in the Mediterranean. Many Australians have said to me that they were definitely surprised that their own countrymen could get so enthusiastic as to throw confetti and to rush police cordons or as to

scream

scream and wave flags as they did. Part of this display of emotion is seen in the rush for the purchase of American flags that took place on Wednesday when the news first became known. Several manufacturers had people working all night to produce additional thousands of flags which were sold as fast as they could be turned out.

"(b) The foregoing plus the openly-expressed statements by speakers and the press are a clear indication of what your visit signifies to the Australian. I am not inventing, since they said it themselves, when I say that you were looked upon as their saviours. They link the visit up with the President's speech of Sunday night, the signing of the Lease-or-Lend Bill, and some even go so far as to believe that Washington timed this visit to coincide with the arrival in Australia of the Japanese Minister. Even though it might be pure coincidence, I would say that if such a thing had been planned it could not have been better timed, both in respect of effect upon the Japanese and effect upon the Australians and upon other peoples of the world. While Sydney was bustling to prepare for your arrival the next morning, the Commonwealth Government was holding at Canberra, on March 19, from 5:30 to 6:30, its official reception to the Japanese Minister. The Japanese Minister was already booked to proceed to Melbourne by train that night.

"(c) To

"(c) To my mind, the most striking event of the entire visit was the almost complete cessation of all Commonwealth Government functioning from 5 o'clock on the 19th: to wit; the adjournment of Parliament for the special purpose of being in Sydney to share in the welcome to the detachment. At 3:00 o'clock on Wednesday the Acting Prime Minister made a stirring speech in appreciation of the action of the United States in the passage of the Lease-or-Lend Bill, in which he also extolled the President of the United States. He was followed by the Leader of the Opposition, who agreed no less wholeheartedly. A short time later in that House the Acting Prime Minister moved that the House adjourn from 5:00 p.m. that day until the next week, a question which was resolved unanimously in the affirmative. You yourself saw and heard the enthusiasm of these Ministers when you came into contact with them at Sydney. I think their action was undoubtedly unprecedented in Australian history."

Eu:Stewart:LG

Australia Folder
1-41

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS**

MEMORANDUM

May 8, 1941

The current visit of Prime Minister Menzies of Australia to the United States provides an opportunity for full discussion of Australian-American relations. In these discussions important world problems of common interest and common concern to the two countries will naturally bulk very large. There are, however, certain important problems of long standing in United States-Australian relations which remain unsolved despite the present generally friendly relations between the two countries.

These questions, outlined in the attached memorandum, include the following:

(1) Permission to extend air communications to Australia.

(2) Facilities for direct radiotelegraph communications between the two countries.

(3) Certain problems in trade relations. Over a period of years both Australia and the United States have maintained excessive tariffs on the principal export products of the other country. It would be difficult to say which country has been more at fault in this regard. The present would seem to be an opportune time to attempt to alleviate this basically unsatisfactory situation.

It is believed that the President, the Secretary, and the Under Secretary should use every opportunity during Mr. Menzies' visit to bring these matters forcefully to his attention.

Em:Stewart:LG:mjh

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

May 8, 1941

Since the outbreak of war in 1939 Australia has made an increasingly intensified effort to emphasize its friendship with the United States and the community of interests of the two countries. Diplomatic representatives were exchanged between the United States and Australia in the spring of 1940 and the Australian Minister, Mr. Casey, has lost no opportunity to speak before various American groups and to affirm the very close and friendly relations existing between our two countries. The Australian Government has invited American newspapermen and representative persons from other groups in this country to Australia and has in turn sent newspapermen, educators, and speechmakers to the United States. The Australian Government has also established a Bureau of Information in New York to transmit to Australia press and radio information from this country and to provide the press and radio of the United States with fuller information on Australia and the Empire war effort. (In the early stages of the inception of the Bureau the Australian Government seems to have contemplated using the Bureau as a great propaganda organ. This matter has, however, been discussed fully with the Australian Legation and it is believed that these questionable features were eliminated before the Bureau was actually established.

On

On March 20 to March 28, 1941 a United States Naval Detachment from the Pacific Fleet visited the Australian ports of Sydney and Brisbane. The reception accorded the personnel of this Detachment was a very warm one indeed. Our Chargé d'Affaires at Canberra reports that they were greeted as if they were Australians returning home from a great victory. He states that he saw street demonstrations which he did not believe possible in Australia. The demonstration, it is said, was many times more frenzied than that given to the cruiser Sydney upon its return from successes in the Mediterranean. The most striking event of the entire visit was the adjournment of Parliament and the trek of the entire Government to Sydney. In the Australian mind this visit is linked with the passage of the Lend-Lease Act and with the President's speech of March 15.

Despite the efforts of the Australian Government to affirm and to publicize the cordial relations with the United States, it has shown little disposition to deal favorably with certain outstanding questions of interest to this Government. Some of these problems are outlined below:

(1) Permission to Extend Air Communications to Australia:

It is obviously desirable and helpful in cultivating closer ties between the United States and Australia, quite aside from mutual defense needs, to improve communication

facilities

facilities between the two countries. Pan American Airways has been endeavoring for some time to secure landing rights in Australia. The Australian Government, however, has hitherto refused such landing rights and is apparently attempting to make the grant of landing facilities conditional upon the United States' giving landing rights to British planes in Hawaii. Both the War and Navy Departments have in the past been opposed to permitting any foreign air transport service to enter Hawaii, the only available landing place at Honolulu being at Pearl Harbor, the United States Naval Station. When the matter was last under discussion shortly before the outbreak of war, the War and Navy Departments were becoming somewhat less opposed to granting Britain landing rights in Hawaii. Quite apart from possible objections on military grounds, however, it is clear that landing rights in Hawaii would be a very valuable concession to Great Britain since this would be the last link in Britain's round the world air service. It would seem to be a very poor bargain from our point of view to give landing rights in Hawaii in return for landing rights in Australia alone and we should no doubt hold this for some more important concessions. The essential point is, however, that Australia can scarcely hope to establish its independent position vis-à-vis the United States and

at

at the same time expect us to accept her playing the Empire game in such a manner. It would seem decidedly in the interest of Australia herself and Australia's war effort to have an air service between the United States and Australia.

(2) Facilities for Direct Radiotelegraph Communication between the United States and Australia.

A direct radio telephone service between the United States and Australia was inaugurated on December 20, 1938. There is, however, no direct telegraph service between the two countries. Telegrams either go by radio via Canada or by cable via Canada or Great Britain. The desirability of a direct telegraph service is manifest. Since rehandlings are necessary there is obviously less danger of error in transmission of messages. It would also foster speed of service since manual relays and delays in retransmission are eliminated. The average delay on telegrams transmitted by radio originating in Australia and destined to the United States is five and one half hours. The establishment of a direct radiotelegraph service would not only reduce the time of transmission of messages between the two countries but, what is more important, it would cut the rates in half. At the present time the rates from New York to Australia are exactly double those from Montreal (and even Vancouver).

The

The above considerations make the establishment of a direct radiotelegraph circuit between the United States and Australia desirable from a purely commercial point of view. In the present emergency, however, a direct service becomes doubly important, not only for the United States and Australia but for the whole British Empire. Should enemy operations disrupt communications between Great Britain and Australia, the volume of traffic now passing directly between them would then have to flow through Canada. This would result in a serious overloading of the Canadian and Australian radiotelegraph and cable facilities, and messages between the United States and Australia would be subjected to even greater delay. Should the United States become involved in war, particularly in the Far East, instantaneous telegraph communication with Australia would be of the utmost importance.

It has been almost three years now since the Department first took up with Australia the desire of RCA to establish a direct radiotelegraph service between the United States and Australia. RCA has had a traffic agreement with Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd. since October 16, 1931 for the establishment of a direct radiotelegraph circuit, and the Federal Communications Commission has issued a license to RCA to establish this service. It

is

is understood that the Australian company is anxious to inaugurate this service but has not been able to secure the necessary license from its Government. This is due in part to a "family row" between the Australian Post Office Department and the Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd. The Post Office Department apparently does not desire to have A.W.A. engage in the communications business. There are further complications, perhaps of a more difficult nature, namely Imperial communications agreements and obligations of the A.W.A. to Imperial Cables and Wirelesses. Indeed it is believed that the principal objection to the establishment of the above service comes from London. The importance of this matter was urged upon Prime Minister Menzies personally by Mr. Gauss before Mr. Menzies left for London and it is understood that Mr. Menzies would pursue the matter in London. It is believed that Mr. Menzies is favorably disposed and desires to find some solution to the problem.

The Department has recently discussed the problem with the British Embassy and emphasized the importance which we attach to this matter and the urgency with which we believe it should be dealt.

(3) Trade Relations

(a) Summary

Prewar relations were very unsatisfactory as a result of our Tariff Act of 1930, the Ottawa agreements,

and

and other hindrances. There was virtually a "trade war" from May 1936 to December 1937 (see (b) below). The Australians have been considerably more reasonable since the outbreak of war (see (c) below). This temporary improvement cannot be expected to endure if something is not done to reduce the trade barriers which both countries have erected against imports from the other country (see (d) below). The United States still does not receive most-favored-nation tariff treatment. The basic situation, if not improved, may some day have very serious political as well as economic results, and the present seems to be an unusually favorable time for attempting to ease the underlying cause of the trouble.

(b) Survey of Relations in Recent Years

During recent years, the relations have been highly unsatisfactory, at times even acrimonious. A climax was reached early in 1936 with Australia's adoption of a "Trade Diversion" policy, which, in effect, prohibited importation of certain products from the United States, while permitting such importations from all other countries. The United States replied to this discrimination by "blacklisting" Australia, i.e., withdrawing most-favored-nation treatment. In December 1937, Australia withdrew its

"Trade

"Trade Diversion" policy and Australia was immediately "de-blacklisted."

The United States does not now receive complete most-favored-foreign-nation treatment in Australia; certain products may be imported from most other foreign countries at a lower rate of duty than from the United States. However, these products are relatively insignificant from the American point of view.

(c) Wartime Trade Relations

While the import-licensing system has been used to restrict severely imports from all non-British countries, the strain on the "Sterling Area's" foreign-exchange resources has probably well justified the general scope of this policy. Although there has been some indication that certain of the specific measures taken were not fully explained by the general situation, complaints of this kind from American firms have fallen off considerably in recent months.

The Australian Government has been very cooperative in connection with various war-time wool problems such as the establishment of a strategic reserve of wool in the United States. While the Australian position has doubtless been based on self-interest, it has been unusually enlightened self-interest and definitely helpful.

(d)

(d) Fundamental Factors in Relations

The basis of the proverbially unsatisfactory relations is that for many years both countries have followed a policy of excluding each other's products by unreasonably high tariffs. We took the lead in this with our tariff acts of 1922 and 1930 under which excessive duties were imposed on Australia's principal exports to the United States, notably wool, the exports of which form in large part the basis of Australian prosperity. Australia has had equally high duties on American products such as automobiles and lumber and has also been a leader in employing "Empire Tariff Preferences" (particularly the Ottawa agreements) which have curtailed imports from the United States.

With any threat of trouble in the Pacific area, the Australian tendency to create difficulties for American trade is consistently--though temporarily--abated. Trade relations will continue to be fundamentally unsatisfactory--at best--as long as both countries continue to maintain almost impassable barriers against the other country's exports.

The current general situation offers an unusual, probably unique, opportunity for attempting to solve, by moderate liberality, a deep-rooted conflict which puts a severe strain on United States-Australian relations in general -- political as well as economic.

Eu:Stewart:LG

Australia Folder 1-41

file personal

December 11, 1941

Dear Mr. Minister:

Please send my best wishes to the Government and people of Australia. We did our utmost to keep the peace in the Pacific but our enemies had decided on aggression beforehand. This is now a world war in the true sense. We are in it with you - and you will not find us wanting. I need not tell Australians to keep a stout heart. I know you will. We will win.

Very sincerely yours,

The Right Honorable
Richard G. Casey, D. S. O., M. C.,
Envoy Extraordinary and
Minister Plenipotentiary,
3117 Woodland Drive,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Minister

"Please send my best wishes to the Government and people of Australia. We did our utmost to keep the peace in the Pacific but our enemies had decided on aggression beforehand. This is now a world war in the true sense. We are in it with you - and you will not find us wanting. I need not tell Australians to keep a stout heart - as I know you will. We will win. [I have no doubt of that although we may well have hard times before we achieve victory.]

--------oooOoo-------

The Right Honorable
Richard G. Casey, D.S.O. M.C.,
Envoy Extraordinary and
Minister Plenipotentiary
3117 Woodland Drive
Washington DC

file personal.

President made notation as follows:
CH
OK FDR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

December 17, 1941

War File
Australian Folder
1-41

My dear Mr. President:

I enclose a communication dated December 13, 1941 from the Australian Minister transmitting a personal message to you from the Prime Minister of Australia, together with a memorandum by the Australian Chiefs of Staff on the defense of Rabaul and New Caledonia. The Prime Minister requests that you and the service authorities consider what assistance our forces may be able to render in the defense of these areas.

I enclose a draft reply which I propose to send if it meets with your approval.

In order to expedite this matter a copy of the enclosed communication has been transmitted to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy.

Faithfully yours,

Cordell Hull

Enclosures:
1. From Australian Minister, December 13, 1941, with enclosures.
2. To Australian Minister.

The President,

The White House.

My dear Mr. Minister:

I have received your communication dated December 13, 1941 enclosing a personal message from the Prime Minister of Australia to the President, together with a memorandum by the Australian Chiefs of Staff on the defense of Rabaul and New Caledonia.

This message has been forwarded to the President who now requests that the following reply be transmitted to Prime Minister Curtin:

"I want to thank you most deeply for your message of courage and inspiration and of firm resolution to stand fast against the enemy.

"The

The Right Honorable
Richard G. Casey, D.S.O., M.C.,
Minister of Australia.

"The question of the defense of Rabaul and New Caledonia is now being studied by our War and Navy Departments to determine in what way we may be of assistance. In the meantime I am sure that your forces are taking all possible steps to protect these areas against enemy attack."

Sincerely yours,

The President has
the Prime Minister's
letter to the Secy. He
may or may not keep it
for the file — ks

file australia 1-41

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

December 24, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS GRACE TULLY

FROM BRECKINRIDGE LONG

Direct radio telegraphic communication will be instituted tomorrow afternoon, December 25, between the United States and Australia.

Under the circumstances existing in the Pacific it is deemed that the President may care to send a telegram directly to the Prime Minister of Australia.

A draft of a proposed telegram to be sent by the President to the Prime Minister is attached.

Considering the presence in Washington of Mr. Churchill, it has been suggested to the British Ambassador that he may care to make some suggestion to the President that Mr. Churchill also exchange a message with the Prime Minister of Australia.

If you will return this with an indication of the President's desires, his wishes will be carried out.

BL

December 25, 1941.

The Honorable

John Curtin, M.P.,

Prime Minister of Australia,

Canberra.

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The opening of a direct radiotelegraph circuit between Australia and the United States normally would be an event of great interest to our respective peoples. Today, however, the event which we celebrate assumes proportions that extend far beyong its peacetime significance. The deep-rooted and sturdy friendship which has existed between us has survived the years because it has been nurtured in the principles of democracy. In my opinion this new link will serve not only to facilitate the more rapid exchange of communications between the United States and Australia but to serve notice on the Axis powers that the free peoples of the world are leaving nothing undone effectively to guarantee

through spiritual and physical unification and ultimate victory which lies ahead of us.

I extend my greetings to you personally and to you as the representative of the people of Australia.

Mr. Churchill, who is staying with me, joins in these greetings and we give you our assurance that we consider the safety of your great Commonwealth as a definite essential in every plan of defense and in every plan of offensive action against our common foes.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

A-L:BL:WA

PSF: Australia Folder 1-41

file personal

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 1, 1942.

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to your memorandum of December 30, 1941 I believe that it would be advisable for you to reply to the Prime Minister of Australia through Mr. Casey, and I am accordingly enclosing a draft reply for your signature if you approve.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

Original communication
of December 23 returned.

Draft reply.

The President,

The White House.

My dear Mr. Minister:

I should be grateful if you would transmit to Mr. Curtin the following reply to his message given in your note of December 23, 1941:

"Mr. Churchill and I have considered your message with the urgency which the situation clearly demands. I need not tell you the importance which we attach to holding every possible strongpoint in the Western Pacific. To this end we and our military, naval and air advisers have given the most urgent consideration to the matter of despatching reinforcements at the earliest possible moment. The necessary steps are already under way for the flight to Australia of effective air assistance, which I hope will arrive in the very near future.

We are deeply conscious of the magnificent contribution which Australia has made and is making to the common effort and of the need to replace the strength which she has despatched to other theaters".

Sincerely yours,

The Right Honorable Richard G. Casey, D.S.O., M.C.,
Minister of Australia,
3117 Woodland Drive,
Washington.

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 23rd, 1941.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have received the following communication by telegram from Mr. John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, with the instruction to convey it to you at the earliest moment.

I am also to convey the same message to Mr. Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain.

"

1. At this time of great crisis, I desire to address you both while you are conferring for the purpose of advancing our common cause.

2. I have already addressed a communication to Mr.Churchill on the question of Russia which I regard as of great importance in relation to the war with Japan, and which I hope will receive the consideration of you both during the conference.

3. I refer now to a matter of more pressing importance.

4. From all reports it is very evident that in North Malaya the Japanese have assumed control of air and sea. The small British Army there includes one Australian division, and we have sent three air squadrons to Malaya and two to the Netherlands East Indies. The Army must be provided with air support, otherwise there will be a repetition of Greece and Crete, and Singapore will be grievously threatened.

5. The fall of Singapore would mean the isolation of the Philippines, the fall of the Netherlands East Indies and an attempt to smother all other bases. This would also sever our communications between the Indian and Pacific Oceans in this region.

6. The set-back would be as serious to the United States interests as to our own.

7. Reinforcements earmarked by the United Kingdom for despatch to Malaya seem to us to be utterly inadequate, especially in relation to aircraft, and more particularly fighting aircraft. Unchallenged at this time, small reinforcements are of little avail. In truth the amount of resistance to the Japanese in Malaya will depend directly on the amount of resistance provided by the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States.

8. Our men have fought and will fight valiantly. But they must be adequately supported. We have three divisions in the Middle East. Our airmen are fighting in Britain, Middle East and training in Canada. We have sent great quantities of supplies to Britain, to the Middle East and to India. Our resources here are very limited indeed.

9. It is in your power to meet the situation. Should the Government of the United States desire, we would gladly accept an American Commander in the Pacific area. The President has said that Australia will be a base of increasing importance, but in order that it shall remain a base, Singapore must be reinforced.

10. In spite of our great difficulties, we are sending further reinforcements to Malaya.

11. I would be glad if this matter could be regarded as of the greatest urgency.

JOHN CURTIN

PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF AUSTRALIA.

RG Casey

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 30, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE:

Do you think this requires an answer direct to the Prime Minister of Australia? If so, will you be good enough to prepare it for my signature?

F.D.R.

Australia

Bmf

WRITTEN BY THE PRESIDENT IN LONGHAND

FEBRUARY 20, 1942

8:30 P.M.

Dear Casey:

Would you be good enough to send this in code from me to P.M. Curtin? Thanks.

F.D.R.

DECLASSIFIED
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.
By W. J. Stewart Date FEB 4 1972

Telegram

~~MOST SECRET~~

FEBRUARY 20, 1942

PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~ FOR PRIME MINISTER CURTIN FROM THE PRESIDENT

I FULLY APPRECIATE HOW GRAVE ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN REACHING A DECISION IN THE PRESENT SERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES AS TO THE DISPOSITION OF THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION RETURNING FROM THE MIDDLE EAST.

I ASSUME YOU KNOW NOW OF OUR DETERMINATION TO SEND, IN ADDITION TO ALL TROOPS AND FORCES NOW EN ROUTE, ANOTHER FORCE OF OVER 27,000 MEN TO AUSTRALIA. THIS FORCE WILL BE FULLY EQUIPPED IN EVERY RESPECT.

WE MUST FIGHT TO THE LIMIT FOR OUR TWO FLANKS - ONE BASED ON AUSTRALIA AND THE OTHER ON BURMA, INDIA AND CHINA. BECAUSE OF OUR GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION WE AMERICANS CAN BETTER HANDLE THE REINFORCEMENT OF AUSTRALIA AND THE RIGHT FLANK.

I SAY THIS TO YOU SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT WE ARE GOING TO REINFORCE YOUR POSITION WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED. MOREOVER, THE OPERATIONS WHICH THE UNITED STATES NAVY HAVE BEGUN AND HAVE IN VIEW WILL IN A MEASURE CONSTITUTE A PROTECTION TO THE COASTSOF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

ON THE OTHER HAND THE LEFT FLANK SIMPLY MUST BE HELD. IF BURMA GOES IT SEEMS TO ME OUR WHOLE POSITION, INCLUDING THAT OF AUSTRALIA, WILL BE IN EXTREME PERIL. YOUR AUSTRALIAN DIVISION IS THE ONLY FORCE THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT. IT COULD GET INTO THE FIGHT AT ONCE AND WOULD I BELIEVE, HAVE

THE STRENGTH TO SAVE WHAT NOW SEEMS TO BE A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION.

WHILE I REALIZE THE JAPS ARE MOVING RAPIDLY I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT, IN VIEW OF YOUR GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND THE FORCES ON THEIR WAY TO YOU OR OPERATING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, YOUR VITAL CENTERS ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.

WHILE I REALIZE THAT YOUR MEN HAVE BEEN FIGHTING ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND ARE STILL, AND WHILE I KNOW FULL WELL OF THE GREAT SACRIFICES WHICH AUSTRALIA HAS MADE, I NEVERTHELESS WANT TO ASK YOU IN THE INTERESTS OF OUR WHOLE WAR EFFORT IN THE FAR EAST IF YOU WILL RECONSIDER YOUR DECISION AND ORDER THE DIVISION NOW EN ROUTE TO AUSTRALIA TO MOVE WITH ALL SPEED TO SUPPORT THE BRITISH FORCES FIGHTING IN BURMA.

YOU MAY BE SURE WE WILL FIGHT BY YOUR SIDE WITH ALL OUR FORCE UNTIL VICTORY.

ROOSEVELT

Australia

DECLASSIFIED
By Authority of Ltr, Australian Archives, dtd 29 May 1974
By [illegible] Date JUN 14 1974

file

40

[redacted]

Prime Minister, Canberra

Mr. Casey

February 21st, 1942

* * *

Your telegram 330. For President from Prime Minister. Begins.

Dear Mr. President,

It is heartening to us to have your message. We have known always in any crisis of this nature that the United States would stand with us in way your message so eloquently indicates.

2. On our part and we hope without presumption we too have pledged ourselves to the common cause and as you know our forces have fought in many distant theatres with a gallantry the world has been good enough to admire.

3. We are now, with a small population in only white man's territory south of the equator, beset grievously. Because we have added to our contribution in manpower so much of our resources and materials we now lack adequacy for forces of our homeland on our own soil.

4. You have indicated an appreciation of the gravity of our responsibilities in reaching a decision on matter referred to in your message. It has affected us profoundly. As we see the whole problem, our vital centres are in immediate danger. This is the reason and the only reason for the reply we have sent to Mr. Churchill which we now quote in full for your information. (see my immediately following telegram).

PRH:RC

DECLASSIFIED
By Authority of Hr. Australian Archives, dtd 23 May 1974
By [illegible] Date JUN 14 1974

41

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, CANBERRA

MR. CASEY

February 21st, 1942 15.40 hrs.

do. 17.55 "

MOST SECRET

My immediately preceding telegram.

For PRIME MINISTER from PRIME MINISTER.

Reference your telegrams No.233 and 235.

I have received your rather strongly worded request at this late stage though our wishes in regard to disposition of A.I.F. in Pacific theatre have long been known to you and carried even further by your statement in House of Commons. Furthermore Page was furnished with lengthy statement on our viewpoint on 15th February (repeated to Dominions Office No.123) 17th February (repeated to Dominions Office in No.127) and 19th February (two cables).

2. The proposal for additional military assistance for Burma comes from the Supreme Commander of A.B.D.A.area. Malaya, Singapore and Timor have been lost and whole of Netherlands East Indies will apparently be occupied shortly by Japan. The enemy with superiority sea and air has commenced raiding our territory on the North West and in North East from Rabaul. The Government made maximum contribution of which it was capable in reinforcement of A.B.D.A.area. It originally sent a division less a brigade to Malaya with certain ancillary troops. A machine gun battalion and substantial reinforcements were later despatched. It also despatched forces to Amboina, Java and Dutch and Portuguese Timor. Six squadrons of air force were also

PRH:RBC:WK:IM:KF

*mutilated groups

sent (to Singapore** ) together with two cruisers from R.A.N.

3. It was suggested by you that two Australian divisions be transferred to Pacific theatre and this suggestion was later publicly expanded by you with statement that no obstacle would be placed in the way of A.I.F.returning to defend their homeland. We agreed to two divisions being located in Sumatra and Java and it was pointed out to Page in cable on February 15th that should fortune still favour the Japanese this disposition would give a line of withdrawl to Australia for our forces.

4. With situation having deteriorated to such an extent in theatre of A.B.D.A.area with which we are closely associated and Japanese also making a southward advance in the Anzac area, the Government, in light of advice of its Chiefs of Staff as to the forces necessary to repel an attack on Australia find it most difficult to understand th at it should be called upon to make a further contribution of forces to be located in the most distant part of the A.B.D.A.area. Notwithstanding your statement that you do not agree with the request to send the other two divisions of the A.I.F. Corps to Burma, our advisers are concerned with Wavell's request for the corps and Dill's statement that the destination of the Sixth and Ninth Australian Divisions should be left open as more troops might be badly needed in Burma. Once one Division became engaged it could not be left unsupported and inferences are that the whole corps might become committed to this region or there might be a recurrence of the experiences of Greek and Malayan campaigns. Finally in view of superior Japanese sea power and air power it would appear to be a matter of some doubt as to whether this division can be landed in Burma and a matter for greater doubt whether it can be brought out as promised. With the fall of Singapore, Penang and Martaban, the Bay of Bengal is vitally vulnerable to what must be considered the superior sea and air power of Japan in that area. The movement of our forces to this theatre, therefore, is not considered a reasonable hazard of war, having regard to what has gone before and its adverse results would have gravest consequences on morale of Australian people. The Government, therefore, must adhere to its decision.

5. In regard to your statement 18 division was diverted from Burma to Singapore in message JOHCU 21, it is pointed out that the date of the latter was Jan.23rd, whereas in WINCH 8, Jan.14th, you informed me that one brigade of this division was due on Jan.13th and remainder on Jan.27th.

6. We feel therefore in view of foregoing and services the A.I.F.have rendered in Middle East that we have every right to expect them to be returned as soon as possible with adequate escorts to ensure their safe arrival.

7. We assure you, and desire you to so inform the President, who knows fully what we have done to help the common cause, that if it were possible to divert our troops to Burma and India without imperilling our security in the judgment of our advisers we should be pleased to agree to the diversion.

file BOP

Australia

TELEGRAM FROM DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ADDRESSED TO MR CASEY.

Despatched February 22, 1942 (05.05 hours)

Received February 21 (11.03 hours)

MOST IMMEDIATE

For Judge Frankfurter to be decyphered by McMillan and to be handed to Judge Frankfurter by him alone. Repeated to Eggleston Number 43.

Telegram Number 222. PART ONE.

I. I take leave to address you on a matter of grave importance to our common cause. Some three days ago we affirmed the decision that the A.I.F. should return to defend their homeland here. We had not suggested its return from the Middle East but we agreed to the proposal of Churchill that for the purpose of reinforcing Singapore and thereafter reinforcing the Netherlands East Indies two of our three divisions should come back. The object of the move was to hold up the southern thrust of Japan.

2. We were glad that the divisions were to go to the Netherlands East Indies, not merely because those Indies would form a screen for the defence of Australia as a base but because they would consolidate goodwill between the N.E.I. and Australia.

3. The decision was taken by Churchill and Wavell not to reinforce the N.E.I. further; thereupon our expert military advisers thought the divisons should at once come to the closest area from which the southern thrust of Japan might be met i.e., Australia.

4. In all technical strategical appreciations the functions of Australia as a base area to attack Japan has been underlined. Wavell himself has repeatedly said it is vital to me (?) and others to defend Australia.

5. The position of our home defences is most unsatisfactory largely owing to our not having the support of land, sea and air forces (sent?) to Britain, the Middle East, Greece, Crete and elsewhere. We have struggled to eke out these defences during our four months of office but they still fall far short of what is required. General Lavarack, who is General Officer Commanding the A.I. F. and close to Wavell, favoured a diverted one division to Burma but only on condition that our Chief of the General Staff was satisfied with the condition of our home defences. But our C.G.S. expressed himself as very dissatisfied --- a conclusion which really understated the gravity of the position here. The Air Force is very small owing to the policy of our predecessors who concentrated upon draining 10,000 air personnel for service in the United Kingdom and who

tended to regard Australian home defence as of subsidiary importance.

6. In these circumstances it became utterly impossible for us to agree to the suggested diversion to Burma. Page in London had instructions as to our view but failed to carry them out. As a result the Pacific War Council in London recommended the diversion of one division to Burma while the second was to come to Australia. But Wavell's technical appreciation did not favour this splitting up of our corps and in his last recommendation he suggested both divisions should go to Burma -- or India.

7. A curious feature of the affair has been the concentrated barrage which has descended upon this Government from its own servants such as Page (acting outside his instructions). Subsequently Hopkins and the President also sent messages based upon their belief that we were not to be seriously threatened by Japan --- a belief we cannot share.

8. But it is one thing to deal with arguments from other Governments; it is another thing to be embarrassed by those who are agents of the Australian Government. We are in our present plight because of what we have done abroad and the people of this country should make short shrift of those who are obstructing the return of the flower of our army for the purpose of defending their homeland.

9. Today we heard the proposal that an American division should come to Australia. Of course we should welcome it and if the United States of America's decision were altered because of our (decision?) the effect might be most important. I do not wish to refer to the controversy of Pacific versus Atlantic for everybody now must see we were right in asserting that a failure to take Japan seriously might lead to world successes of the Axis.

PART TWO

Sending American Division to Northern Ireland has had a bad effect on this country because of Beaverbrook's comment that this was the first and most important job which Churchill performed in America. We are glad that Cripps is in office and hope that he will check Churchill whose attitude over this particular matter has been turbulent and peremptory.

10. I am aware that although our decision is on the highest plane of secrecy it may by treachery be allowed to leak out in London and Washington. It is vital to allied solidarity that we should have your sympathy and understanding.

11. I now draw your attention to an article four days ago by J. Harsch in

the "Christian Science Monitor". This is most defeatist and fifth columnist in character and we have traced its origin in Australia to a fascist, anti-Semitic group. It was deliberately intended to embroil Australia and the N.E.I. In fact this Government has fulfilled every requisition made in relation to the N.E.I. and our losses in defending the N.E.I. have been very heavy both on land and in the air. I do not know whether Casey or Bailey (his publicity man) are counteracting this propaganda. Journalists like Harsch, Browne, Knickerbocker seem ready to injure this country whenever possible, and two of them are suspected by the British Security Service.

12. Further, the A.I.F. decision may also be used by fifth columnists to cause difficulties between China and ourselves. Owing largely to Sir Frederick Eggleston's brilliant work at Chungking we are on terms of the greatest friendship with the Chinese Government. China has always supported our emphasis upon the importance of the Pacific war. I hope you will try and explain to Hopkins that the President's goodwill should not be used by Churchill as if it were his own personal property already. Casey has been asked to explain to Hopkins but his advocacy does not appear to have been at all useful (?).

13. The whole incident of the suggested diversion of the A.I.F. to Burma has been alarming. I feel certain Wavell himself only recommended the diversion under pressure from Churchill; Wavell had always insisted upon the vital importance of Australia as a base. Finally the party political (?) possibilities occur to a few anti-Labour opportunists here and in London most of whom are distrusted by the Australian people. The President and Mrs. Roosevelt will know that a New Deal Government is obstructed by its opponents in war as well as in peace.

14. Harsch's poisonous stuff seems already to have been repeated in other New York papers.

15. Above all we are anxious about the President's attitude. Already promises of deliveries of aircraft here have been greatly whittled down behind his back and it is feared that the pressure of those against aid to the Pacific is still too strong. I only wish I could speak to you in person for we are very worried especially over the side-tracking of our plan for direct contact with the United States in plans for the prosecution of the war. Churchill's elaborate machinery has prevented us from meeting the United States

as a partner on any Council or Committee whatever. We feel that the President cannot understand how much difficulties have thereby increased. We simply cannot have our aims regarding reinforcements determined by Churchill who is so unsympathetic and hostile to the Labour movement. I have always admired Churchill's stand against Hitler from 1933 to 1939. But it is essential that we should have the backing of yourself and others in Washington.

16. Please excuse this frank message. I am sure that you understand that it originates in deep admiration and valued friendship.

17. At present we are informed of decisions and have little or no effective voice in their making. Yet we are an allied country whose contribution and losses proportionately are far greater than any other Dominion or even the United Kingdom. The President should realise that the only basis of democratic control is participation by all in general plan. As it is main advisers lead us from one disaster to another. Greece, Crete, Malaya, Singapore were typical examples of the Munich mind, a combination of conservatism, incompetence and deception, valour. It is not only Australia I am thinking of but your country and Britain which I love * . I left the Bench here to help in the winning of the war. I have no other object in life. I am * ed that we must rapidly improve the machinery of allied co-operation or disaster will occur.

EVATT.

*mutilation

~~SECRET~~

Box

CABLE

AC-4

Received at the War Department Message Center PSF: Australia
Room 3441 Munitions Bldg., Washington, D.C.

March 17, 1942

648 A.M.

PRIORITY

From: AUSTRALIA

To: AGWAR

No. 736 Seventeenth

General MacArthur and party arrived Australia today expected arrival Melbourne Sunday via rail from Alice Springs. Have read to Prime Minister and confirmed by letter authorized statement regarding arrival General MacArthur and his assumption of command United States Army Forces here and Presidents suggestion his nomination to Supreme Allied Command. Prime Minister enthusiastically concurred with suggestions and approved. Will act promptly and agrees make simultaneous announcement with Washington and with this headquarters. Danger of leakage is serious if announcement delayed. Request urgent cable GMT for simultaneous release from Washington Canberra and this headquarters Melbourne. Also any specific recommendations form of announcement. It is arranged that we will notify Prime Minister as to time and suggested form of announcement.

Brett

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
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DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)
Date- 6-14-66
Signature- Carl L Spicer

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

WAR DEPARTMENT
WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF
WAR PLANS DIVISION
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WATSON:

The Chief of Staff thought that the President would like a copy of the attached cablegram.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER,
Brigadier General,
Assistant Chief of Staff.

1 Incl.
Copy of cable from
Australia to AGWAR
(3-17-42)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)
Date 6-14-66
Signature Earl L Spicer

~~SECRET~~

for Dr Evatt W.

(1)

DECLASSIFIED
By Authority of Ltr Australian Archives, dtd 23 May 1974
By ABS Date JUN 14 1974

P.M.3

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, CANBERRA

DR. EVATT

~~MOST IMMEDIATE~~:

March 21st, 1942 00.30 hrs.

" 20th " 16.30 "

~~MOST SECRET~~:

1. The following telegram has been ~~sent to~~ received from the Prime Minister, United Kingdom. BEGINS.

In response to various suggestions and requests which I made to the President for the common conduct of the war against Japan, I have received message containing the following passage: "We concur in your estimate of the importance of the Indian and Middle Eastern areas and agree that reinforcements are required. We also agree that Australian and New Zealand Divisions now in that region should remain. The 41st Division is leaving the United States by the 18th of this month, reaching Australia about April 10th. As replacement for Australian and New Zealand Divisions allotted to the Middle East and India, the United States is prepared to despatch two additional Divisions, one to Australia and one to New Zealand. A convoy of one-half Division could leave about April 15th, and the remainder of this Division about May 15th. Another United States Division can also leave for the South-West Pacific about March 15th. It should be understood that our willingness to despatch these two Divisions over and above the 41st which is already set up to go is based on the necessity for economising in shipping and continuing security of the Middle East, India and Ceylon. It is, therefore, dependent on existence of a similar number of Australian and New Zealand Divisions in those theatres. The above movements in the

JWM:NG:WE:JG:KF

SouthWest Pacific can be accomplished provided some 25 cargo ships are withdrawn for one voyage from those engaged in the transport of Lease-Lend material to the Red Sea and to China and scheduled to sail in April and May."

2. Our fifth British Division is about to sail from the United Kingdom. The President has also promised to give me shipping to move the above additional British Divisions (40,000 men) in April and May and we are sending further British Division is our own ships during the next few months. How these Divisions will be disposed between the Middle East and India must depend on how things are going when they have rounded the Cape. We have also postponed for an indefinite period the completion of the movement of various United States Divisions into Northern Ireland and Iceland on which we had counted in order to facilitate all the above movements of troops to the East and Far East.

3. You may be sure that the presence of considerable United States forces in the Anzac Area will emphasise to the United States the importance of protecting that area by (*mutilated group) the main sea power and also of accelerating equipment of existing Australian forces for which I am pressing.

4. I hope in these circumstances you will feel able to leave the Ninth Australian Division in the Middle East where its presence is most sorely needed. We will send on brigades of Sixth Division which you sent might be stopped off for a while at Ceylon as soon as min (as received). Arrangements for this all ten points can be made.

ENDS.

II. Following is United States (*mutilated group*) Chiefs of Staff:

BEGINS:

Chiefs of Staff referred to the following considerations relating to the proposal to substitute an American Division for the Ninth Division of the Australian Imperial Force in Australia.

(1) Military (a) Substitution would not mean any diminution in the number of troops to arrive in Australia by about mid-June as it is estimated that American Division would arrive here as soon as the Ninth Division of Australian Imperial Force could be expected.

(b) Substitution would result in a large saving of shipping as it would

mean one movement only, that is a Division from the United States of America to Australia and not two as would be necessary if the Ninth Division were to be brought to Australia and another Division taken to the Middle East to replace it.

(c) Acceptance of the proposed substitution would probably expedite the return to Australia of two brigades of the Sixth Division of Australian Imperial Force which are now in Ceylon.

(3.) View consideration which is mentioned in paragraph 3 of the telegram that the presence of considerable United States forces in the Anzac Area will emphasise to the United States the importance of protecting the area by (*mutilated group*) the main sea power and also of accelerating the flow of equipment from the United States for existing Australian forces.

Taking these factors into account the Chiefs of Staff recommend that the proposals should be accepted notwithstanding that American troops would not be so highly trained as the Ninth Division with its war experience.

ENDS.

3. It is desired that you discuss this matter with the President as early as possible to ascertain the strength of his feelings on this request. You will note from the early part of his message to Churchill that he expresses agreement that Australian and New Zealand Divisions now in the Middle East should remain there. This would indicate that notwithstanding our original decision and assurances from Churchill, the latter has originated something with the President of this matter. On the other hand, Page's comments on Churchill's telegram show that Churchill attributed the origin of this request to the President.

4. The following special observations are furnished in connection with your discussions with the President.

(a) In offering two brigade groups of the Sixth Division for the purpose of temporary (*corrupt group) to garrison ? Ceylon ? we stated that we were relying on the understanding that the Ninth Division will return to Australia under proper escort as soon as possible.

(b) In Chiefs of Staff Headquarters Communication Washington in telegram of ? 1st ? it was stated minimum forces required for the defence additional to Australian are - Army 25 Divisions. Air 64, First-line

squadrons, 9 transport squadrons.

(c) In regard to army strength it was stated that the strength mentione is the minimum until such time as adequate naval and air forces are available and that 10 fully equipped Divisions would have to be supplied by our Allies.

(d) With reference to adequate naval forces, you are aware of the views of the Australian Chiefs of Staff on the concentration of an Allied force of sufficient strength to challenge Japanese fleet at any moment. This would be a general deterrent to a sea-borne operation such as a large scale invasion of Australia. In regard to ?reasonable ? naval forces in the Anza area you will have received my S.W.18 relative to the increase considered necessary.

(e) With reference to adequate air strength you are aware that we have 15 first line squadrons, that supplies of aircraft are required for expansion of the Royal Australian Air Force and for its maintenance and in the meantime an increase in American air strength this country is urgently necessary.

(f) Adequate naval and air strength do not therefore exist and we have no assurances as to the rate at which they will be provided. Only promise of increased land strength is one American Division due to arrive about April 10th and conditional promise of another Division if the Ninth Division is allowed to remain in the Middle East.

(g) President in his message to Churchill regarding the division of world war theatre into Atlantic Middle and Pacific areas said accordingly "there would be a Middle Area extending from Singapore to the Mediterranean which would be a British responsibility, it being understood, however, that Australia and New Zealand would give as much assistance to this area as their governments could manage and the Americans would allocate to it all possible munitions and merchant vessels".

We have all based our views on the return of the Australian Imperial Force on the fundamental consideration that our first responsibility is to ensure the security of Australia as the main base in the South West Pacific. We must be assured of this before we are in a position to assist elsewhere.

(h) Finally there is the important psychological aspect relating to the retention of the Ninth Division in the Middle East. As their comrades have returned to Australia, these troops cannot be retained abroad indefinitely

without the morale being affected particularly ? as the ? others returned because their homeland is threatened. There is also the aspect of maintenance in reserve division by regular flow of reinforcements overseas.

5. You should b e aware that New Zealand Government in regard to a similar request for retention of its one division in the Middle East has stated that it requires a minimum of six divisions of which it has provided itself with three. As you will have noted, it is being promised one.

CURTIN.

FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILES

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

P=F: Australia

March 25, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I telephoned to Minister Casey and advised him of your decision regarding the attached cable from the Prime Minister to Dr. Evatt, as follows:

1. That an additional American Division would be sent to Australia unconditionally.

2. That the President's original statement expressing his anxiety about the Middle East and hoping that the Australian Division would remain there stood.

3. That the decision regarding the movement of this 3rd Australian Division to Australia must be determined by Prime Minister Curtin.

HARRY L. HOPKINS

PSF: Australia

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

In view of the position taken by the Australian Government as expressed in Mr. Curtin's message, I recommend that the United States, as a matter of policy, send an additional American Division to Australia, withdrawing our previously implied condition that an equal strength of Australian troops be left in the Middle East.

Our original proposal was based on recognition of the fact that the common good should guide our actions and that the impending situation in the Middle East constitutes a critical threat to all the United Powers. By supplying United States shipping for the movement of two British Divisions from the United Kingdom to the Middle East, and by moving two United States Divisions to the Southwest Pacific in lieu of the returning thereto from the Middle East of an Australian and a New Zealand Division, immediate and strong reinforcement to that seriously threatened area would have been accomplished without weakening the position of Australia and New Zealand. The total Middle East reinforcement that could have been realized under our proposed arrangement exceeds by six Divisions (approximately 120,000 men) that which could otherwise be accomplished.

It is still to be hoped that Australia and New Zealand will appreciate the force of these considerations and will not insist on

bringing home their Divisions. The result of such insistance would be to strengthen the Southwest Pacific area by two divisions at the expense of reducing the weak Middle East garrison by twice this strength (80,000 men), as the British shipping required for the return of ANZAC troops could otherwise be used for the transportation of reinforcements from the United Kingdom.

It should also be remembered that the movements proposed can only be made if approximately 36 cargo vessels are taken off Lend-Lease runs or are supplied from British sources.

G C Marshall
Chief of Staff.

PSF: Australia folder file Confidential

MR. PRESIDENT:

The Australian Prime Minister, the Honourable John Curtin, has requested me to convey to you the following message,-

"1. The Commonwealth Government are of the opinion that attacks on Port Moresby followed by attacks on the East Coast of Australia or New Caledonia may take place shortly.

2. Such attacks will undoubtedly be carried out by a force including carriers and transports.

3. Japanese forces already occupy forward bases on the North Coast of New Guinea, in addition to Gasmata Kessa and Rabaul.

4. Evidence accumulates that Rabaul is being consolidated as a submarine base.

5. The above moves could be more satisfactorily countered if adequate naval forces, including at least two carriers and submarines could be based nearer for a period.

6. Sydney provides a reasonably well protected base with air cover and warning and would shorten the distance from supplies and refueling.

7. We wish to assure the President that we have every confidence in Admiral Leary and are completely satisfied with existing naval organisation whereby Australian naval forces are under his operational command. We feel, however, that Admiral Leary would be so much more in a position to strike effective blows at the Japanese forces in this area, if he had at least the additional forces mentioned in Paragraph 5 above, especially if they were operating from a base within immediate command but we venture to put forward this request directly through you."

March 20th, 1942.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 3, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

GENERAL MARSHALL

ADMIRAL KING

GENERAL ARNOLD

TO NOTE AND LET ME HAVE A MEMORANDUM.

F.D.R.

Australia Folder
1-42

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 30th, 1942

Dear Mr. Hopkins,

Dr. Evatt has directed me to forward to you a copy of the enclosed telegram which he has received from Australia setting out the views of the Australian and New Zealand Governments concerning the proposal to establish a Southwestern Pacific and a Southern Pacific area.

Dr. Evatt hopes to have the opportunity of discussing this matter with you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Watt

Mr. Harry L. Hopkins,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

DECLASSIFIED
By Authority of Nr Australian Archives, dtd 23 May 1974
By ABS Date JUN 14 1974

PM IO

Prime Minister's Department

Dr. Evatt

1545/29/3/42/

IMMEDIATE

0630/29/3/42

~~MOST SECRET~~

Your telegram Number PM5 of March 25th.

New Zealand have repeated to us extensive comments to Nash on the proposal ~~for~~ of combined Chiefs of Staff Committe for the division of Pacific theatre into a South West Pacific area under General MacArthur and a Southern Pacific area directly under Washington. Chiefs of Staff have considered this proposal and ~~of~~ the New Zealand Government's observations and have submitted the following reports:

Begins: Chiefs of Staff are strongly opposed to the proposed subdivision of the Pacific area. We agree with the comments of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and urge the following additional considerations against the proposal. It is essential to Australia that Fiji and New Caledonia should be in the same area as Australia because they are all inter-dependent and from every point of view must be considered together. Australian line of communications with the United States is through New Zealand Fiji and New Caledonia and the most effective and economic use of forces available to defend the whole area depends upon there being united command so that speedy reinforcement of any ~~xxx~~ points threatened can be effected as necessary: Ends

2. For reasons set out in the above report we are opposed to the proposed division of the Pacific theatre involving the separation of Australia from New Zealand Fiji

and New Caledonia. It is desired that you cooperate with Nash on this question.

3. Chiefs of Staff have also furnished the following additional observations which are communicated for your information and for discussion with the combined Chiefs of Staff or Admiral King as appropriate: Begins:

While adhering to the proposals already made by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for the creation of an Anzac area rather than what is now proposed from Washington, we would prefer that all naval forces in the Pacific should be put directly under the command of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff with a view to ensuring the greatest concentration of xxxx naval forces at the right place and time. This of course would invo involve Admiral Glassford's force (comprising U.S. units from ABDA area now based on Fremantle) being placed under the command of Admiral Leary. Ends.

This message has been repeated to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Australia Folder

Personal.

file

Ritz Carlton Hotel
New York City,
April 5th. 1942.

My dear Mr. President,

I have had an enforced few days in New York waiting for a Clipper that has been delayed.

You may perhaps remember that I mentioned, when I had my farewell meeting with you, the possible necessity of more money being spent in the Middle East on Intelligence and Secret Operations, and you were good enough to suggest that additional money for these necessary purposes would not be impossible to find.

I have seen Colonel Donovan on several occasions in New York, and I find that tentative arrangements for close collaboration between the American and British Intelligence and Secret Operations in the Middle East and elsewhere are already in hand. I have discussed the subject quite fully with Colonel Donovan and his officers, and I believe that (subject to your approval) the proposals can be made quite fruitful.

Fortified with the knowledge of Colonel Donovan's mind, I hope to be able to advance the matter at the London end. I believe that Colonel Donovan will put the proposals up to you at an early date.

I fully expect that the money side may frighten the people in London a good deal, particularly from the fact that actual gold will be needed. I hope very much that you may be able to help on this side, as you were good enough to suggest.

I look forward to communicating direct with you when I reach Cairo.

With all good wishes and deep appreciation of your personal kindness to me,

I am,
Yours sincerely,

R G Casey

The President of the United States,
The White House, Washington DC.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

file

May 2, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

CAPTAIN McCREA

Will you telephone to Dr. Evatt and tell him I shall be delighted to have Mr. Smith attend the Pacific War Council meeting next week and that I hope he will have a pleasant voyage and I count on seeing him on his return?

F. D. R.

Australia Folder

Captain McCrea has seen

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 27th, 1942

Dear Mr.President,

As you are aware, the Commonwealth Government desires me to visit the United Kingdom to confer with Mr.Churchill and other members of the British Government and services, and I have now arranged to leave within the course of the next day or so.

Mr.A. V. Smith, who specially accompanied me on my mission to this country and who was also to accompany me to London, will now remain in Washington until my return and I would appreciate your acquiesence to the proposal that he should take my place on the Pacific War Council as a representative of the Australian Government until my return from the United Kingdom. Mr.Smith has a good knowledge of the Australian defence position and enjoys the complete confidence of the Government.

Yours sincerely,

R G Casey

The Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

Australia Folder

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 16, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Will you be good enough to prepare a reply to the enclosed message from the Prime Minister of Australia in conjunction with General Marshall and Admiral King?

F. D. R.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

May 15, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

I am transmitting herewith a message addressed to you by the Prime Minister of Australia which has just been handed to me by the Australian Chargé d'Affaires.

Would you let me know if you desire your reply to be sent by the Department of State?

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:
From Australian Legation,
May 14, 1942, with enclosure.

The President,

The White House.

file personal.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

May 13. 1942

My dear Mr. President:

I enclose a communication dated May 9, 1942 from the Australian Legation transmitting a message from the Honorable John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, expressing his appreciation for your message regarding Dr. Evatt's visit.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

From the Australian
Legation.

The President,

The White House.

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 9th, 1942

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have been asked by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following message:-

" I am grateful for your message concerning Dr. Evatt's visit. It is additionally gratifying to learn that his first hand contact with you has been useful in enabling you to see the position in the Southwest Pacific area more clearly.

I would express my personal thanks for all the assistance and help that has been extended to Dr. Evatt, in enabling him to present to you and to your advisers the viewpoint of the Commonwealth Government. "

flw.

1.

Australia Folder

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 20, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

ADMIRAL KING:

Do you want to do something about putting the additional paragraph in the message to Curtin?

Please return for my files.

F.D.R.

Capt McCrea has complete file on message to Australia

May 19, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

In accordance with the request contained in your memorandum to me of May 16 to prepare, in conjunction with General Marshall and Admiral King, for your approval a reply to the message addressed to you under date of May 14 by the Prime Minister of Australia, I am submitting herewith a suggested message to be sent by you in reply to Mr. Curtin's communication.

This suggested reply was drafted, at my request, by General Marshall and Admiral King inasmuch as the questions taken up in Mr. Curtin's message were primarily military and naval. The message so prepared seems to me to meet the situation. Will you let me know if it meets with your approval? If so, I shall request the Australian Legation in Washington to forward it to Mr. Curtin.

I am likewise enclosing a copy of Admiral King's letter to me of May 17, of which the last paragraph

The President,

The White House.

may seem to you to merit consideration.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

Encs.
To Mr. Welles from
Admiral King, 5-17-42,
with enclosure;
To President from
Prime Minister of Australia,
5-14-42.

THE WHITE HOUSE

file Australia

General Douglas MacArthur

By Safe Hand

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 2, 1942.

Dear Douglas:

Bill Clark, an old friend of mine, is heading back your way and I just wanted to send this line to tell you that you and our forces in Australia are much in our thoughts. I wish I could have a chance to see you in person. I am doing everything I can to keep the flow of supplies going forward to you. On the home front the production is increasing well on the whole, and reasonably up to the program except in two or three items. Shipping is, of course, our greatest need.

It looks, at this moment, as if the Japanese Fleet is heading toward the Aleutian Islands or Midway and Hawaii, with a remote possibility that it may attack Southern California or Seattle by air.

I have telegraphed to Mr. Curtin suggesting that he come to Washington to see me this summer.

My best to you.

Always sincerely,

Franklin D. Roosevelt

General Douglas MacArthur,
Australia.

Australia Folder

file personal

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 3rd, 1942

Dear Mr. President,

I have just arrived from England with information and impressions which should, I think, be communicated to you as soon as possible.

In particular, the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, has made certain arrangements through me in relation to the war against Japan and there are one or two vital aspects of this theatre of war which I desire to place urgently before you.

I propose to leave for Australia in the very near future - probably towards the end of next week.

Believe me,
My dear Mr. President,
Yours very sincerely,

H Evatt

The Honourable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

Australia Folder

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 9, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL MARSHALL:

Will you speak to me about this?

F.D.R.

Letter from Mr. Evatt to the President June 7th re urgency of sending Gen. Arnold and Admiral Leahy to Australia.

Australia Folder
file
personal

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 10, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

You said you wanted to take this up with the Pacific Council today.

G.

C
O
P
Y

[redacted]

OFFICE OF THE WAR CABINET

GREAT GEORGE ST.

S.W.1

27th May 1942

Dear Dr. Evatt,

It may be of assistance both to you and to us if I set down on paper the principal results which have arisen from your discussions with the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet. These results have not been achieved without sacrifice on the part of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, but this sacrifice is willingly made in the full spirit of brotherhood and in recognition of the support which the mother country has received from Australia.

(1) Although Australia, forming part of the South West Pacific area, is within the sphere of United States strategic responsibility it is the firm intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that this circumstance will not in any way lessen their regard for Australian interests and their solicitude for her safety. Instructions to this effect have been sent to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, and he has been told to press the United States Chiefs of Staff for assurances that measures will be taken to ensure the safety of Australia. This is in accord with the statement made by the War Cabinet to General Marshall during his recent visit, that the plan which he proposed was accepted on the understanding that adequate forces must be allocated to safeguard the defence of Australia and the island bases connecting that country with the United States.

(2) Mr. Churchill reaffirmed, and the War Cabinet endorsed, the following undertaking given to the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Sealand in his telegram of the 11th August 1940:

"If however contrary to prudence and self-interest, Japan set about invading Australia or New Zealand on a large scale, I have the explicit authority of the Cabinet to assure you that we should then cut our losses in the Mediterranean and proceed to your aid, sacrificing every interest except only the defence and feeding of this Island on which all depends".

(3) Recognising the need for accelerating the flow of army equipment to Australia, to make good deficiencies, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have undertaken to assure delivery for shipment in June or July of the important equipment agreed upon by yourself and Mr. Lyttelton. This may entail some slight diminution of assignments in subsequent months, but it is the intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to do their utmost to ensure that the equipment which the Australian forces need will be sent to them. Special steps have been and will continue to be taken to speed up the shipment of American equipment assigned to Australia.

(4) Finally, at the instance of the Prime Minister His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided to adopt a special plan for the air support of Australia, under which a wing of three Spitfire Squadrons, complete with aircraft, two of the Squadrons being Royal Australian Air Force and one Royal Air Force, will be shipped to Australia in a convoy leaving in the middle of June and will be fully maintained. This special reinforcement of well-established squadrons is over and above any assignment of aircraft which may be made from the United Kingdom, or which may be secured for Australia from the output of the United States of America. It is an expression of the mutual support which should bind together the countries of the Empire and will go some way towards repaying the sacrifices made by Australia in the Imperial cause.

DECLASSIFIED
By Authority of State
Dept. letter, 1-12-72
By JS Date FEB 8 1972

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) H.L.Ismay,
Chief of Staff to the Minister of Defence,

The Rt.Hon. H.V.Evatt, K.C.

file confidential

Australia Feder
Aug 10
1942

SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR

The Australian Government representative and British Consul at Portuguese Timor, Mr. Ross, returned to Australia recently. He has made a secret report to the Commonwealth Government on the situation in Portuguese Timor, and the following summary of this report has been telegraphed by the Australian Minister for External Affairs to the Australian Minister, Washington:

"When the Japanese landed on February 19th, number two independent company A.I.F. were disposed amongst the mountains to the west of Dilli, where they could better employ offensive guerilla tactics wherein they had been specially trained.

The Japanese landed a force of marines and soldiers 4,000 strong. A Dutch unit of about 600 troops, mostly natives retreated to the mountains from the town without defending it and gradually disintegrated.

The Australians, with ample ammunition and food supplies in the interior of the island, began guerilla warfare against the enemy. Their ambushes and raids were so successful that the Japanese columns found they could not move into the bush without risk of serious losses. In the period March to June the Japanese lost a minimum of 250 killed, while one Australian was wounded. The enemy therefore is now practically confined to Dilli, leaving the whole of the area between Dilli and the south coast in the hands of our patrols.

Through Mr. Ross the Japanese twice asked the Australians to surrender, but as our force was practically intact, had proved itself superior to the Japanese on each occasion when contact was made, and was well supplied with ammunition and food, surrender was not seriously considered.

Our troops meantime established communication, including radio communication, with Australia. Supplies were dropped by aircraft and carried across the Timor Sea by boat.

Before the Japanese arrived, the Australian troops made friends of the natives. Nothing was obtained from them without payment; they were not ill treated in any respect and to their great wonder were recognised as human beings and their salutations acknowledged and returned. Word spread about the

island that the Australians were good men and they were accordingly given a welcome everywhere.

The continued existence of the Australian force as a fighting unit, when no food supplies could be obtained from army sources and when all money had been spent, would have been impossible without the help of all Portuguese officers in the interior and the friendship and admiration of the natives.

The older Portuguese officials are not wholly in sympathy with Salazar regime. A few young officials are Fascists. But the bulk of the Portuguese population, consisting of political deportees and retired officials, were friendly almost without exception.

But wherever the Japanese went they stole everything of value and destroyed the remainder. They never paid for food obtained from the natives, molested their women whenever possible and generally behaved like animals.

After it was seen how the Japanese treated both Portuguese property and the natives themselves, neither the Portuguese officials in the interior nor the natives could do enough for an Australian soldier. For three months the natives, together with Portuguese officials, provided our troops with free food, transport and personal service and kept our men informed of every Japanese movement away from Dilli.

Consequently the morale of our troops is high and so long as occasional mails and supplies can be received from Australia, the force is content. With heavy reinforcements the Japanese could eventually clear out this force, but only at the cost of very severe casualties."

RETURNED BY
H.L.H. FOR THE FILES

Australian folder
1-42

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

SO 8191035

THE WHITE HOUSE
AUG 21 9 03 AM '42
RECEIVED

August 19, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Subject: Inadequate Australian Censorship.

1. The following examples of news leaks through the Australian censorship are merely illustrative; other instances could be cited:

On August 12, 11:15 PM(EWT) Frank Cuhel, Mutual Broadcasting Company, from Melbourne said: "A dispatch from Washington reports a total of around 150 vessels were used in the last operation (Solomon Islands) representing about 100 transports and 50 warships." This despatch was published in the Sydney Mirror.

In reply to General Marshalls' query, General MacArthur said that the, "Local press received two messages, one from Montreal which states: 'Herald Tribune Washington (Bureau) declares attacking fleet, probably one of largest ever massed for invasion, perhaps numbers between 50 and 100 ships.'" It is understood this also came out of London.

The Office of Censorship has no record of any such message leaving the country. It might have been telephoned to Montreal.

2. Another illustration of loose censorship is afforded in a United Press dispatch from Australia, also on August 12. It referred to the use of parachutes by Marines in effecting first landings in the Solomon Islands. It also said that no land-based fighter planes were available to our forces and that they had no land-based bombers other than those of the United Nations in the Australian zone.

A few examples have been taken from recent issues of The New York Times:

August 14: It was revealed that three beachheads had been established and an airfield captured. American strength was described as centered on a ridge on Tulagi. The censor also cleared a statement attributed to New Zealand sources which asserted that our naval forces included battleships, carriers, cruisers, etc.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

SO 8191035

August 19, 1942

August 15: The Sydney correspondent of the London Evening Star said the first phase of the battle was concluded.

3. Speculative stories datelined General MacArthur's Headquarters take on an authority which they would not have if they did not carry that dateline. Many of these go into particulars.

For example, an AP dispatch of August 15, says, "Dispatches to the London Daily Mail said U.S. Marines were believed to have seized the two small islands of Makambo and Gavutu near Tulagi."

Another AP dispatch of the same date: "The London Naval correspondent of the Yorkshire Post expressed the belief that the American Marines had overrun the main airfield on Guadalcanal Island."

4. As long ago as March 2, the Secretary of the Navy met with executives of the broadcasting chains and Byron Price to meet the situation highlighted by Martin Agronsky's broadcast of February 21 from Sydney in which he said an officer had informed him of the poor ammunition found in the U. S. Asiatic Fleet. The cooperation of the American companies was pledged but the problem requires a broader solution. In the Southwest and South Pacific it requires the very close and active participation of the governments of Australia and New Zealand.

Frank Knox

file confidential

Australia Folder

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

August 22. 1942

My dear Mr. President:

of Australia

I enclose for your information a copy of a despatch dated July 21, 1942 from the American Legation at Canberra in regard to your invitation to Prime Minister Curtin to visit Washington. Referring to Mr. Curtin's statement that he would be glad to come "should circumstances of Government permit," the Legation outlines some of the circumstances which appear to make it difficult for Prime Minister Curtin to leave Australia at the present moment.

Faithfully yours,

Cordell Hull

Enclosure:

From Legation, Canberra,
dated July 21, 1942.

The President,

The White House.

TRIPLICATE

Canberra, Australia, July 21, 1942.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

Subject: Invitation to Prime Minister John Curtin to visit Washington.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's personal and confidential telegram no. 189, of June 1, 1942, 5 p.m., to me, directing me to deliver personally to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia an invitation from the President to visit Washington sometime during the next few months, and to my telegram no. 303, of June 5, 1942, 12 noon, giving the text of Prime Minister Curtin's reply to the effect that he would be glad to avail himself of the opportunity offered by the President's invitation "should circumstances of Government permit".

On June 30, the private secretary to the Prime Minister telephoned the First Secretary of Legation to inquire whether Mr. Curtin's reply to the President had been sent and whether it had been received at Washington. He gave as his reason for making this inquiry a report which they had received from Sir Owen Dixon which quoted the President as having said that he had received a reply to his invitation from both Smutts and Fraser but had received no reply from the Prime Minister of Australia. Reference to the records showed that Mr. Curtin's tentative reply had been sent promptly, and inquiry through the telegraph office revealed that the message had been delivered to the State Department. It was then explained to Mr. McLachlan that undoubtedly what the President meant was that he had not received <u>an acceptance</u> from Mr. Curtin, while probably having received definitive acceptances from Smutts and Fraser. This seemed to dispel the apprehension of

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By J. Schauble Date FEB 4 1972

of the Prime Minister regarding any feeling which the President may have had on the subject.

The subject has not been mentioned to me since the 5th of June, on which day Prime Minister Curtin called personally and handed his reply to me, but I feel that it would be appropriate for me to set down for the information of the Department one or two comments on "circumstances of Government" here in the Commonwealth of Australia with which Prime Minister Curtin will doubtless be preoccupied in giving consideration to the question of leaving Australia at this time. In this connection I should like to refer to the last paragraph of the Legation's confidential review of the political situation in Australia for the month of October 1941, dated November 15, 1941 (no. 28), in which I pointed out the conditions under which cabinets are organized here in the Commonwealth of Australia. When Japan entered the war on December 7, there was some talk of Mr. Curtin inviting the members of the Opposition to join his Cabinet, thus forming a national government. This appears to have been merely talk, for Prime Minister Curtin very quickly let it be known that his Government would be a Labor Government, and that it would survive or fall on its accomplishments as a Labor Government. The Labor Party was not prepared to share its responsibilities with anyone.

The result has been that the Cabinet which Mr. Curtin organized in October last continues unchanged. Mr. Curtin, as Prime Minister, has developed. He is today, I believe, trusted and respected throughout the Commonwealth because of his obvious sincerity, directness and integrity of character. No other member of the Cabinet has stood the test of recent months as well as John Curtin. As pointed out in this Legation's report above referred to, Mr. Beasley and Dr. Evatt appeared to be the most influential members of the Cabinet. Beasley, however, does not appear to have grown, and Evatt would appear to have lost rather than gained. The Treasurer, Mr. Chifley, has, I think, won public confidence. As for the other members of the Cabinet, they have followed along the road of mediocrity which has distinguished their past. There has been some local gossip of an intrigue within the Cabinet on the part of Beasley and Evatt, gossip which would indicate that within the Cabinet there was a certain amount of disunity. The outstanding individual in the Cabinet who has handicapped rather than aided Prime Minister Curtin in his conduct of affairs has been Mr. E. J. Ward, Minister for Labor and National Service. Mr. Ward, in Parliament and out of Parliament, has carried on a campaign for the nationalization of the coal-mining industry and banking, a direct contradiction to the policies of his leader, Mr. Curtin. If there has been any criticism of Mr. Curtin since he took office it has been that he has not rid himself of this member of his Cabinet who has given active encouragement to labor elements to use the present emergency to obtain political ends.

The truth is that Mr. Curtin, in his Cabinet and in the House, has apparently not felt strong enough politically to deal with Mr. Ward.

Thus

Thus it becomes clear that Prime Minister Curtin at this time cannot feel that he could leave Australia with a united and strongly-entrenched Government behind him.

The recent Liberty Loan was almost a failure, although Mr. Curtin and his Treasurer, Mr. Chifley, made every effort to whip up public interest in the loan in Sydney and in Melbourne. It is difficult to say just why this should have been the case, when the country stands in such obvious and present danger. It is true that the taxes are high, but on the other hand the wage-earning class has increased enormously due to the expansion of industry. Wages have increased also, and there is more currency in circulation than at any previous time in the history of Australia. It is this very class, however, that is being encouraged by Labor leaders, who look upon them in terms of the past, consider that they are only getting their just dues at a time like the present when "easy money" is available, and talk a great deal about relieving them of the burdens of taxation. This class in Australia has never been encouraged to save. It has been encouraged to spend its time at the races and at cricket and ball games, and if it has as a class any instinct toward accumulating funds this instinct finds expression in games of chance and betting, rather than in investment of savings. This same class also has for many years sought to substitute Government subsidies, in the shape of old-age pensions and child endowment, for individual savings, and it would seem probable that the increase in currency and wages and in the number of the wage-earning class would not add materially to an investing public to which a government circumstanced as the Labor Government of Australia is circumstanced could sell a Government loan. Next month Prime Minister Curtin's Government must face Parliament with a new budget. This budget will present problems of considerable difficulty, and it is natural that until that political hurdle has been passed the Prime Minister can hardly give thought to leaving the country.

Japan's entry into the war in December has placed Australia in a critical position, not only as regards its territorial and political integrity, but also as regards its position as a necessary base from which operations would have to be conducted for the purpose of regaining British possessions lost to the Japanese in the early part of the Japanese campaign. What is left of the Colonial Government of the Netherlands East Indies and its resources has taken refuge in Australia, so that inevitably the fate of Australia has become involved in the future of Dutch possessions in Java, Sumatra and Borneo, in the East Indies. A large American force has been placed here in Australia to be trained and equipped for the purpose of re-occupying the Philippine Islands. We are now on the threshold of a great military movement, upon the fate of which depends the whole future of the Dutch, British, Australian, and American influence in this sphere for generations to come. Australia is destined to play a very important part in that movement. Prime Minister Curtin's presence in Australia is essential to continuity of Australian policy in connection with this effort.

At

At the last sitting of Parliament there were passed four bills providing for a uniform income tax for the Commonwealth. The purpose of these bills was to enable the Commonwealth to mobilize funds procurable from the taxable incomes of the entire population of the Commonwealth in the interest of Commonwealth financial obligations. To do this it was necessary for the Commonwealth Government to push the State Governments out of the field of income tax. One of the bills provided for grants of money out of Commonwealth funds to the States to compensate the States for leaving the income tax field. Five of the States, namely, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, filed suit in the High Court of the Commonwealth against the Commonwealth, for the purpose of upsetting these bills on the ground of their unconstitutionality. This suit is now awaiting judgment in the High Court. If that judgment is in favor of the Commonwealth--and I believe it will be--certain financial readjustments will be necessary. There has been some speculation, however, to the effect that the Court may decide against the Commonwealth, in which case it is expected that Mr. Curtin will go to the people with a referendum calling for an amendment to the Constitution broad enough to give the Commonwealth Government all of the powers which it needs, for there is a belief that at the present time the Government would succeed in such a referendum, not only because of the popularity of Mr. Curtin but also because of the fact that the people as a whole are pretty well disgusted with the political game that is being played in some of the State Governments, notably New South Wales and Victoria. In view of this situation the Prime Minister would find it difficult to leave the Commonwealth.

These are some of the "circumstances of Government" which are at present in the mind of Mr. Curtin in considering whether he can at this moment absent himself from the Commonwealth for a period which must, by the very nature of things, cover at least a month, and perhaps two months, of time very vital not only to Australia but to the situation now existing in the Pacific Area. Underlying all of this, it must also be remembered that, politically, one of the most dangerous things for an Australian Prime Minister to do is to visit London. Traditionally, these visits have marked the political eclipse of each Prime Minister that has undertaken them in the past, and Mr. Curtin could not visit Washington without visiting London, unless perhaps his visit could in some way be timed to coincide with a visit to Washington of Prime Minister Churchill.

I have set down the above as purely personal speculations drawn from personal observations here in Australia. They are not based on statements made by responsible authorities to me. I have not discussed the situation with the Prime Minister. They certainly do not express any views which he has enunciated to me. But in consideration of

him,

him, and of his very real difficulties, I feel that I should set them forth for your consideration in connection with the proposed visit. It would seem hardly possible that the Prime Minister could seriously consider leaving Australia before September at the very earliest.

Respectfully yours,

A true copy of the signed original MEG

800.01

NTJ/meg

To the Department in quintuplicate.

DOROTHY:

THIS CAN BE FILED: I UNDERSTAND IT WAS ANSWERED WITH A LATER CABLE.

LOIS

Brady

Australian folder
1-42

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

August 31, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

The Australian Minister has just been in to see me to request an urgent interview with you by instruction of his Prime Minister.

I enclose a copy of the message from Mr. Curtin which the Minister is instructed to hand you.

The Minister informs me that he has not yet received Annex "A" referred to on page 3 of this message but that this document is now in course of transmission and he will have it available before evening.

I have informed the Minister that I would submit this message to you immediately and that I felt sure the White House would advise him as soon as it was possible for you to receive him.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enc.

The President,

The White House.

August 31st, 1942

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have been asked by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following message:-

"Dear Mr.President:

1. I desire to submit for your urgent consideration my views on the situation and the needs of the Southwest Pacific Area and their relation to global strategy which Mr.Churchill, yourself and the Combined Chiefs of Staff have constantly under review.

2. We in Australia realise the difficulties that confront you in spreading the limited resources of the United Nations over the various theatres of operations. It is a penalty and peril imposed on peace-loving nations, because the pre-war years were used as a period of preparation for war by our enemies and not by ourselves.

3. I realise the great importance to our cause in sustaining Russian resistance and the need for doing all that is possible to furnish supplies to Russia. Also, in conformity with the discussions between Mr.Churchill, M. Molotov and yourself, and between Mr.Churchill and M.Stalin, it is evident that military relief must be afforded Russia by attacks on Germany and Italy in some other theatre as soon as the necessary strength can be marshalled and used with every prospect of success. Furthermore, it is only by offensive action and military defeat that Germany and Italy can be brought to terms. These operations will require large forces and supplies.

4. The importance of the Middle East, including sources of oil supplies in Iraq and Iran and the need for preventing a conjunction of the Axis and Japan through India, is fully apprehended in Australia. This was demonstrated by the despatch of Australian Imperial Forces to the Middle East. We realise that this theatre again is one which requires extensive allocations of forces and supplies.

5. The remaining theatre is Eastern Asia and the Pacific Ocean. China has been undergoing an ordeal for years, but there are great physical difficulties in supplying her needs. The most effective way to render her assistance is to attack Japan where she is most vulnerable. It would appear that Japan has no intention of attacking Siberia for the time being, and intelligence reports show concentrations in the Southwest Pacific area. The principles of Imperial defence on which Australia has for years based its defence policy of reciprocal co-operation and local defence, contemplated that a British fleet based on Singapore would afford a general deterrent to large-scale aggression against British possessions in the Eastern Hemisphere. The Australian people have gratefully learnt by anxious experience that the American fleet based on Hawaii has exercised a similar deterrent effect on Japan; also that your task forces, with which it has been the privilege of the sadly diminishing Australian Navy to serve, have in actions such as the Coral Sea frustrated the attempts of the enemy to extend his southern advance, imperil lines of communication between the United States and Australia and further threaten the mainland of the Commonwealth.

6. In the absence of knowledge of what is contemplated in the Southwest Pacific area in the general scheme for global strategy, we feel apprehensive regarding the capacity of the forces assigned to the Southwest Pacific area to ensure the security of Australia as a base. You will realise that so much is dependent on the strength of naval task forces that operate in or near this area and the

continued flow of land and air forces and necessary aircraft and equipment. We consider that it is a cardinal objective of grand strategy to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy in order to throw him back in the first instance on to his bases in the Mandated Islands. For this, superior sea power and ancillary air force are necessary. I append as Annex "A" to this note a copy of a telegram I have despatched to Mr. Churchill on co-operation by the Eastern Fleet in the concentration of a superior naval force in the Pacific. Naval and air strength is vital to the maintenance and reinforcement of land and air forces at Port Moresby and Milne Bay in New Guinea, where there are now nearly two divisions of troops and several squadrons of air forces.

7. In regard to the strength of air forces in the Southwest Pacific area I have given the Australian Minister a full statement of our views on the disappointing reply to our long-standing request to be allotted aircraft for an air force of the strength recommended by our advisers. We are most emphatically opposed to the proposal to transfer equipment from the American Air Force squadrons in Australia to the Australian Air Force and the withdrawal of personnel implied. We consider that we should be given aircraft to accord with our programme of expansion as endorsed by the Commander-in-Chief in stages, and that the American Air Force should be at least maintained at the strength laid down when Dr.Evatt was in Washington.

8. We have two of your splendid American Army Divisions in Australia which with Australian forces are being well trained in their operational roles for either offensive or defensive action. The total number of United States Army and Air Corps troops is 98,000. We are deeply grateful for their presence but on the general question of the strength necessary for the Southwest Pacific area I would respectfully point out, Mr. President, that

Australia's capacity to help herself has been limited by the fact that 48,000 men are still serving overseas and our casualties in dead, missing, and prisoners of war total 37,000, or an aggregate of 85,000.

9. Japan has already launched one counter-offensive against the Solomon Islands and has continued her gradual advance along the northern shore of New Guinea until we now face each other in Milne Bay. It is evident from intelligence reports relating to concentrations in the Southwest Pacific area that Japan intends to wage an intense offensive in this region. We feel that, with the superior strength of the United Nations, there should be no uncertainty about our ability to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy. In fact from the aspect of grand strategy the importance of doing so should be an agreed objective of first priority. I would commend to the earnest consideration of yourself and your advisers, the statement of the position as I see it in the Southwest Pacific area and the vital needs for which provision should be made, if we are not going to run the risk of irreparable damage to our defensive position and our ultimate capacity to defeat Japan.

10. Much as I would like to discuss these matters with you personally, I feel that the threatening dangers of the position in the Southwest Pacific area do not warrant my leaving Australia, nor my absence from my post as Prime Minister, under such critical conditions.

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN CURTIN.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 1, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to my letter to you of yesterday's date, with which I enclosed a message addressed to you by the Prime Minister of Australia, I am enclosing herewith two copies of Annex "A", referred to in the sixth paragraph of Mr. Curtin's message, which I have just received from the Australian Minister.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enc.

The President,

The White House.

ANNEX "A"

COPY OF TELEGRAM FROM MR. JOHN CURTIN TO MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL

"1. It will be evident from the Coral Sea, Midway and Solomon Islands naval engagements that operations in the Pacific Ocean are leading to a naval clash which may well decide the course of the conflict in this theatre.

2. I would refer to the views of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff in Dominions Office telegram Number 362 of April 6th that when the moment is opportune naval forces of the United Nations should take the strategical offensive in the Pacific. It would be appreciated if a statement could be furnished giving the present views of the Chiefs of Staff on the conditions outlined by them in paragraph 4 as necessary for fulfilment before the concentration of superior naval forces in the Pacific Ocean can be undertaken.

3. It would appear inevitable from the operations in the Solomon Islands and the increased activity in New Guinea that the Japanese will offer substantial resistance to any efforts to push them back to their bases in the Mandated Islands. We must therefore be in a position to bring to bear at the point of contact forces superior in strength to those of the enemy, otherwise we shall be laying ourselves open to grave risks.

4. It is therefore desired to know what are the present prospects and plans for the concentration of a superior naval force in the Pacific which presumably could only be done by the transfer of part of the Eastern fleet to that region. "

File Australia Folder
Personnel

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Mr. President—

This is a report from one of our men in Australia. I do not know him personally. Allowance should perhaps be made for some personal feeling due to the fact that apparently he and an organization were rather brushed off at headquarters. The organization feels that it can take care of that situation but some of his comments seem to deserve study, with allowances made for possible personal feeling.

Elmer Davis

Elmer — All of this is interesting — but the section marked on page 3 is particularly so.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Aug. 25

Bob Sherwood

Harold Guinzburg

Office of War Information

Dear Harold:

This is the way it is--

There are some here who were in Paris who say, "This is the way France was, before the collapse." There are others who were in Singapore who say, It's just like Malaya, before we went." I suspect it's not quite like either of these things, but simply like Australia before the fall of Australia, if the Japs decide to attack.

I have been all over now, and I have talked to a great number of people. There is shocking disunity, there is a fatalistic depression that is almost solid, and if the Japs landed tomorrow the great majority of Australians would just turn over and play dead. The atmosphere reminds me of Washington in February, 1932. I don't know what has turned this once aggressive, fighting nation into what it is now. There are probably many interlocking reasons, some which Mike will outline in this letter, some of what I'll try to indicate here. Only the American troops, and those Australian troops actually fighting or flying, have escaped the general disintegration of spirit.

It probably had its beginning in the bitterness of old political wounds. For a long time there has been no strong and altogether popular national leadership. There is no one wholly trusted, inspiring national leader now.

Singapore was Australia's Maginot Line, and because of Singapore Australia was possessed of a complete Maginot mentality. It still exists, except in place of Singapore say MacArthur. Australia has not yet learned that the defense of Australia does not lie upon its shores, but upon the islands that stand between Australia and Japan, and upon the Middle East, and upon Hawaii, and with the American fleet.

It is because of this Maginot mentality that half of the Australian Army cannot, by law, be sent out of Australian territory. The Militia is tied to this continent. It is therefore wedded to inactivity, and barrack and town life, and all their evils. Since the Australian Imperial Forces have been called back from the Middle East, they too rot within the confines of the country.

I am very fearful that MacArthur's GHQ, in their anxiety to accumulate sufficient forces to launch an offensive from Australia-- and from Australia and under MacArthur alone-- have aided the Maginot point of view. When I was in Brisbane, talking to MacArthur's embittered staffers, they didn't like it when I pointed out that Australia was, at the moment, being defended not by any accumulation of troops and material here, but by the Marines in the Solomons, and our forces in New Caledonia and the Fiji Islands, and all the other islands in the Pacific not under MacArthur's command.

Since we never met MacArthur himself, we cannot report his personal views. But we can report the views of the members of his staff to whom we talked, and who are fiercely loyal to MacArthur personally, and who reflect MacArthur.

They feel that MacArthur has been "double-crossed" by Washington. They say he was promised certain forces and equipment, and that he has not received them. They are, in my estimation, a completely self-centered lot. To them the whole world revolves around GHQ, Brisbane. This may be common to all General Staffs of an A.E.F. I don't know. I never saw one before.

A few days after we arrived in Australia, the papers blasted a story -- obviously planted because of its unanimity -- quoting unnamed official sources as saying that only a mere trickle of American troops was now arriving, that only one-sixth of the forces under MacArthur's command were Americans, and that the materiel sent to Australia represented only three days of America's production capacity. That story -- and the ones that followed it -- numbed Australia.

I was surprised when newspaper publishers told us the story had been put out by GHQ. I had suspected the Australian government. It didn't seem possible until I heard it from the lips of Colonel Diller, MacArthur's press chief. Yes, he had released the story.

He said he did it to remove all the misconceptions that had grown up in the minds of the Australians -- who believed that MacArthur had hundreds of thousands of American troops and great quantities of materiel, and should begin an offensive. This may be true. But I know that the effect of the story, back home, must have been pressure upon the government to send more forces to Australia.

Personally, I don't think MacArthur will ever have enough troops to defend Australia. He may have enough to capture Tokyo.

In any case, the psychological damage has been done here. In our opinion, we can no longer emphasize production figures when talking to Australia. It only increases their depression. In our opinion we should tell ~~America before~~ Australia-- and keep telling 'em -- the same story that we had to tell America before the war -- that the defense of a continent does not lie upon its shores, but upon the furthest point away from its shores where you can come to grips with the enemy.

We must tell them that every plane and gun used against Japan in action anywhere in the Pacific is of far greater use to Australia than a gun or plane in Australia, and not shooting or flying. Further, we must contrive to tell this story officially.

After Singapore fell, Australia was in a blue funk. Australia had been a small boy flexing his muscles and challenging a big bully, but knowing all the time that his big brother stood between the bully and himself. Suddenly big brother collapses. The kid wants to run, but he's in a corner, and he's in panic.

Then MacArthur came, and the spirit of Australia soared swiftly as it had fallen. I suppose everyone ever did the idea that American might had come to the rescue, and Australia was saved. It was a new Maginot Line, and Australia took comfortable refuge behind it. But now everyone in Australia knows that MacArthur is dissatisfied and perhaps bitter because he has been unable to build no great offensive force here.

And again Australia is dazed with apprehension, strangely mixed with apathy. Australia is like the bird paralyzed by the snake-- but somehow sure that the Great White Chief will kill the snake before it strikes.

We don't know, of course, how much will be sent out here. But we are certain that only the Australians, by a maximum effort and the revitalization of its army, can save Australia. And we have a plan, which I'll outline later in this letter. First I want to tell you what we found in Brisbane, and how we were received.

In the first place, when we arrived in Brisbane we found that GHQ had heard vaguely about the OWI, but that they knew nothing of our work. I think they put us down as just another New Deal agency. I can describe their general attitude as very suspicious, and at times hostile. I think that they are at the moment suspicious of everything that comes out of Washington. They probably said, "We want airplanes-- and they send us propagandists!"

We were turned over to Colonel Merle Smith (who at one time was an Assistant Secretary of State.) In addition to the officers brought with him from the Philippines, General MacArthur has what I might call political officers. There is,for instance, Hanford McNider, just elevated to a General Officer. Anyway, Merle Smith read our directives, and talked with us for some time. He expressed surprise that we had been empowered to cooperate with the Australian government in the conduct of political and psychological warfare against the enemy.

It was his understanding, he said, that propaganda and psychological warfare was to be supervised not by the OWI but by the Joint Chiefs of Staffs. He thought the OSS had something to do with it. At one point he asked us-- just as man to man, you know -- whether it wasn't true that the OWI and Donovan's organization weren't having a fight over propaganda. We urged him to read the executive order creating OWI. He said, "But has it been superseded by now?" We said we didn't know anything about it.

Well, he introduced us to General Sutherland, MacArthur's Chief of Staff. He said it had been decided that GHQ had decided not to cooperate with anyone actively in propaganda against the enemy, since they felt it was strictly a civilian function. He said GHQ would help us make a survey of radio facilities, listening habits, etc. of the American troops in Australia. It was agreed that I would go to the principal encampments, and find out the facts about reception, facilities, what American and Australian stations could be heard best at what hours, the reactions of the troops to our news shows, and the programs we and the Army are producing especially for the troops, and all the rest of it.

But after Mike went back to Sydney, strange difficulties began to arise. Colonel Diller told me "transportation was too difficult." He said officers in the field were "too busy training to be bothered."

This is of especial importance

All this sounded pretty flimsy. We were denied even the minimum cooperation that might be extended to the Perth Gazette, or to the Australian Department of Information. We dickered for days, there in Brisbane. At GHQ I felt like a cross between an enemy alien, and a private, second class.

Finally, Cononel Diller said that if we could show definitely what "you can do for us" they would circulate a questionaire on radio reception among the troops. Mike wrote him a letter. He said he never received it. I showed him a copy. Finally, I wrote the questionnaire, and he agreed to mimeograph it and send it around. That's the last we heard from Diller.

That is the extent of the cooperation which we have received from GHQ. I might mention one more thing. Merle Smith suggested it might be wise for us to send GHQ copies of all cables and letters we send to OWI!

The demoralization of the Australian troops was more apparent in Brisbane than in any other city. I could never be accused of what Australians call a "wowser" but I am frankly shocked at the drunkedness I've seen among the Aussies. In Brisbane Aussies in uniform reel through the streets all day and all night. They aren't happy drunks. They're just sodden, with their baggy, shoddy uniforms hanging sack-like from them. Their uniforms alone are enough to give them an inferiority complex, compared with the Americans.

And of course the American troops get all the pretty girls, and they have more money, and the American canteens are cleaner and better equipped, and the Americans have snap and drive and are eager for a scrap, The Aussies who came home after being mauled in Egypt and Singapore can only brood and drink.

It is no wonder that one Australian publisher told us, in Brisbane, "We are already a conquered people."

Yet essentially the Australians are good soldiers, as strong and brave as our own. But they have a tradition of no discipline, of being hell-raisers and individualists. It hasn't done them any good in this machine war.

We feel that the whole country reflects the demoralization of the Australian troops. It is not our opinion alone, from personal observation, that the Aussies are demoralized, and that the whole country is in the dumps with them. It is the opinion of every important man to whom we have talked, and of Australian and American officers, outside of GHQ. We didn't discuss it at GHQ.

We are therefore convinced that our one big immediate job is to help give the Aussies back their self-respect, fire them with an offensive spirit, and convert them into first line troops who think they can lick the Japs, man for man.

It is for this reason that we have concocted the slogan, "Every Digger a Commando." We hope to sell it, through the press and radio here, and with the help of OWI in America and England, to the Australian people. We want to convince the Aussies that the way to win the war and save their people is to form of themselves a powerful offensive Army, fit to carry the fight to the enemy.

We have made a cautious beginning, by enlisting the aid of Frank Packer, the most aggressive and one of the most powerful Australian publishers, who is also an Australian officer. He wants to start the ball rolling in his Women's Weekly, the magazine with the largest circulation in the country.

We are confident that every other important Australian publisher will fall into line. (Fortunately Mike knows most of them very well, personally, and we have sounded out some of them." They are all as concerned as we about the disintegration of the fighting spirit of a fine nation.

That, briefly, is what has been going on.

We want to hear from you immediately the reaction of OWI to what we have begun, for we cannot go ahead without the most complete and imaginative aid from home. We will keep you informed of everything as it comes up.

Regards,

~~s~~s Pat Frank

(OWI - Australia)