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**AMERICAN-DUTCH-BRITISH
CONVERSATIONS**

SINGAPORE, APRIL, 1941

(Short Title—"A.D.B.")

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REPORT
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MOST SECRET.A.D.B.
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(Short Title: "A.D.B.")

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SINGAPORE.
27th April 1941.

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| 1. | Admiralty | } | By Air. |
| 2. | War Office | | |
| 3. | Air Ministry | | |
| 4. | Admiralty | } | By All Sea Route. |
| 5. | War Office | | |
| 6. | Air Ministry | | |
- 7 - 12. United States of America.
- 13 - 28. Netherlands East Indies.
- 29 - 31. Commander-in-Chief, Far East.
- 32 - 34. Commander-in-Chief, China.
35. Far East Combined Bureau.
- 36 - 43. Australia.
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- 52 - 55. India.
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Page 3.AMERICAN - DUTCH - BRITISH CONVERSATIONS,
APRIL 1941.DELEGATESUnited States of America.

Captain W.R. Purnell, U.S.N.	Chief of Staff, U.S. Asiatic Fleet.
Colonel A.C. McBride, U.S.A.	Asst. Chief of Staff U.S. Military Forces Philippines.
Captain A.M.R. Allen, U.S.N.	U.S. Naval Observer, Singapore.
Lt. Colonel F.G. Brink, U.S.A.	U.S. Military Observer Singapore.

Netherlands East Indies.

Major-General H. ter Poorten	Chief of General Staff.
Captain J.J.A. van Staveren, R.N.N	Chief of Naval Staff.
Captain D.C. Buurmen van Vreeden	General Staff.
Lt. Cdr. H.C.W. Moorman, R.N.N.	Naval Staff.
Captain L.G.L. van der Kun, R.N.N.	Naval Liaison Officer Singapore.
Major J.M.J. Wegner.	Military Liaison Officer, Singapore.

General Headquarters, Far East.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., A.F.C. (Secretary General).	Commander in Chief, Far East.
Group Captain L. Dervall, M.C., Royal Air Force.	

Commander in Chief, China and Staff.

Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, K.C.B., D.S.O.	Commander in Chief, China.
Commodore F.E.P. Hutton, R.N.	Chief of Staff.
Paymaster Captain D.H. Doig, R.N. (Secretary to Conference)	Secretary to Commander in Chief China.

Australia.

Admiral Sir Ragnar M. Colvin, K.B.E., C.B.	First Naval Member.
Paymaster Captain J.B. Foley, O.B.E., R.A.N.	Secretary to First Naval Member.
Commander R.F. Nichols, R.N.	Naval Staff.
Group Captain F.N. Bldin, R.A.A.F.	Air Staff.
Colonel H.G. Rourke, M.C.	General Staff, Australian Imperial Force, Malaya.
Commander V.E. Kennedy, R.A.N.	Australian Naval Liaison Officer, Batavia.

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APRIL, 1941.DELEGATES.....continuedNew Zealand.

Commodore W.E. Parry, C.B., R.N.	Chief of Naval Staff.
Air Commodore H.W.L. Saunders, M.C., D.F.C., M.M., R.A.F.	Chief of Air Staff.
Colonel A.E. Conway, C.B.E.	New Zealand Staff Corps.

India.

Major General G.W. Molesworth.	Deputy Chief of General Staff (representing Defence Department).
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East Indies Station.

Commodore A.G.B. Wilson, D.S.O., M.V.O., R.N.	Chief of Staff.
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AMERICAN - DUTCH - BRITISH CONVERSATIONS.
APRIL 1941.

REPORT.

SIGNED at Singapore this twenty-seventh day of April 1941

(Sd.) W.R. Purnell

CAPTAIN, U.S.N.
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ASIATIC FLEET.

(Sd.) V. Stavercn.

(Sd.) H. ter Poorten.

CAPTAIN, R.N.N.,
CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF,
NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES.

MAJOR-GENERAL,
CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF, NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES.

(Sd.) R.M. Colvin.

ADMIRAL,
FIRST NAVAL MEMBER,
AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH NAVAL BOARD.

(Sd.) W.E. Parry.

COMMODORE,
CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF, NEW ZEALAND.

(Sd.) G.N. Moleworth.

MAJOR-GENERAL,
DEPUTY CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF, INDIA.

(Sd.) A.G.B. Wilson.

COMMODORE,
CHIEF OF STAFF, EAST INDIES STATION.

(Sd.) G. Layton.

VICE-ADMIRAL,
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, CHINA STATION.

(Sd.) R. Brooke-Popham.

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL,
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, FAR EAST.

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APRIL 1941.INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE.1. Introduction.

The following conditions apply:-

- The President*
- (a) State of war between Germany, Italy and Japan on one hand, and British Empire with its present Allies and the United States of America (referred to herein as the Associated Powers) on the other.
 - (b) No political commitment is implied.
 - (c) Any agreement is subject to ratification by Government concerned.

Terms of Reference.

- 2. To prepare plan for conduct of military operations in Far East on basis of report of Washington conversations.
- 3. Particular points for agreement are:-
 - (a) Plan for employment and disposition of forces in whole area Indian Ocean, Pacific and Australian and New Zealand waters before and after arrival of Far East Fleet, as agreed in Washington conversations, and summarised in Admiralty Telegram 1848 of 4th April.
 - (b) Details of arrangements for co-operation, e.g. communications, exchange of Liaison Officers, etc.

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APRIL 1941.

I - OBJECT.

4. Our object is to defeat Germany and her allies, and hence in the Far East to maintain the position of the Associated Powers against Japanese attack, in order to sustain a long-term economic pressure against Japan until we are in a position to take the offensive.

Our most important interests in the Far East are:-

(a) The security of sea communications

and

(b) The security of Singapore.

An important subsidiary interest is the security of Luzon in the Philippine Islands since, so long as submarine and air forces can be operated from Luzon, expeditions to threaten Malaya or the Netherlands East Indies from the East are cut-flanked.

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APRIL 1941.V - COMMAND (contd.)

In order to work out operational plans and to exercise this strategic direction, the immediate establishment at Singapore of a combined staff including representatives from Dominions and Associated Powers is recommended. ✓

LAND FORCES.

36. In the particular circumstances the primary task of the land forces has been decided to be the defence of the naval and air bases and the denial of potential naval and air bases to the enemy. There is little possibility of strategic offensive action by land forces and a localised strategic policy is therefore already established for the land forces. They will continue to be controlled by the authorities of the territories in which they are stationed except as where otherwise mutually arranged, e.g. TIMOR.

AIR FORCES.

37. Air forces have the power to concentrate provided the decision can be made quickly, the orders issued rapidly, and the necessary bases and facilities are available throughout the area. Unless one central authority with power to direct concentrations is established in advance the great strategic advantages of this power to concentrate rapidly to meet particular situations in different areas cannot be obtained.

38. In effect such central control would only be exercised over those portions of the air forces of the Associated Powers which can from time to time be made available for concentration in the area that is at any time most important to the common interest. The central controlling authority would be empowered to decide the time and area for the concentration, direct the moves to take place, and indicate the main task of the forces. The operational control of the forces thus concentrated would be exercised by the Commander of the Power in whose operational area the concentration was effected.

39. It is recommended that the authority empowered to exercise this strategical direction of air forces in the FAR EAST should be the Commander-in-Chief, FAR EAST, with General Headquarters at SINGAPORE.

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40. Phase I is regarded as existing from the outbreak of hostilities with Japan until the arrival of the British Far Eastern Fleet in the Eastern Theatre.

Phase II refers to operations subsequent to this.

OPERATIONS AGAINST JAPAN IN THE PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEANS
DURING PHASE I.

41. The basic principle of the strategy of the Associated Powers is that the Atlantic and Europe are the decisive theatre of war. It follows that the forces employed in other theatres must be reduced to a minimum so as not to impair our main effort in the decisive theatre.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to allot large forces to other theatres, and such forces should be used whenever possible, to inflict the maximum loss on our enemies.

The chief example of this is the United States Pacific Fleet, which it is essential to maintain in strength at least equal to the Japanese fleet, in order to hold our position in the Pacific and to act offensively against Japanese forces and bases in order to counter the certain Japanese offensive against the position of the Associated Powers in the Eastern Theatre.

The remaining naval forces of the Associated Powers in the Eastern Theatre are so weak that they will inevitably find themselves very largely occupied with the local defence of bases and the protection of vital sea communications. Nevertheless, whenever and wherever they can, they should assume the offensive against Japanese naval forces and sea communications.

United States Pacific Fleet.

42. As stated in the Report of the Washington Conversations, the United States Pacific Fleet at Hawaii will operate offensively against the Japanese Mandated Islands and against Japanese sea communications in the Pacific. The support to be afforded to British forces south of the equator between 155° East and 180° cannot be defined until further information is received from the Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, as to his intentions.

As the United States Pacific Fleet is responsible for operations, including the protection of sea communications, to the Eastward of 180°, it will be necessary for Australia and New Zealand to co-operate direct with the Commander in Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet.

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43. Based on Manila initially. Should movements of Japanese naval and air forces become threatening, it is proposed to despatch the submarine, destroyer and large patrol plane tenders and the tankers to Singapore before the commencement of hostilities. If hostilities start before these auxiliaries are safely disposed, the combatant vessels will escort them. It is estimated that Japan's most probable course of action will be to :-

- (a) contain the Asiatic Fleet in Manila Bay with the object of destroying it by air and torpedo attacks and failing in this, to
- (b) locate the fleet at the earliest possible moment and endeavour to destroy it by air, submarine or surface vessel attacks.

44. The submarine, naval air and local defence forces will be employed in support of the Army in its defence of Luzon, conducting reconnaissance and such offensive operations against Japanese sea communications and naval forces as are consistent with that mission. Hong Kong will be available as a base for these operations.

45. The cruisers with attached aviation units and destroyers will, when ordered by C in C Asiatic Fleet, proceed towards Singapore reporting to Commander in Chief China, to operate under his strategic direction.

46. Upon the "Ultimate Defence Area" (which includes Corregidor at the entrance to Manila Bay) becoming untenable, all remaining naval and naval air forces retaining combat value will, when released by Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, retire southward passing under the strategic direction of Commander in Chief China.

British Naval Forces.

47. Apart from the local defence of bases, British naval forces will be employed on the defence of our vital sea communications, and the attack on Japanese sea communications. It is clear that the forces available are quite inadequate for the introduction of general convoy system and that evasive routing or sailings under cover must therefore form the main defence for trade.

Dutch Naval Forces.

48. These will be employed primarily for the defence of the Netherlands East Indies and of the narrow passages between the islands.

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49. One cruiser, two destroyers and two submarines will be available initially to operate under British control.

Submarine Operations.

50. Co-ordinated direction of the operations of allied submarines is of great importance since these working in conjunction with our air forces, constitute our most powerful weapon for attacking Japan's seaborne forces.

51. United States submarines, so long as they operate in defence of the Philippines, will operate under the orders of Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet. Upon being released by Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, they will pass under the control of Commander in Chief, China, who will be responsible for co-ordinating their operations with those of the Dutch submarines.

52. The Dutch submarines will principally operate under the orders of Commander in Chief, Netherlands East Indies, for defence of the channels through the Netherlands East Indies to the Indian Ocean and to meet any enemy action in Netherlands East Indies waters, but as described in para. 49, two initially, and possibly others at a later stage, will be allotted to general tasks at the direction of the Commander in Chief, China. These Dutch submarines will operate in the South China Sea south of the line joining Cape Padaran and Kudat, all United States submarines keeping north of this line until both forces operate under Commander in Chief, China.

DEFENCE OF SEA COMMUNICATIONS.

53. The security of the following must be ensured:-

- (a) Reinforcements and supplies to our forces in Middle East.
- (b) Reinforcements and supplies to our forces in the Eastern Theatre.
- (c) Conveyance of vital supplies between the United Kingdom, U.S.A., Malaya, Netherlands East Indies, Australia and New Zealand.
- (d) Empire Air Training Scheme to Canada and U.K.
- (e) Empire Air Training Scheme to South Africa.
- (f) Troop movements to Ambon and Koepang.
- (g) Troop movements to Pacific Islands.

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54. The above entails protection to the following routes :-

- (a) Cape to Aden, Indian Ports, Colombo and Malaya.
- (b) Australia to Colombo, Indian Ports and Aden.
- (c) Australia and New Zealand to Singapore via Sunde Strait.
- (d) Australia and New Zealand to Cape.
- (e) Australia and New Zealand to West Coast of America.
- (f) Indian Ports to Aden.
- (g) Persian Gulf to Aden.
- (h) Persian Gulf to Indian Ports and Colombo.
- (i) Darwin to Netherlands East Indies.
- ✓ (j) N.E.I. to the Philippines.
- (k) Coastal trade.

55. Methods of protection may be summarised as follows:-

- (a) Convoy.
- (b) Cover.
- (c) Patrol of focal and terminal areas by surface vessels and aircraft.
- (d) Routeing of shipping, either evasive or coast-wise. The latter, when feasible, requires :-
 - (i) Seaward cover by surface ships including A/S vessels.
 - (ii) Air cover and availability of air striking forces.
 - (iii) Protective minefields.

Convoy.

56. The volume of trade passing along the routes denoted in paragraph 54, the great distances involved and the number of warships available render impossible the adoption of a universal convoy system throughout the whole Eastern Theatre. We should therefore be prepared to provide escorted convoys as necessary to meet the following requirements :-

- (a) important troop movements (capital ship escort for the more important).
- (b) supply ships between Colombo (and Indian ports) and Malaya.
- (c) supply ships from Australia to Singapore and Netherlands East Indies.
- (d) shipping between America, Australia and New Zealand while in the Tasman area.

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The Commander in Chief of the Stations concerned will continue to arrange convoy escorts as hitherto, with the Commander in Chief, China, acting where necessary as the co-ordinating authority.

Routeing.

57. Routeing of independent sailings should be conducted on the following general lines :-

- (a) Shipping in the Indian Ocean, with the exception of that to and from Australia should be routed as far to the North as is feasible. No shipping to pass South of the Seychelles Group or at more than 100 miles South of Ceylon.
- (b) Wherever feasible, all shipping to be routed close inshore.
- (c) Australia to Aden shipping to be routed via Durban.
- (d) All shipping on Indian and Pacific Ocean routes to be evasively routed.

Protective Minefields.

58. It is not yet possible to consider the provision of protective minefields for inshore routeing in any area of the Eastern Theatre.

Disposition of Naval and Air Forces.

59. Naval Forces and air forces detailed primarily for defence of sea communications should be disposed with the following principles in view :-

- (a) prevention of the passage of enemy forces through the Netherlands East Indies.
- (b) cover of focal and terminal areas by both surface and air forces.
- (c) provision of escorts for convoys as in paragraph 56, without unduly affecting (a) and (b) above.
- (d) rapid concentration of forces employed in (b) above to deal with any attack on a particular section of a trade route.

60. A table giving the intended initial dispositions and functions of the naval forces of the Associated Powers in the Eastern Theatre, based on the foregoing principles, is attached as Appendix I, but it should be understood that offensive operations by the United States Pacific Fleet may so contain Japanese forces that it may be possible to release both naval and air forces allocated for trade protection for other operations.

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APRIL 1941.VI - PLAN FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF NAVAL FORCES..cont.DEFENCE OF SEA COMMUNICATIONS.....cont.PHASE II. .

61. In Phase II with the arrival of the British Far Eastern Fleet the balance of strength of naval forces in the Eastern Theatre will be altered considerably against Japan, and taking the Pacific and Indian Oceans as a whole, Japan would probably be in a position of inferiority.

62. The immediate object of the British Far Eastern Fleet is to operate from Singapore. While alone it is inferior to the Japanese Main Fleet, its strength should be sufficient to enable the Associated Powers to seize the initiative, launch powerful counter-attacks against such Japanese forces as may have established their position in territories of Associated Powers, and intensify the attack on Japanese forces, territories and sea communications.

63. In the unlikely event of it proving impossible for the British Fleet to operate from Singapore, it will operate from bases in the Indian Ocean with the object of securing our vital sea communications in the Indian Ocean and Australian and New Zealand areas, disputing any further advance by the enemy to the southward or westward, and if possible, relieving pressure on Malaya by operations in the Malacca Straits and against any enemy activities on the West coast of Malaya.

64. So many developments must precede the arrival of the British Far Eastern Fleet that it is not profitable to examine in greater detail the operations that would then be possible.

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APRIL 1941.VII - PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT OF LAND AND AIR FORCES.

65. The only land frontiers in the area to be guarded are those of Burma and Malaya.

66. The northern frontier of Malaya is strategically weak, and attack across it becomes possible after Japanese occupation of Southern Thailand, either by moving down the Isthmus, or after a landing.

67. In Java, Sumatra, the West coast of Malaya, Luzon, and Celebes, land communications are well developed. In all other areas, such communications are almost entirely absent and could only be improvised with great difficulty. Movement is chiefly coastwise by ship or by means of native boats up the rivers.

68. Except therefore in Burma and Northern Malaya, any enemy land forces moving to attack our territory must be sea-borne. This involves seizure of bases from which to operate naval and air forces and from which to advance to the objective, except that if the Philippines are attacked only advanced air bases will be required. Adequate air support is an essential requirement for a combined operation.

69. The most suitable objectives for enemy attack are the sea and air bases on which the defence mainly rests. The policy should therefore be to organise the defence system to give the greatest possible security to these bases. This, together with the denial of potential air and naval bases to enemy occupation, will be the primary task of the land forces. We can thus fully employ the mobility of air forces both independently and in co-operation with naval submarine and surface forces, to effect concentrations against any naval forces or sea-borne expeditions during their approach and landing, to discover and destroy enemy air forces and to operate dispersed for the protection of sea communications.

70. The method adopted to implement the policy set out in paragraph 69 above, is to establish protected air bases along the line Burma - Malaya - Borneo - Philippines - New Guinea - Solomons - New Hebrides - Fiji - Tonga. This line of bases is supported by a second line from Sumatra through the Netherlands East Indies and the East coast of Australia to New Zealand. At present the numbers of aircraft and land forces available are below what is considered to be the safe minimum required, but to some extent the power to concentrate air forces quickly makes up for lack of numbers. The move of land forces, in the circumstances, is much more difficult.

71. The Associated Powers undertake responsibility for air operations, including reconnaissance, in the following spheres:-

(a) U.S.A.

(1) Pacific area as defined in paragraph 33.

Note. The extent of the United States support to

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APRIL 1941.VII - PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT OF LAND AND AIR FORCES. (contd.)

the British air forces in areas (d) and (e) cannot be defined until further information is received from the Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, as to his intentions.

- (11) Philippine Islands including the Sulu Se. area and bounded on the West by a line joining Kudat to Cape Padaran. On the South it is bounded by a line joining Kudat to Sangi Island, and thence to 4° North 140° East.
- (b) N.E.I. On the West: 92° East. On the North: the line of the equator from 92° East to 113° East, thence North-East to the frontier of Sarawak and from thence following the frontier to the sea. The boundary continues N.E. along the coast of British North Borneo to Kudat, thence East to Sangi Island and thence to 4° North, 140° East. On the South: a line drawn along 13° South from 92° East to 120° East, thence just excluding the Islands of Roti, Seman, Timor and Molu to Cape Valsche, continuing along the South shore of Dutch New Guinea to its boundary in 141° East, thence North.
- (c) British. The area northward and westward of the Dutch sphere.
- (d) Australia. The area southward and eastward of the Dutch sphere as far East as the western boundary of the New Zealand Naval Station and the northern reconnaissance line from New Guinea - New Hebrides (Sandwich Island).
- (e) New Zealand. The area of the New Zealand Naval Station, excluding the Pacific area, and the northern reconnaissance line from New Hebrides (Sandwich Island) - Fiji - Tonga.

AIR RECONNAISSANCE AND STRIKING FORCES IN THE PRECAUTIONARY STAGE.

72. On the introduction of the "precautionary stage", air reconnaissance will be intensified throughout the whole of the Eastern Theatre and co-ordinated with naval reconnaissance. Air striking forces will be prepared to attack raiders, naval forces or expeditions.

73. To enable concentrations to take place to deal with major operations in specially important localities, certain air base areas are prepared to receive and operate reinforcements from other areas. Such areas are Burma, Southern Malaya, West and East Borneo, South Celebes, Ambon, Timor, Luzon in the Philippine Islands, and the Australian and New Zealand areas. It is important that the aerodromes concerned should be adequately supplied with fuel, bombs

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and S.A.A. for the use of reinforcing squadrons, reasonably secured against air and land attack and with good signal communications.

74. As a basis for planning it can be assumed that the forces available for reinforcing will be as follows:-

From Malaya	4 (B) Squadrons.
From Netherlands East Indies	3 (B), 1 (F) Squadrons.
From Philippines (in event of evacuation only)	All available.
From Australia	Up to possible 2 (B) Squadrons for the Ambon - Timor area.

Flying boats are very short in the whole area. It is impracticable to lay down now from which area or in what numbers they might be spared for reinforcement, but it is important that the mobility of flying boats shall be exploited to the full to make good the deficiency in numbers.

75. The maintenance of a secure air route, adequately supplied with fuel, permitting reinforcement via India through Burma, Malaya, Netherlands East Indies to Australia, with a branch to Luzon, is of great importance.

76. The Conference recommends that it should be a definite object of the Associated Powers to build up the capacity to operate aircraft offensively against Japan to the maximum extent in their power with due regard to the main object, which is the defeat of Germany and Italy.

77. Plans will be prepared and co-ordinated for air bombardment of targets on the Japanese lines of sea communications in the South China Sea and Pelew areas, and objectives in China, Formosa and the Pelew Islands. It may be possible also to attack targets in Japan from air bases to be established in China.

OTHER OPERATIONS.

78. (a) Support to Chinese Regular Forces by financial aid, provision of equipment and establishment of military and air missions. A British nucleus Mission is already established, and a United States Mission possible combined with the British Mission would be of considerable value, and it is recommended that preparations to establish it should now be made.

(b) The operating of Chinese Guerilla Forces armed, equipped and directed by the Associated Powers. Steps have already been taken by the British Government to organise such operations. It is recommended that the United States Government organise similar guerilla forces.

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APRIL 1941.VII - PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT OF LAND AND AIR FORCES (contd.)

(c) The organisation of subversive activities, sabotage and corruption in Japan and Japanese occupied territories. Activities of this kind are already being organised by the British Government. It is recommended that the United States Government should also undertake such activities and co-ordinate them closely with those of the British.

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APRIL 1941.VIII - LIAISON, COMMUNICATIONS.LIAISON.

79. Arrangements for the exchange of liaison officers and observers are already well under way and the Conference does not recommend any special extension of these. It is recommended, however, that the Liaison Officers and Observers of the Dominions and Associated Powers at Singapore should be instructed that, on the outbreak of hostilities they will be available for duty ✓ on the Combined Staff of the C-in-C., Far East or C-in-C., China.

80. A list of the present Liaison Officers and Observers is appended for reference as Appendix III.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The following is a summary of the present situation :-

(Radio)

81. Point-to-point W/T Services.

- (a) Singapore, Batavia and Australian W/T Stations communicate direct by W/T at routine times daily.
- (b) Arrangements have been made for Cavite to Join in, making a four cornered W/T point-to-point service (Singapore - Batavia - Cavite - Australia). Up to the present Cavite has not taken part. It is considered desirable that permission should be given by the United States Naval Authorities for Cavite to open up direct W/T communication with stations named, as soon as possible. ✓
- (c) No arrangements have been made for a point-to-point service between Australia, New Zealand and Honolulu. It is now considered that such a point-to-point service is required and should be arranged directly by the parties concerned. ✓

82. Communications to and from 'Associated' Ships.

- (a) The normal method is for ships to pass their messages to their own shore bases, the latter forwarding relevant messages (via the services in 81 above) to other Commanders-in-Chief.
- (b) Ships can, if desired, pass messages direct to 'Associated' shore stations.

/ (contd.)

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Page 28.AMERICAN - DUTCH - BRITISH CONVERSATIONS,
APRIL 1941.VIII - LIAISON, COMMUNICATIONS.(contd.)83. Communications between 'Associated' ships
in an operation.

A means is provided whereby, at a certain stage of an operation, Associated ships may be ordered to set watch on a common wave to allow direct communication between them.

CODES AND CYPHERS.

84. The following are in force now or will be distributed and brought into force when available :-

- (a) A cypher for use between Flag Officers afloat and ashore and Senior Officers Commanding Ports, etc. (Dutch ENIGMA at present in use, with very limited distribution. A British cypher is being distributed now and will be brought into force about the end of May 1941).
- (b) A cypher for use between all ships and shore authorities (in production in England now).
- (c) A code (with low degree of security) for use between all ships and shore authorities. It also contains Self Evident Code for use between ships and aircraft. (Distributed and ready to be brought into force now).
- (d) A code for use between ground stations and aircraft or ships and aircraft (in production in Far East now).
- (e) A book of Call Signs (in course of distribution now).
- (f) Recognition signals for use between ships, aircraft and signal stations at defended ports (distributed and ready to be brought into force now).

85. In addition to the above the following books are distributed and in force in the Far East for use between British and Dutch ships and aircraft :-

- (a) Code as in 84(c).
- (b) Call signs as in 84(e)
- (c) Recognition signals as in 84(f).

CONFERENCE OF SIGNAL OFFICERS.

86. A further conference of Communication Officers will be required and will probably be convened by Commander-in-Chief, China, about the end of May.

/ (contd.)

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APRIL 1941.APPENDIX I.LIST OF INITIAL DISPOSITIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF NAVAL FORCES.

SHIP	BASE	FUNCTION
(a) <u>British Commonwealth Forces - East Indies Station.</u>		
GLASGOW RANCHI CARTHAGE KANIMBLA	Durban	Cover to shipping from Cape Area through Mozambique Channel.
SHROPSHIRE ENTERPRISE HERMLES (or EAGLE) 4 HUNTS (if available)	Seychelles Mombasa	Cover to shipping from N. end Mazambique Channel towards Maldives area. Reconnaissance over Saya de Malha area. Escort of troop and supply convoys as required.
1 Cruiser 2 A/S Sloops	Maldives	Cover to shipping to westward of Maldives to Ceylon. Escort of troop and supply convoys in this area as necessary.
EMERALD COLOMBO EAGLE (if available) 2 A/S Sloops	Colombo	Cover to shipping in Ceylon area and to eastward. Escort of troop and supply convoys to and from Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea as requisite.
CERES CAPETOWN	Trincomalee Madras. Calcutta	Cover of shipping in Bay of Bengal. Escort of troop and supply convoys from Indian ports as requisite in conjunction with China cruisers operating from Penang area.
CALEDON DIECTOR ANTENOR	Bombay	Cover of shipping in Arabian Sea. Escort of troop and supply convoys Bombay-Aden, Bombay - Colombo as requisite.
RENOWN ARK ROYAL 5 destroyers (Force "H")	Trincomalee	General cover to route Seychelles to Aden. Escort of troop convoys Fremantle - Colombo and onward as necessary. Escort or cover of troop convoys in Bay of Bengal as requisite. Destroyers A/S protection of Force H in terminal areas.

/ (cont)

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SHIP	BASE	FUNCTION
(a) <u>British Commonwealth Forces - East Indies Station</u> (continued)		
SEABELLE FALMOUTH 3 R.I.N. Sloops.	Bahrein Basra Khor Kuwait	Protection of shipping in Persian Gulf. Patrol of Straits of Ormuz.
3 Sloops	Aden Suez	Protection of shipping in Red Sea. Patrol and convoy cover in Perin Strait.
(b) <u>British Commonwealth Forces - China Station.</u>		
DAUNTLESS DURBAN DANAE	Singapore and Penang	Protection of shipping in Malacca Straits and to westward.
(c) <u>British Commonwealth Forces - Australian Station.</u>		
AUSTRALIA CANBERRA	Operating in and from S.W. Pacific.	Act as Hunting Force in Indian Ocean or SW Pacific. Escort of troop convoys to Middle East as far as Fremantle. Escort of supplies Fremantle to Malaya.
2 6-inch cruisers.	Operating in S.W. Pacific.	Act as Hunting Force in S.W. Pacific. Escort trans-Tasman convoys. Escort troop convoys to Tulagi and Vila. Provide cover for supplies to islands in S.W. Pacific.
1 6-inch cruiser.	Operate in N. Australian waters.	Escort troop convoys to Ambon and Koepong. Escort reinforcements to Singapore. (Then to be at disposition of C-in-C China).
<u>Note:</u> Cruisers in the Tasman Sea will provide a degree of cover for the east coast trade.		
ADELAIDE @ MANOORA WESTRALIA	Melbourne	Escort westbound shipping from Melbourne and Adelaide to Fremantle and/or point of dispersal for independent routing.
@ ADELAIDE - effectiveness considered to be that of an A.M.C. only		

/ (contd.)

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SHIP	BASE	FUNCTION
<u>(d) British Commonwealth Forces - New Zealand Station.</u>		
ACHILLES LEANDER MONOWAI	Auckland	(1) Escort of troop convoy. (2) Protection of eastbound shipping (N.Z. - Panama) within focal area. (3) Protection of N.Z.-Fiji-Vancouver convoys, in focal area. (4) Troop movements in Pacific Islands. (5) General defence of territory and shipping on New Zealand Station.
<u>(e) Dutch Naval Forces in Netherlands East Indies.</u>		
JAVA 2 destroyers	Sourabaya	Under orders of Commander-in-Chief, China. Escort of important convoys.
DE RUYTER TROMP 4 destroyers 6 submarines	Sourabaya	Defence of straits and passages in N.E.I., and general action against enemy forces in N.E.I. waters.
3 submarines	Sourabaya	Local defence of Sourabaya.
2 submarines	A _s requisite	Available for offensive action in S.China Sea south of line Cape Padaran-Kudat under C-in-C., China.
<u>(f) United States Asiatic Fleet.</u>		
HOUSTON MARBLEHEAD 13 destroyers (1200-ton class)	Singapore	Under orders of Commander-in-Chief, China. (1) To attack enemy naval forces and sea communications. (2) To escort important convoys.
17 submarines	Manila	Under orders of Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet. (1) Defence of Philippines. (2) Attack on enemy naval forces and sea communications.

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APRIL 1941.II - SUMMARY OF SITUATION.

5. The war situation is that obtaining on the 20th April, 1941.
6. The Associated Powers are convinced that any action against one is of vital importance for the others. 2
7. JAPAN's object is assumed to be to obtain complete political and economic domination of South East Asia and the islands in the Far East Area in order to secure control for herself of the sources of vital war supplies.
8. Knowledge by Japan that aggression by her against one of the Associated Powers would immediately lead to united resistance by all might prevent war.
9. In spite of the signing of a Non-Aggression Pact between Russia and Japan, it is considered that the Japanese will not feel relieved of responsibility for maintaining considerable forces in the North to guard against the possibility of a change of policy by Russia. The signing of a Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Russia has not led to the growth of mutual trust between these countries.
10. The influence of China is likely to be considerable. The Russians declare that they are not reducing their military support to China. Nothing could give Chinese resistance more encouragement than if the Associated Powers went to war with Japan. Considerable progress has already been made in organising British assistance to China. A scheme for the operation of Air Forces and Guerillas controlled and advised by the British is already well advanced in the planning stage.

COURSES OF ACTION OPEN TO JAPAN.

11. To achieve her object Japan must assume the offensive; she can launch attacks against any of the following:-
- (a) The Philippines and/or Hong Kong.
 - (b) Malaya, direct or via Thailand.
 - (c) Burma, via Thailand and Indo-China.
 - (d) Borneo or the Northern line of Netherlands East Indies.
 - (e) Sea communications in all areas, (including the establishment of advanced bases).

/ (contd.).....

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APRIL 1941.II - SUMMARY OF SITUATION (contd.)

12. Attacks on :-

(a) The Southern line of Netherlands East Indies
(Java - Sumatra) and

(b) Australia and New Zealand

are ruled out as initial operations.

*While of low priority
of feasibility, should
not be ruled out*Attack on the Philippines and/or Hong Kong.

13. This would eliminate a serious threat to the flank of further Japanese expeditions to the Southward. All the other possible lines of attack would be hampered by an active United States naval and air base at Manila.

It would also be the nearest objective to Japan and so easiest to cover as regards air support and lines of communications. If successful, the attack would provide useful bases from which further expeditions could be launched.

The disadvantage to the Japanese of an attack on the Philippines is that the economic resources of the islands are of comparatively little value for war purposes, so that it would be primarily a strategical move towards Japan's main object.

An attack on the Philippines might well be combined with an attack on Hong Kong on similar principles.

Attack on Malaya.

14. An attack on Malaya via Thailand would have to be made in two stages :-

(a) Political domination which would give some indication of intention;

(b) Military occupation which would take time and would provide an opportunity of forestalling action in the Kra Isthmus.

On the other hand, attack by direct landing on the East coast of the Malay Peninsula could be undertaken without preliminary warning, but requires a greater degree of control of the sea and air communications.

15. It must be obvious to Japan that the forces available for the defence of Malaya have been greatly reinforced during the last six months, and an attack on them is becoming a much more formidable proposition than it was in October, even taking into account only the British forces available on the spot. Either line of attack, if undertaken before the reduction of Hong Kong and Manila, involves a long and precarious line of communications.

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APRIL 1941.II - SUMMARY OF SITUATION (contd.)Attack on Burma.

16. Attack on Burma only becomes a possibility after occupation of Indo-China and Thailand and prior indication of Japanese intention would be available. Even after occupation of Thailand the routes to Burma are so poor that they severely limit the size of forces available to attack Burma. The great advantage to Japan would be the cutting of communications between Burma and China, which would have a disastrous effect upon Chinese resistance. It would also cut the air route between India and Malaya except for long range aircraft.

The principal threat to Burma and Eastern India would be of air bombardment on oil refineries and docks at Rangoon and possibly on vulnerable points in Eastern India (Digboi, Calcutta, Tatanagar).

Although the immediate economic gains to Japan of an occupation of Burma would be negligible, the denial of Burma's resources to us would be serious. ?

Attack on Borneo or the Northern Line of Netherlands East Indies.

17. Although Manila and Hong Kong are on the flanks of the line of communications of Japan, an attack launched from an advanced base such as Kamranh Bay or Pelew on Borneo would facilitate the subsequent reduction of the Philippines, provide a base for air attack on Singapore, and assist further Southward advance. It might also establish control of vital sources of oil supplies. An attack on other points in the Northern line of the Netherlands East Indies would provide useful subsidiary bases for further expeditions.

The possibility of attack on the oil fields by landing operations in conjunction with parachute troops cannot be overlooked and is being provided against.

Attack on Sea Communications.

18. Attack on sea communications will certainly form part of any Japanese plan of action and may constitute a most serious threat to the war effort of the Associated Powers. In spite of the influence of the United States Pacific Fleet, Japan's local naval superiority in the Eastern Theatre (paragraph 34) places her in a position to devote a limited number of cruisers and submarines, in addition to a considerable number of armed merchant raiders, to attack on sea communications in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Though the distances involved are considerable, they present no greater difficulties than those confronting Germany in operating raiders in the same areas. The problem for the Japanese is closely connected with the use of isolated harbours

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APRIL 1941.II - SUMMARY OF SITUATION (contd.)

fuelling bases, and also with the passage of Japanese ships through the straits and narrows of the Netherlands East Indies.

19. The Associated Powers must therefore be prepared for a greatly increased and sustained scale of attack on their sea communications in the Eastern Theatre, including attack by armed merchant raiders and a limited number of cruisers and submarines, operating singly or in company. This will be concerted with attacks by German raiders.

20. Active operations by the United States Pacific Fleet against Japanese bases in the Marshall and Caroline Islands may have the effect of considerably reducing the scale of attack on sea communications in the Southern Pacific, at least as regards warships.

REMARKS ON POSSIBLE JAPANESE COURSES OF ACTION.

21. Until the forces, particularly submarine and air, maintained in the Philippines, are eliminated, Japan would be taking great risks in launching an attack either West of them on Malaya or the Netherlands East Indies, or East of them on the Netherlands East Indies or Australia and New Zealand.

22. The question whether Japan is in a position to launch two or more sea-borne attacks simultaneously is influenced by the following factors :-

- (a) Japan not established in South Indo-China and Bangkok area.
- (b) Japan established in South Indo-China and Bangkok area.

23. Under the conditions of 22(a) all Japanese forces attacking Malaya must be moved by sea. The Japanese can never afford to ignore the needs of home defence against the Pacific and Asiatic Fleets. While maintaining in Home waters a force slightly inferior to the U.S.A. Fleets she can just provide sufficient covering and escort forces to protect her first expedition against small scale raids by surface craft and submarines. For the passage of subsequent expeditions the same warships could be used but escorts of supply ships would be additional commitments. In consequence, simultaneous attacks on more than one of the objectives described in paragraph 11 can only be undertaken if the Japanese accept great risks.

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24. Under the conditions of 22(b), the risks attendant on simultaneous attacks on any two of these would be reduced.

25. If it is clear to Japan that the united forces of the British Empire, the United States and the Dutch would meet aggression on her part, her immediate intervention in the war is unlikely. The only situation which would be likely to appeal to her as offering outstanding chances would be such a deterioration in our position in Europe that it appeared probable that all United States and British effort would have to be concentrated in that theatre for a considerable time. On the other hand, such is the national psychology of the Japanese that acts of hysteria which might lead to the plunging of Japan into war must be faced. It is for this reason in particular that it is necessary for combined plans to be made by the Associated Powers to meet threats to their interests which may occur at very short notice.

/ (contd.)

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APRIL 1941.III - NECESSITY FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION.

26. Our collective military strength can only be developed fully if our Governments agree to act together, should any of them judge that the Japanese have taken action which necessitated active military counter-action. It is agreed that any of the following actions by Japan would create a position in which our failure to take active military counter-action would place us at such military disadvantage, should Japan subsequently attack, that we should then advise our respective Governments to authorize such action:-

- (a) A direct act of war by Japanese armed forces against the Territory or Mandated Territory of any of the Associated Powers. It is not possible to define accurately what would constitute "a direct act of war". It is possible for a minor incident to occur which, although technically an act of war, could be resolved by diplomatic action. It is recognized that the decision as to whether such an incident is an act of war must lie with the Government concerned.
- (b) The movement of the Japanese forces into any part of Thailand to the West of 100° East or to the South of 10° North.
- (c) The movement of a large number of Japanese warships, or of a convoy of merchant ships escorted by Japanese warships, which from its position and course was clearly directed upon the Philippine Islands, the East coast of the Isthmus of Kra or the East coast of Malaya, or had crossed the parallel of 6° North between Malaya and the Philippines, a line from the Gulf of Davao to Waigeo Island, or the Equator East of Waigeo.
- (d) The movement of Japanese forces into Portuguese Timor.
- (e) The movement of Japanese forces into New Caledonia or the Loyalty Islands.

27. The Conference recommends that steps should be taken to evolve a satisfactory procedure to ensure immediate decision to take counter-measures. This applies particularly to 26 (c) above.

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28. To ensure that we are not diverted from the major object of the defeat of Germany and Italy, our main strategy in the Far East at the present time must be defensive. There, are, however, certain measures open to us which will assist greatly in the defence of our interests in the Far East, but which are themselves offensive.

29. It is important to organise air operations against Japanese occupied territory and against Japan herself. It is probable that her collapse will occur as a result of economic blockade, naval pressure and air bombardment. This latter form of pressure is the most direct and one which Japan particularly fears.

In addition to the defensive value of operations submarine and air forces from Luzon, referred to in para. 21 above there is even greater value from the offensive point of view in holding this island. It is therefore recommended that the defences of Luzon should be strengthened and that every effort should be made to maintain a bombing force in the island in addition to building up a similar force in China.

30. Other positive activities which may be undertaken are as follows:-

- (a) Support to the Chinese Regular Forces by financial aid and provision of equipment.
- (b) Operation of Guerillas in China.
- (c) Organisation of subversive activities in Japan.

31. So far as economic pressure is concerned, the entry of the United States of America, the British Empire, and the Netherlands East Indies into a war against Japan would automatically restrict Japanese trade to that with the coast of Asia. Since China will be in the war against her, and our submarine and air forces should be able to interfere considerably with trade from Thailand and Indo-China, a very large measure of economic blockade would thus be forced upon Japan from the outset.

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32. The following arrangements are subject to the right of any of the Governments of the Associated Powers or British Dominions to withdraw or withhold its forces, provided that prior information of such an intention is passed to the Strategic Commander concerned.

33. The United States will undertake responsibility for strategic direction of its own and British Forces in the Pacific area, together with Islands therein contained and adjacent continental land areas. The Pacific Area is defined as area North of 30° North and West of 140° East: North of Equator and East of 140° East; South of Equator and East of 180° to South American coast and 74° West. The United States will support British Naval Forces in regions South of Equator as far West as 155° East. The Far Eastern Area is defined as area from coast of China in 30° North, East to 140° East, thence South to Equator, thence East to 141° East, thence South to boundary between British and Dutch New Guinea on South coast thence Westward to 11° South, 120° East, thence South to 13° South, thence West to 92° East, thence North to 20° North, thence to boundary between India and Burma.

34. For the purposes of this report the term "Eastern Theatre" is used to indicate the whole Sea area included in the East Indies, China, Australia and New Zealand British naval stations except parts included in the Pacific Area as defined in the preceding paragraph.

NAVAL FORCES.

35. In order to attain greater flexibility and economy in the employment of naval forces in the Eastern Theatre, it is recommended that the British Commander-in-Chief, China Station, should exercise unified strategical direction over all naval forces, excluding those employed solely on local defence, or operating under Commander-in-Chief, United States Asiatic Fleet.

This direction would include movements of warships from any part of the area to that point where the Commander-in-Chief, China, considers they can best be employed.

In exercising this direction the Commander-in-Chief, China, must be fully acquainted with the operations being carried out from day to day in all areas concerned; and he will decide which of the regional operations must be modified in order to deal with a more dangerous situation elsewhere.

While the Commander-in-Chief, China, will thus direct the dispositions of naval forces throughout the area and the general plan for their employment, the Commander-in-Chief of each station would retain full operational command of forces within that station.

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APRIL 1941.APPENDIX II.SYSTEM OF AIR REINFORCEMENT.

It is intended that the system of air reinforcement shall conform to the following general principles :-

- (a) If any reinforcing squadrons are ordered to proceed to the Philippines in the event of the main attack falling on those islands, they will be found from the Netherlands East Indies squadrons mentioned in paragraph 74. Such squadrons will be replaced in the Netherlands East Indies from Malaya. ✓
- (b) If the main attack falls on the Netherlands East Indies the Malayan squadrons will proceed to Borneo; initially 2 to Sinkawang II, and 2 to Samarinda II.
- (c) If the main attack falls on Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies (B) and (F) squadrons will proceed to Malaya.
- (d) If the circumstances occur when the evacuation of air forces from LUZON is required the United States (F) and (B) Squadrons will proceed to Samarinda II in Borneo, initially for operations under control of the Dutch Command. The Flying Boats will proceed to Singapore for operations under the control of the British Commander-in-Chief, China Station. ✓
- (e) The Australian (B) Squadrons will be prepared to operate as a striking force from Ambon as soon as possible after war breaks out. When not required for striking force duties, they will be based on Darwin for reconnaissance and striking duties in the Darwin - Timor areas. Australian land force detachments will proceed to Ambon and Timor to reinforce the Dutch garrison at Ambon and to take over military control of Dutch Timor. ✓

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British Observers U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA	Commander C.R.L. Parry, R.N.
U.S.S. BOISE	Lieutenant Commdr. C.C. Martell, R.N.
U.S.S. STERRENT	Lieutenant Commdr. Hon. D.C. Cairns, R.N.

MANILA.

Dutch Observer.	Commander H.D. Lindner, R.N.N.
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BATAVIA.

British Naval Liaison Officer	Commander J.B. Heath, R.N.
British Air Liaison Officer	Squadron Leader Watkins, R.A.F.
Australia Naval Liaison Officer	Commander V.E. Kennedy, R.A.N.
Australia Air Liaison Officer	Wing Commander Thomas, R.A.A.F.

SINGAPORE.

United States of America Naval Observer	Captain A.M.R. Allen, U.S.N.
United States of America Army Observer	Lieutenant Colonel F.G. Brink, U.S.A.
Dutch Naval Liaison Officer	Captain L.G.L. Van der Kun.
Dutch Military Liaison Officer	Major J.M.J. Wegner.
New Zealand Liaison Officers	Group Captain L. Darvall, M.C., R.A.F.
	Commander E.K.H. St. Aubyn, D.S.C., R.N.

AUSTRALIA.

United States Naval Attache	Commander L.D. Causey, U.S.N.
United States Naval Observer (Darwin)	Commander M. Collins, U.S.N.
Dutch Naval Liaison Officer	Commander G.B. Salm, R.N.N.
New Zealand Liaison Officer	Group Captain T. Wilkes, R.N.Z.A.F.

NEW ZEALAND.

United States Naval Observer	Commander Olding, U.S.N.
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COLOMBO.

United States Naval Observer	Commander H.M. Lammers, U.S.N.
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