THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

IN NEW ZEALAND'S DEFENCE POLICY, 1935-1939

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### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Background to 1935</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Policy Before 1935</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Attitudes to Defence Policy Before the Election</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand's Early Involvement in the Pacific</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 &quot;Cochrane's Impact&quot;, 1936-37</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan: The Aggressor</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Zealand Labour Government</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Policy Reviewed</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Zealand Air Force</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochrane: The Right Man</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 &quot;Island Scramble&quot;, 1936-37</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America in the Pacific</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Aviation in the Pacific</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio in the Pacific</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pan Am Agreement</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Civil Aviation Conference</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute over Canton and Enderbury Islands</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Policy Questioned</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1937 Imperial Conference</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 &quot;Islands Surveyed&quot;, 1937-38</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Island Surveys</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achilles Expedition, 1937</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Planning Influenced</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Air-Route Policy</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Munich Crisis</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sydney Conference</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Planning Inspired</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Planning Accelerated</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 The Pacific Defence Conference, 1939</strong></td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The formation of defence policy, like that of any policy, is by nature a continually changing process. In the four years prior to the Second World War, New Zealand's defence policy saw a transition of emphasis and a focus on the Pacific. During the years 1935 to 1939, the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands was recognised and became an accepted part of New Zealand defence policy. The aim of this thesis is to show how the islands achieved this level of importance. It is first necessary, however, to define the issues involved.

Defence policy can not be totally separated from foreign policy but must rather be seen as one facet of it. "After all, the essential aims of New Zealand's foreign policy...are to protect the national security, to promote the national interests, and to advance a national viewpoint on matters of concern to us."* Defence policy is central to the first of these objectives, the maintenance of national security. Defence policy is then itself divided into different categories. In this thesis the terms 'imperial defence, 'regional defence' and 'local defence' are used. Imperial defence refers to defence schemes of the British Empire (which included New Zealand), and in particular the Singapore strategy of dependence on a British Fleet being stationed at Singapore. Local defence

refers to defence policy as related to the defence of New Zealand territory. Finally regional defence is used to denote defence planning which has extended out of New Zealand territory into the Pacific area. The advent of Japan as a potential threat to New Zealand in the thirties necessitated a reassessment of Dominion defence planning. The scale of attack was expected to be in the form of raids, that is, if Japan decided to expand southwards, she would first occupy Pacific Islands close to New Zealand which could then act as jump-off bases for raids on the Dominion. Consequently New Zealand had to extend her local defence planning on to a regional scale so as to protect the Pacific Islands as well as New Zealand itself.

The term "Pacific Islands" is often used quite loosely in this thesis, and it does not specify which islands are being referred to. In this context the term "is intended to define that part of Oceania which is contained in the...New Zealand Naval Station"* not including the mainland of New Zealand. The islands of particular concern are to the north of New Zealand and include, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Fanning Island, Niue, and the Tokelau and Cook Islands. Other islands are dealt with for various reasons, but it is these islands, especially Fiji and Fanning Island, to which New Zealand extends her defence responsibilities.

There were intimations before 1935 of the importance of the Pacific Islands to New Zealand, but it was not until after the first Labour Government came to power that the

* "The Strategic Significance of the Pacific Islands" (draft) August 1937, AIR 1 132/1/6, Vol.1.
significance of the islands in New Zealand's defence planning was established. It must be stressed at this stage that the importance of the islands never surpassed that of imperial defence but rather regional defence was elevated to a parity with imperial defence by the time of the Pacific Defence Conference. The catalyst and influence of the Labour Government on defence policy are examined in Chapter Two. Particular emphasis is given to the growth of the Air Force and the role of Group-Captain Cochrane in its development into an effective armed service. The Air Force receives such special attention because its emergence as the most suitable means of defence for New Zealand facilitated the extension of defence planning into the Pacific Islands. Air power necessitated concern for the islands and the emergence of longer range aircraft made reconnaissance and the monitoring of Japanese actions in the islands possible. The Navy and Army were of course still as important as they had been before the rise of the Air Force, but they have only been dealt with in passing because it is the Air Force which in particular contributes to the significance of the islands.

It was not only military air power which enhanced the islands' importance, but civil aviation also played a vital role. Chapter Three traces the development of commercial aviation, and in particular that of Pan American Airways, in the Pacific and the consequent "island scramble" to assert sovereignty and gain landing rights in the islands. Attention is also given to the 1937 Imperial Conference which marks a turning point in attitudes within
the Empire towards the importance of the Pacific Islands. Chapter Four sees action in the Pacific gain momentum. Island surveys, of a preliminary nature had already been made, but by late 1938 the urgency to establish island bases coupled with the deteriorating international situation resulted in a more extensive expedition than ever before. The New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey concluded in 1939 in time for the report to be used by the Pacific Defence Conference. This Conference, initiated and hosted by New Zealand, exemplified the significance of the Pacific Islands by 1939. Thus it can be seen how the islands became such an important and integral part of New Zealand's defence thinking by the eve of the Second World War.
CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO 1935

The recognition of the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands in New Zealand's defence policy primarily occurred between 1935 and 1939. However, prior to 1935 the Pacific Islands still held an important position in New Zealand's external policy and they had not been totally ignored in the Dominion's defence planning. Traditionally New Zealand was a true "dutiful daughter" of the British Empire. Her politicians were characterised by loyal imperialism and Britain's lead was usually followed in foreign affairs. Examples of New Zealand's loyalty to the Empire can be quickly recognised in her contributions to imperial wars during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the Boer War the Dominion was quick to send troops to South Africa to help the Empire and during the First World War New Zealand's contribution was one of the highest per capita in the Empire. Nor did New Zealand hesitate in offering help when it may have been required, for example, in 1920 for rebellion-stricken Mesopotamia and during the Chanak crisis in 1922 when it looked like the Empire might become embroiled in yet another war.

The Dominion's loyalty to the Empire prevented to a certain extent an independent outlook on foreign affairs, however a New Zealand voice was not entirely absent. But, differences of opinion and controversial issues were
never aired outside the Empire. After the First World War New Zealand became a member of the League of Nations and thenceforth, especially under the First Labour Government, New Zealand would, on occasions, voice independent views.¹

Until the First Labour Government came to power there was not much development in more independent-minded defence policy and regional issues were not given much priority in defence. The Pacific Islands had, however, often featured as important in New Zealand's foreign policy, and it is worth looking at New Zealand's involvement in the Pacific prior to 1935, as well as defence policy prior to this time, as these two separate issues merge after 1935 to the point where they became inseparable. That is, by 1939 the Pacific Islands are a strategically essential part of New Zealand's defence planning.

DEFENCE POLICY BEFORE 1935

Until the 1930s New Zealand's defence requirements were catered for under the Imperial umbrella which consisted of "a world-wide security system based on the strength of an acknowledged great power" with policy and decision-making based in London.² New Zealand's security was consequently dependent on Imperial protection with the Royal Navy providing the main source of Imperial defence. The Dominion's interests were thus best served by helping ensure the Empire's naval supremacy rather than by attempting to build up a force of her own which would never be large enough to be practicable. Consequently, Sir Joseph Ward's
gift, on behalf of New Zealand, of a battlecruiser to the Royal Navy in 1909 can be seen as supporting this policy.  

After the First World War, New Zealand began to reassess her defence policy. In 1919 she was visited by two British defence experts. Group Captain Arthur Vere Bettingham arrived first and advised the Dominion on air policy, and Admiral of the Fleet, Viscount Jellicoe arrived soon after as part of his mission on post-war naval policy to the Dominions. Although they represented different branches of the armed services, the basic assessment of the two officers was very similar: Japan was recognised as posing a potential threat to New Zealand, Bettingham and Jellicoe both expressed doubts in trusting treaties and they saw defence policy in an Imperial context. That is, defence policy was aimed at protecting the Empire which included trade routes and sea communications as well as defending the territory of New Zealand. Both experts also pointed out the vulnerability of strategic points in the country, for example, the four main centres - Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin - were open to attack because of their situation on the coastline. Finally, and most important to this thesis, Bettingham and Jellicoe both mentioned the strategic importance of the Pacific Islands to New Zealand's defence policy.

Preoccupation with the election at the end of 1919 prevented any serious consideration being given to defence problems, however "where obliged to act, the government was generally guided by Jellicoe's report in both air and naval fields". Defence policy in the 1920s, however, was
characterised by financial stringency which resulted in the three armed services competing with each other for the very limited available funds.

Meanwhile Great Britain, also having to economise, was at the same time facing pressure because of the decreasing superiority of the Royal Navy over those of the United States of America and Japan. This problem, alongside that of the American aversion to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance led the British Cabinet to support the idea for a Conference to discuss defence issues and especially disarmament. At this same time, Canada expressed her desire for a specific Conference of Pacific Powers to look at Far Eastern and Pacific questions, however, neither New Zealand nor Australia showed any interest and it did not eventuate. 5

In 1922, the Washington Conference resulted in the establishment of several treaties, one of the most important of which was the Five Power Naval Limitation Treaty. Limitations covering the building of capital ships resulted in tonnage ratios which gave the United States of America and the British Empire parity with each other and superiority over Japan. The treaty also established boundaries in the Pacific area (ending in the west at longitude 110°), within which the building of new fortifications was prohibited. 6 With the exclusion of Singapore from these restrictions and the cessation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the importance of a naval base at Singapore was increased tremendously in Imperial defence planning. The limitations on building capital ships suited the British policy of economy in defence expenditure and defence planners then began to work on the assumption
that there would be no war for ten years. This "ten-year rule" which resulted, assumed that there would not be a war for ten years so it was not necessary to spend what funds were available on defence measures. Consequently there was a general across-the-board reduction in defence expenditure.

New Zealand generally supported the agreements made at Washington but there was some dissatisfaction concerning the replacement of the solid Anglo-Japanese Alliance by the more vague Pacific (or Four Power) Treaty. Sir John Salmond, New Zealand's representative at the Conference, described it as 'a treaty of harmonious consultation and co-operation' as it was more an agreement to discuss issues rather than a commitment to action. As Japan was seen as the main potential enemy such a change increased the urgency of improving Imperial defence arrangements in the Far East and the Pacific. During the inter-war years Singapore was to become the key to Imperial defence in the East and the Pacific. The "Singapore strategy" briefly meant that if trouble arose in the Pacific or Far East, then Britain would send a fleet to operate in this area from a base at Singapore, that is once the necessary facilities were completed. The security of Singapore was thus seen as essential, especially by Australia and New Zealand whose own security was dependent on this "Singapore strategy". In meeting the costs of the naval base, Britain encouraged the Dominions to forsake local development and contribute as much as possible to Imperial defence. Although the Dominions generally agreed, they did not totally neglect local needs. For example, Australia maintained its own
navy and New Zealand often argued to keep some light cruisers at home rather than give everything to the Royal Navy.8

Supporters of the Singapore strategy in New Zealand did not escape opposition. The Labour Party opposed New Zealand contributing to the base at Singapore and the Liberal Party preferred direct contributions to the Royal Navy rather than to the base. The Singapore advocates however prevailed. At the 1923 Imperial Conference Prime Minister Massey offered £100,000 towards costs at Singapore with the idea that there would be more to follow in the future.9 Consequently when Britain's Labour Government suspended work on the base in 1924 New Zealand and Australia protested strongly. The decision, however, was reversed by Britain's new Conservative Government later that year and work continued, very slowly, over the next few years at Singapore. In 1927 the New Zealand Government again expressed its support for Singapore with an offer of £1 million to be spread over eight years. The general response was of patriotic support for this offer, but there was a strong hostile reaction from Harry Holland and his Labour Party.10

In June 1929 Britain's Second Labour Government came to power and it too was keen to curtail expenditure on the naval base. Although unable to stop the main dockyard construction, the government recommended that the work be 'slowed down as much as possible', and where possible all other work was to be suspended and no new work begun. New Zealand was against such a move and was especially
outraged at the lack of consultation on the matter but had no option but to agree to the British decisions. In 1930 there was a Naval Conference and an Imperial Conference in London. The former saw the emergence of the London Naval Treaty which decreased Britain's superiority over Japan and the latter saw the New Zealand Prime Minister, George Forbes, fail to reverse the Singapore decision. In general, while the Commonwealth Governments struggled with the problems of the depression, expenditure on defence was not only very limited, but what did occur was unpopular. However, when the Japanese army occupied Manchuria in 1931 and the 'Shanghai incident' occurred in 1932 the new National Government in Britain was shocked into action. The British Chiefs of Staff's review of the Singapore situation concluded that the base was so weak that it provided temptation to any potential enemy. Increased attention on Singapore then resulted in a definite decision being made by the British Cabinet on 12 April 1933 to strengthen the base.

New Zealand of course was pleased with this progress but by the thirties scepticism about the reliability of the Singapore strategy was strong. With the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany and the consequent emphasis on a possible war in Europe, doubts emerged as to the priority of defence in the Far East especially if the Empire had to face a simultaneous war in the Pacific and in Europe. New Zealand's defence planners needed to reassess the country's defence policy taking all these factors into consideration, and in November 1935 the election of a Labour Government in New Zealand would be highly influential in the formation of future policy.
LABOUR ATTITUDES TO DEFENCE POLICY BEFORE THE ELECTION

The election of the First Labour Government in New Zealand at the end of 1935 was an important factor in the development of defence policy. Prior to 1935 the Labour Party's attitudes to defence were generally the opposite to those of the Government. Anti-militarist in character, the Labour Party strongly opposed conscription during the First World War. In fact during the war some Labour members were conscientious objectors and they ended up in prison because of their beliefs. Labour politicians tended to follow a more independent and nationalistic line than their counterparts and would speak out against the Empire, especially if they judged the Empire to be morally wrong. For example, in the Chanak Crisis in 1922 the Labour Party did not agree with Parliament's decision to follow Britain to war if it were necessary. As Harry Holland pointed out: the Labour Party does "not subscribe to the immoral doctrine 'My Country, right or wrong'."¹⁴

Throughout the twenties and early thirties Labour's attitudes to defence policy mellowed from its strong anti-militarism. As Labour representation in Parliament increased and the possibility of the Labour Party forming a Government became more real, the Party began to form a defence policy of its own. National rather than class interests became predominant in both defence and foreign policy.¹⁵

By the 1930s the Labour Party had come out in support of the League of Nations as the best means of achieving collective security and world peace. Consequently, New Zealand's First Labour Government in 1935 did have some established attitudes to foreign affairs and defence policy.
even though it had won the election on its main platform of socio-economic policies. Labour was not only a keen advocate of collective security through the League of Nations, but it was also very sceptical about the whole Singapore strategy. With a tendency to support local and regional issues as opposed to Imperial ones, the new government had a marked preference for New Zealand's budding air force as the most suitable armed service to meet the Dominion's defence requirements. The consequent influence of this Government on the development of New Zealand defence planning over the following years was to be a major contributor to the emergence and acceptance of the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands for New Zealand.

**NEW ZEALAND'S EARLY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PACIFIC**

New Zealand's early contact with its neighbouring Pacific Islands had very little to do with defence policy. During the nineteenth century New Zealand politicians felt destined to play an important role in the Pacific, however, the main contact was through traders and missionaries. Imperialists often tried to persuade Britain to annex various island groups, for example, using the argument that 'trade would follow the flag'. Fuelled by Anglo-French and Anglo-German rivalry in the Pacific, imperial feelings strengthened with many politicians dreaming of a Pacific arm of the British Empire.

Strategic considerations were not unheard of in these early Pacific relations, for example "the colonial
imperialists frequently argued that foreign occupation of an island capable of being turned into a base or of being used as a harbour for raiding cruisers would constitute a serious danger to New Zealand. Arguments were put forward, on the one hand, that so long as Britain ruled the seas the islands were not important, and on the other hand, that island harbours could be invaluable as refueling and refitting stations for the Royal Navy.

There was some recognition, then, of the strategic value of the Pacific Islands as early as the nineteenth century, but it was not a widely accepted or established view. Nor was it an accepted part of defence policy in New Zealand or in the Empire.

New Zealand imperialists, like Julius Vogel, Sir George Grey and Richard John Seddon, strongly favoured Pacific expansionism and endeavoured to persuade the Colonial Office to annex various islands. Samoa and Fiji were especially coveted. For example, Samoa was seen as a vital coaling station for a planned trans-Pacific Steamship line and Vogel emphasized the danger of these strategic islands falling into American or German hands if action was not taken quickly. However, it was not until the late nineteenth - early twentieth century, that New Zealand met with some success, her imperialistic ideas in the Pacific.

The Cook Islands, after repeated requests from British residents, New Zealand politicians and some native rulers, came under a British protectorate in 1888. Then, in 1901, New Zealand's boundaries were extended to formerly include the Cook Islands. Prior to this, in
1886, the Kermadec Islands had been annexed with very little trouble, probably because there was little international interest in them. The Cook and Kermadec Islands were, however, seen as small reward as New Zealand particularly desired Fiji and Samoa.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century interest in Samoa steadily increased, especially as Germany advanced her interests. In 1900, for example, Germany declared a protectorate over all of Samoa west of $171^\circ$ longitude. The strategic significance of Samoa to New Zealand was clearly recognised. "Its geographic position in the Pacific and in relation to other islands gave it an apparent strategic importance which was markedly increased by the merits of Pago Pago as a harbour and possible naval base." However, it was not until the First World War the New Zealand realised her ambitions in Samoa when Dominion soldiers seized and occupied the German territory of Western Samoa in 1914. By the time New Zealand had realised her ambitions in Samoa it was not desired as strongly as in the past. The military administration in Samoa lasted till May 1920 and experienced a reasonably smooth rule. That is, except for the disastrous influenza epidemic of November-December 1918. Towards the end of 1919 it was becoming an important issue whether New Zealand was to have the mandate over Samoa. In the face of strong opposition towards accepting the mandate, the Prime Minister, William Massey, and the Minister of Defence, Sir James Allen, "took the traditional view that control of the territory was important to New Zealand defence" and that Samoa would not be a great expense as it was financially self-supporting.
In December 1920 the Council of the League of Nations conferred the mandate for Western Samoa to New Zealand which the Government rather reluctantly accepted. Throughout the 1920s there were obvious signs of indigenous opposition to the New Zealand administration, especially by the nationalist Mau Movement. In 1928 the situation was so bad that the cruisers *Diomede* and *Dunedin* were sent to Apia. The arrest of four hundred of the Mau did not prevent further trouble and in January 1930 *HMS Dunedin* was again despatched to Samoa. This use of the New Zealand armed services to police the Pacific was not restricted to Samoa. There are several other examples in the twenties when New Zealand used its military forces to help keep the peace in the Pacific Islands.

Niue, which had been annexed and administered as part of the Cook Islands until 1904 when it was made a separate dependency, also experienced the visit of a naval vessel. In April 1921 a policeman was murdered in Niue. News of this incident was intercepted by *HMS Veronica* which then rushed to Niue. Twenty rifles were landed to aid the guard and two suspects were found and later transported to New Zealand aboard *HMS Chatham.*

Prior to the incident in Niue New Zealand had also sent a peace-keeping force to Fiji. In 1920 Indian workers were striking in Fiji and there had been some cases of sabotage of bridges and telegraph lines. The Governor of Fiji had requested that Australia send a warship but the Australian Navy had been unable to help. New Zealand was then turned to, and of course unable to let Britain down, sent the only available vessel, the Marine
Department's steamer *Tutanekai* which made it to Suva despite serious labour problems in New Zealand. The local police, rather than the New Zealand force of regular artillery men were used but the show of force did succeed as a deterrent to further trouble.\(^{30}\)

In 1925 a further example of New Zealand intervening in a peace-keeping role in the Pacific occurred in Ocean Island. A race riot between Gilbertese and Chinese workers resulted in New Zealand sending a ship in to solve the problem. Armed sailors quickly defused the situation and the Chinese prisoners were later taken to Fiji.\(^{31}\)

New Zealand's peace-keeping in the Pacific Islands clearly illustrates involvement in and a sense of responsibility towards the Pacific area. This role of "imperial watchdog in the Pacific" constitutes an aspect of New Zealand's defence policy which already recognised the importance of the Pacific Islands to New Zealand. Although such policing incidents in the islands were the exception rather than the rule, they still established a precedent of Pacific involvement and responsibility which was to be further established and consolidated after 1935 in New Zealand's defence planning.
CHAPTER ONE: NOTES


5. Ibid., p.77.

6. McIntyre, Singapore Naval Base, p.32.


8. Ibid., p.118.

9. Ibid., p.126.

10. McIntyre, Singapore Naval Base, p.65.

11. Ibid., pp.91-93.

12. Ibid., pp.94-95.

13. Ibid., p.112.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p.6.


21. Ibid., p.104.


30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.
Air Vice-Marshal Sir Ralph Cochrane

(Wigram Archives)
In 1935 New Zealand’s defence policy was firmly established within an imperial framework. Over the next four years an important development took place within this policy as the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands was recognised. This development however did not affect the overall scheme of Imperial defence which was centred on the Singapore strategy. That is, the plan to send a British fleet to Singapore if trouble arose in the Far East or Pacific.

By 1935 the validity of the Singapore strategy was increasingly in doubt as potential enemies emerged simultaneously in the East and in Europe. Germany and Italy emerged as threats to the British Empire while the Dominions felt more afraid of an expansionist Japan and less and less secure about the Singapore strategy. This was especially the case for New Zealand. These renewed feelings of vulnerability in New Zealand resulted in increased attention being focused on regional defence. The strategic value of the Pacific Islands was thus magnified as they became recognised as New Zealand’s front line of defence.

The developing emphasis on the significance of the Pacific Islands owes much to the crucial influence of the
Labour Government during these years. More independent
minded, and more concerned with national, as opposed to
imperial, issues than previous governments, the Labour
Government concentrated on local and regional defence
planning. This government did not abandon Britain nor
the general imperial defence scheme but rather encouraged
the advance of local defence, especially the emerging air
force. Military and civil aviation played a vital role in
the recognition of the strategic significance of the
Pacific Islands. The emergence of longer range aircraft
in these years saw the distances between New Zealand and
the islands diminish. These new aircraft thus made flights
and patrolling in the area more easily accessible. The
consequent demand for landing bases and rights resulted in
the "island scramble" of the thirties which illustrated
how highly these islands were regarded by this time.

**JAPAN: THE AGGRESSOR**

During the early thirties the powerlessness of the
League of Nations became obvious both in Europe-and in
the Far East. The League had proved to be totally
ineffective in 1934 when Italy invaded Abyssinia as had
also been the case three years earlier when Japan occupied
Manchuria.

In the early thirties Japan blatantly breached the
Washington treaties through her aggressive action in China.
In September 1931 an explosion on part of the South
Manchurian railway, owned by Japan, resulted in fighting
between Japanese and Chinese forces. The Japanese forces
seized Mukden and on 18 February 1932 the "independent"
The British Government was unable, and unwilling, to intervene in this crisis. The reasons were three-fold. Firstly, Britain was preoccupied with a major domestic, financial crisis, secondly, no British interests were threatened in China at this stage, and finally, and most importantly, Britain was too weak to contemplate intervention. As soon as the trouble had begun, China appealed to the League of Nations to resolve the dispute. Unfortunately, however, the application met with little success. The Council requested the withdrawal of Chinese and Japanese troops but Japan would not co-operate. The only action taken was the despatch of a commission of inquiry, under Lord Lytton, which resulted in the publication of the Lytton Report on 1 October 1932. On the basis of this report a Special Assembly of the League condemned Japan as an aggressor and refused to recognize the 'puppet-state' of Manchukuo. As a result of this, Japan withdrew from the Assembly and then on 27 March 1933 she resigned from the League of Nations.

There were varied reactions to the Manchurian crisis. The United States strongly condemned Japan's actions and protests were made to Tokyo about Japan's violation of the Kellog Pact and the Nine Power Treaty. Apart from keeping the American fleet at Hawaii the only pressure the United States could apply was a warning to Japan that other Powers might also cease to observe the Washington agreements. As was previously mentioned, the United Kingdom was not interested in intervening in China. In fact the Government did not even fully support the American policy, and it failed to persuade the League to
adopt economic sanctions. The lack of action on Britain's part can be attributed not only to her own domestic crisis and to a reluctance to run any possibility of hostilities with Japan, but perhaps also to relief that Japan's aggression was in Manchuria and not towards the Yangtse Valley or the Indian frontier. New Zealand, at first looked to the League of Nations to intervene, but on its failure to do so adopted a policy of appeasement so as not to antagonize Japan into aggression southwards. This situation soon changed as Japanese aggression escalated.

In 1932 world sympathy for China intensified as Japan's hostilities extended into Shanghai with the Japanese assault on Chapei. By February, 50,000 Japanese troops were fighting the Chinese on the outskirts of Shanghai. The largest concentration of Britain's interests in China was centred in Shanghai, consisting of nearly $150 millions worth of investment, 6,000 British residents and a garrison of two infantry battalions. Japan's aggression in Shanghai now directly threatened British interests. The Japanese, however, withdrew in May which was fortunate for Britain as she was still not in a position to contemplate intervention.

This incident proved to be of major importance to Commonwealth defence planning as it resulted in an emergency review of Britain's situation in the Far East and of Imperial defence policy as a whole. The United Kingdom COS Annual Review for 1932 was consequently brought forward. The situation in Singapore was re-examined, especially its vulnerability to attack. It had become obvious that the "Ten Year Rule" would come to an end and that the future would
be concerned with rearming. The past possibility of a simultaneous war in the Far East and in Europe had now turned into a future probability.

Japan's expansionist policy in China had heightened awareness in New Zealand of the vulnerability of the Pacific if Japan were to contemplate expansion southwards. Feelings in New Zealand became even less secure as it became apparent that Japan had lodged itself as the predominant power in several strategically placed islands. In fact Japan had been fortifying her mandated islands thereby again breaching the Washington treaties. The past fear of a "Yellow Peril" was now redirected at Japanese expansion, as opposed to Chinese immigration, and was strongly felt by the mid thirties. In March 1935 the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff maintained that:

The only possible foe is Japan. Although there is no reason to suspect Japan of any deliberate hostile intentions against the British Empire, the fact remains that several times in the last few years there has been considerable friction between the two countries, both military and economic.

The advent of Japan as a potential enemy thus brought existing defence policy under scrutiny. By the end of 1935 New Zealand felt less and less confident about the Singapore strategy. Answers were being sought concerning details of the policy as Japanese expansionism increased feelings of insecurity. With the change-over of government in New Zealand at the end of 1935 it would not have been surprising if the Singapore strategy had been abandoned. However, the new Labour Government, although a keen critic of the Singapore strategy in the past, did not take the strong anti-imperialist stance it had taken in opposition.
This was because in reality New Zealand had no other viable alternative scheme of defence and thus had to accept the Singapore strategy as the basis of her defence policy. Restricted because of their dependence on Singapore, the Dominions were only able to try and influence the United Kingdom into giving definite details concerning the size of the fleet, the length of time it would take to arrive at Singapore, including any delays, and finally where the Indian and Pacific Oceans stood in priority against the Arctic and Mediterranean.

New Zealand not only sought answers to these aspects of global strategy but she also began to examine defence policy from a regional perspective, because of the emergence of a Japanese threat. As a result, the Pacific Islands took on increased strategic value, as their vulnerability to attack also increased. This in turn weakened New Zealand's security by bringing the enemy closer if any of the islands were occupied by Japan. The role of the islands as a jump-off point for raiders attacking New Zealand was by this stage a serious worry. Consequently, defence policy in New Zealand aimed at preventing such a situation.

A NEW ZEALAND LABOUR GOVERNMENT

When the first Labour Government took office in December 1935 it had won power primarily on a socio-economic platform. Defence and foreign policy had not been regarded as priority issues and they received little immediate attention. Right up until assuming office the Labour Party's attitude to defence policy had still been
idealistic and out of touch with current harsh realities. As Walter Nash announced in September:

> The Labour Party is solidly behind the idea of collective security. This can best be achieved through adherence to the Covenant of the League of Nations [which]... was the finest thing that has ever been signed for the peace of the world....

Defence policy, however, was not neglected for long as war loomed more and more as a possibility for the British Empire. However, the new Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, illustrated the low priority of defence policy when in choosing the Labour Government, he appointed Frederick Jones as Minister of Defence. Jones, a former shoe manufacturer from Dunedin, had had no previous experience, nor interest, in defence issues and he did not particularly want this position. John A. Lee, on the other hand, did desire this post. Lee had considerable experience and involvement in defence policy and he expected, as did many others, that he would be given the defence portfolio.

During the twenties, Lee, unlike most members of the Labour Party, attempted to formulate a practical defence policy for the Labour Party. In 1924 the annual conference elected Lee to a defence sub-committee and with Peter Fraser, he succeeded in bringing about more flexibility in Labour's attitudes to defence. Thus a future Labour Government in New Zealand would be prepared to face the problem of defence realistically on assuming office instead of rejecting it altogether. Although the pacifist wing of the Labour Party did not support Lee's views, he was accepted as the Party's leading spokesman on defence.
He believed that New Zealand's best defence lay in a healthy, prosperous and numerous population which would be able to repel the 'yellow peril' of a rapidly expanding Japanese population spilling down into the Pacific and New Zealand. Lee also believed that local defence issues were more important to New Zealand than imperial schemes and that the Air Force was the most important of all the armed services as far as New Zealand's needs were concerned. Although these views were not particularly unique to Lee, the fact that he, a member of the Labour Party, held such definite views, made him the most obvious candidate for the defence portfolio in 1935.

Despite his annoyance at not receiving the defence portfolio, Lee remained active in defence planning. In January 1936 he was appointed to the Cabinet Committees of finance and defence and he also produced a Report on Defence. This confidential party report clearly illustrates Lee's support for the Air Force. He believed that air development would "offer better possibilities of local defence than any other expenditure" and he recommended that the air vote should be doubled. Lee also favoured positive action in building up armaments, for example, modernising army equipment and purchasing second-hand planes from Britain and he insisted that:

...like Canada and South Africa we will not lose by basing our Defence expenditure on local necessity rather than upon Imperialistic Sentiment.

Throughout 1936 Lee strove to convince the Cabinet to modernize the army and create a suitable, working air force for New Zealand. Lee, being the forceful and outspoken man that he was, often seemed to overshadow Fred Jones on
defence issues. There can be no doubt, however, that he exaggerated Jones' ignorance on defence matters. Statements like "I prepared the policy statement the Minister accepted but did not understand," which he recorded in his diary, must be interpreted as self-exaggeration and not accepted as factual.\textsuperscript{14}

Through his involvement in defence policy, Lee came into contact with many top officials of the Army and Navy who bolstered his somewhat deflated ego by "paying him the compliment of attention, almost ignoring Jones."\textsuperscript{15} For example, after dining with the Naval Secretary, Air Adviser and General Officer Commanding in July 1937, Lee recorded in his diary that "They think I'm of importance to the scheme of things."\textsuperscript{16}

Lee did play a role in New Zealand's defence policy under the Labour Government, but it was a minor one. There were many other men, defence experts from Britain, local military authorities and government officials, who played major roles in defence planning in New Zealand. One of the most important of such men was Carl Berendsen (later Sir Carl), the permanent head of the New Zealand Prime Minister's Department. Born in Australia, Berendsen came to New Zealand with his parents in 1900 at the age of ten. A law graduate of Victoria University College he served with the New Zealand Forces in Samoa during the First World War, and served with the Expeditionary Force in England at the end of the war. In 1917, he became the Chief Clerk in the Labour Department and then the Deputy Registrar of Industrial Unions in 1918. From 1926 Berendsen had responsibility over Imperial Affairs as Imperial Affairs Officer in the New Zealand Prime Minister's Department.
In 1928 he also became Secretary for External Affairs and in 1935 he became the Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department. He held these two positions, and that of Secretary of the New Zealand War Cabinet, until 1943 when he went to Australia as New Zealand's High Commissioner. In 1944 he left Australia to be New Zealand's Minister to the United States of America where he was also Ambassador from 1948 to 1952.17

Variously described as "pugnacious, dogmatic, obsessive, passionate, active, self-confident and voluble..."18 Berendsen was also extremely hard-working, and from 1926 until 1943 he was practically the sole draftsman of New Zealand's foreign policy working 'literally from a cramped backroom'. He not only dealt with New Zealand's policy towards Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth, and the League of Nations, but also towards Samoa, in his capacity as Secretary for External Affairs.19

During this period Berendsen attended every Imperial Conference constantly extending his expertise which was consequently highly sought after. "Apart from foreign and imperial affairs generally, he dealt with treaties, League of Nations affairs and 'General (as opposed to particular) questions of Defence, e.g. Naval policy, disarmament etc.'"20

Prior to the 1937 Imperial Conference, Berendsen was advised about the air requirements, which would require discussion at the Conference, by Wing-Commander R.A. Cochrane. Cochrane who was highly influential in the development of New Zealand's air force, thus helped develop Berendsen's views and knowledge concerning New Zealand's defence policy at this time. For example,
Cochrane's view "That the time has now come to consider the place of the Pacific Islands in the general scheme of defence" was to be a major issue taken up by the New Zealand delegation at the Conference. 21

Even though Berendsen held very conservative views on domestic politics and boasted that he had never voted for Labour in his life, he still strongly supported the new Labour Government's foreign policy. Berendsen thus managed to overlook many personal differences of opinion and succeed in working extremely well with this government. He supported Collective 'Security and the League of Nations as a vehicle for peace and in his 'black and white' manner Berendsen saw this as the only moral choice. "Right is right and wrong is wrong and it can never be wise to do wrong or tolerate wrong" believed Berendsen and in this light he condemned the pre-war appeasement of Germany. 22

As one of the main creators of New Zealand's foreign policy and a key figure in the development of New Zealand's defence policy, although he was aware of New Zealand's local defence needs, Berendsen never neglected the wider imperial framework of defence. He consistently maintained that the defence of New Zealand was dependent on the defence of the Commonwealth and that the two were inextricably bound together. This attitude also held by the Labour Government was apparent even at times when New Zealand was concentrating on local issues, for example, at the 1937 Imperial Conference when New Zealand requested an assessment of the strategic value of the Pacific Islands, imperial loyalty was still asserted. At the 1939 Pacific Defence Conference this was also made clear when
Berendsen stated categorically "that the defence of New Zealand depends on the defence of the Commonwealth."  

**DEFENCE POLICY REVIEWED**

In March 1935 the New Zealand Chief of Staff produced an extensive review of New Zealand's defence situation which was to become the future basis for the work of the various sub-committees of the New Zealand Committee of Imperial Defence. The report, entitled the *Defence of New Zealand* was based on the assumption that New Zealand was an integral part of the British Empire and thus was dependent upon imperial defence and must therefore play an active role in imperial defence. The report also focused on the Pacific Islands and in particular Fanning Island. The Chiefs of Staff concluded that most islands were not likely to invite attack "with three important exceptions, namely, Fiji, Fanning Island and Norfolk Island."  

The British cable connecting Canada with Australia and New Zealand had landing stations on Fiji and Fanning Island while the cable terminating in Australia landed at Norfolk Island. These islands were consequently seen to be of considerable value to the Dominions and would need to be defended if threatened. Apart from the case of Fanning Island, for which in 1930, New Zealand had committed itself to the despatch of a small force of seventy men in an emergency, the Chiefs of Staff did not recommend that New Zealand send an expeditionary force to any other islands at this stage. They did however, advise the acceptance of the formation of local defence forces, especially in Western Samoa and
that New Zealand provide the necessary small arms.\textsuperscript{25}

This review was approved by the Chiefs of Staff in March 1935 but, because of preoccupation with the election that year, it was not considered by Cabinet.

The concept of Japan threatening New Zealand was widely accepted by 1936. In a debate in parliament in April The Hon. Mr. William Perry emphasised the Japanese threat to New Zealand even though Japan was still involved in China:

\begin{quote}
Meanwhile she is building stepping-stones across the Pacific. About 1000 miles south-east of Japan we find the Bonnin Islands. They belong to Japan. They are fortified as strongly as any islands in the world can be fortified...Then we have the Marshall Islands, taken from Germany during the Great War, and of which Japan is still in possession. Japan has given evasive answers time after time to questions asked at Geneva as to her alleged fortifying of the Marshall Islands and other islands in the North Pacific... Japan, therefore, is expanding not only eastward into China but also southward across the Pacific Ocean.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

The increasing concern about the possibility of New Zealand being invaded by Japan was examined in a paper entitled \textit{The Case for a Japanese Invasion of New Zealand} by Wing Commander T.M. Wilkes, the Director of Air Services. The strategic consequences of Japan's southward expansion were particularly noted:

\begin{quote}
The Mandated Islands held by Japan constitute an increasingly important factor in the strategical control of the Far East. Their value as a vast base for air forces and light naval craft is not generally appreciated... Moreover, the route to New Zealand would be via these islands.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

In evaluating what course of action Japan would take if attacking the British Empire in the Pacific it was decided that British seaborne commerce would be open to
attack as would the British colony of Hong Kong. The Auckland area of New Zealand was also seen to be vulnerable. It was consequently recommended that these dangers be taken into consideration in future defence planning.28

In 1936 the New Zealand Committee of Imperial Defence was renamed the Organisation for National Security (ONS). This was, in effect, a group of committees whose purpose was to investigate and advise on "problems affecting national defence in its broadest aspect, i.e. those matters which extend beyond the purview of the armed forces along and affect the life of the community at large."29 The Meteorological Subcommittee which was set up to advise the Government on extending and maintaining the existing meteorological facilities in the South Pacific recommended:

That the COS Subcommittee of the ONS assess in concert with the corresponding authorities in Australia and the UK, the strategic value of the British Islands in the South Pacific and formulate a policy for the consideration of the Government embracing these islands in a scheme for the defence of Australia and New Zealand in the event of war in the Pacific.30

The strategic value to New Zealand of the Pacific Islands was becoming increasingly obvious. Inextricably bound with this development was the growth of New Zealand's air force. Recognised as the most appropriate armed force for local defence, it was receiving greater attention from New Zealand's defence planners than ever before.
A NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE

It was obvious by 1936 that the Royal New Zealand Air Force needed strong leadership and direction for its future growth and it was suggested by John A Lee that:

...an attempt should be made to get a young and thoroughly efficient officer on loan from Britain for the reorganisation of the air defences, someone akin to our Naval Secretary, until we can develop a suitable local man with adequate experience.... 31

This resulted in Wing-Commander R.A. Cochrane coming to New Zealand, and, he proved to be "the right man at the right time for the emerging Royal New Zealand Air Force."

In order to understand the importance of Cochrane it is first necessary to examine the origins and history of New Zealand's air force. Before the outbreak of World War I the Hon. Henry (later Sir Henry) Wigram had urged the formation of a Flying Corps as part of the country's defence forces. There was, however, little interest shown by the Government at this time. During the war two private schools of flying - the New Zealand Flying School at Kohimaramo, Auckland, run by Leo and Vivian Walsh, and the Canterbury (NZ) Aviation School of Christchurch, trained nearly 300 pilots for service with the British air forces at no cost to the Government. 33

The major role played by civil aviation, in establishing military aviation, was thus inaugurated. By 1919 the New Zealand Government had realised the importance of aviation to defence policy.

In 1918 when the Dominion's request for three seaplanes for local patrol was turned down, as compensation, she was offered the services of a British expert to advise
on aviation questions. Thus Lieutenant-Colonel A.V. Bettington (RAF), arrived in New Zealand early in 1919. Although "the only tangible result of this visit was a gift of four service aircraft to the Government" Betlington still examined New Zealand's air defence needs and presented a report to the New Zealand Government. He recommended that New Zealand should form an Air Force immediately using men returning from service with the RAF as a nucleus for the force. Because his plans were far too ambitious for the New Zealand Government, with the total cost over the next four years amounting to £1,294,000, Bettington modified his report twice. He finally recommended the following temporary measures:

1. The appointment of an Air Adviser.
2. Subsidising the Civil Flying Schools at Auckland and Christchurch.
3. Refresher training for ex-RAF personnel.
4. The transfer of a number of Territorial personnel for air training.
5. The acceptance of some, at least, of the gift aircraft.
6. The allotment of £25,000 for expenditure on the above.
7. Experiments with an airmail service.

The fifth point referred to an offer by Britain of a hundred aircraft "to assist the Dominion to establish an Air Force, and thereby develop the defence of the Empire by air." Because New Zealand hesitated for nearly six months before replying to this offer, many of the surplus aircraft were no longer available and New Zealand had to quickly reserve the aircraft which were. Bettington had already brought four machines and twenty-nine others
were then shipped to New Zealand of which six were retained by the Government for military purposes and the rest were lent to various private flying schools. 37

Colonel Bettington returned to Britain having achieved no real results, but he had made some very important observations in his report. He foresaw the Pacific as a future trouble spot with Japan as the most likely enemy. In assessing New Zealand's defence requirements, Bettington did not assume the impregnability of the Singapore Naval Base but rather believed that New Zealand had to play an active role in its own defence, that is, working within an imperial scheme.

One crucial observation by Bettington, in 1919, was that of the importance of the Pacific Islands in New Zealand's defence policy. In an interim report to Sir James Allen, the New Zealand Minister of Defence, Bettington pointed out that:

No consideration has as yet been given to the outlying Islands of the Dominion, but if you consider fit I will arrange to inspect these; personally I think they will play an important part in the future, and the matter should be carefully gone into at an early date. 38

The origins of the relationship between the emerging awareness of the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands with the suitability of the developing air force for New Zealand's defence requirements, can be clearly seen in Bettington's report. Admiral Jellicoe, who visited at the same time to advise the Dominion on naval policy, also maintained the Pacific Islands were important in New Zealand's defence planning.
By 1920 there was a general acceptance that there was now a third dimension of defence after land and naval forces, which was the Air Force. Throughout the twenties the Air Force was further developed as the Government took what action it could in times of economic depression and general defence cut-backs. As the private flying schools faced economic hardship, the Government at first helped with subsidies and then in April 1923 the plant of the Canterbury Aviation Company was taken over by the Government. Sir Henry Wigram contributed £10,000 towards the cost of purchasing the Sockburn aerodrome which was then renamed "Wigram" in recognition of this gift and his role in the creation of New Zealand's air force. Six years later in 1929 the Walsh Brother's plant in Auckland was purchased.

In 1923 the New Zealand Permanent Air Force (NZPAF) was formed as part of the New Zealand Military Forces and the New Zealand Air Force (NZAF) was constituted as part of the territorial forces. Both these forces were controlled as part of the military forces by General Headquarters in Wellington. While "Wigram" developed in Christchurch, Auckland still lacked an aerodrome until 1925 when 167 acres of land were purchased at Hobsonville. Construction at Hobsonville was, however, prevented because of lack of finances. Although there was some form of air policy by 1926, its effectiveness had been restricted because of economic constraints and also because civil aviation had not been developing as rapidly as expected.

In September 1928, Air Marshal (later Marshal of the Royal Air Force) Sir John Salmond visited New Zealand.
to advise on air defence. After touring the country and visiting places of strategic importance, Salmond reported to the Government. His recommendations to increase the size of the air force amounted to an approximate cost of £1,233,300 which would be £418,850 annually for the next three years. Not surprisingly the economic conditions of the early thirties prevented Salmond's major proposals taking effect.

Salmond did not specifically mention the strategic importance of the Pacific Islands, as did Bettington, but he still advocated the Air Force as the best means of defence for New Zealand. Concentrating solely on the defence of New Zealand's territory, the argument Salmond used could easily be extended to apply also to the Pacific Islands, that is, that "The inherent mobility of Air Forces render them peculiarly suitable for defence of widely separated localities." 41

Although after 1928 the condition of the New Zealand Air Force, if anything, deteriorated, the military did make use of the Air Force. In February 1929 the first joint land, sea and air exercise took place in Auckland. The New Zealand Permanent Air Force carried out its first active operation in January 1930 when trouble in Samoa led to the despatch of HMS Dunedin. On board was a Moth seaplane with Flight Lieutenant S. Wallingford as pilot and two Air Force corporals as service staff. During the two months spent in Samoa, Wallingford clocked up ninety hours flying through general reconnaissance and other operations. 42 This first active operation which involved a Pacific Island is a clear indicator of the potential
role of New Zealand's air force in the Pacific arena. This operation also illustrates New Zealand's attitude of responsibility towards maintaining the security of the islands.

During the early thirties the depression provided the strongest restriction on the development of the Air Force. For example, expenditure on both military and civil aviation was reduced by about half, from £55,102 in 1929-1930 to £28,280 in the year 1931-1932, and the following year expenditure was again reduced. With such financial problems and with shortages of aircraft and personnel, progress was limited. However, there was another source of aircraft. From 1930 until 1936, when HMS Achilles and HMS Leander joined the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy with their own aircraft, the Hobsonville Moth seaplanes and Fairey IIIFs co-operated with the Navy in exercises.

By the middle of the 1930s the economic situation had begun to improve, and this, coupled with the advance of events in Europe, saw more attention being focused on the Royal New Zealand Air Force. In the year 1934-1935 more generous funds were voted for the Air Force of which £132,230 was spent as compared with the £38,548 of the previous year. More land at Hobsonville was bought, buildings were constructed and the personnel staff was increased.

In 1935 twelve Vickers Vildebeeste torpedo-bombers arrived from Britain followed a year later by four Avro 626 training aircraft. Over three years the RNZAF increased rapidly in size and by 1936 it had, without
doubt, begun to develop into a more effective arm of New Zealand's defence forces. For example, in 1936 Wing-Commander T.M. Wilkes described the Air Forces as "a powerful deterrent to any hostile power contemplating operations against the Dominion." This argument assumed that the Pacific Islands had not been overtaken by some enemy, which necessitated their defence so that "any foreign power operating in New Zealand waters must necessarily be at a considerable distance from its own bases.

COCHRANE: THE RIGHT MAN

With a new Government, which was particularly interested in the Air Force, and with better economic conditions, the time was right for progress. Wing-Commander R.A. Cochrane provided the necessary leadership for the RNZAF when it was most needed. On 4 November 1936 Cochrane arrived in New Zealand to advise the Dominion Government on air defence. Cochrane had, in fact, written his report before he arrived in New Zealand as he later recorded: "Crossing the Pacific took nearly three weeks and I filled in the time writing my report and reading "Gone With The Wind"." His "Report on the Air Aspect of the Defence Problems of New Zealand, Including the Suggested Duties, Strength, and Organisation of the New Zealand Air Force," recommended the complete reorganisation of Air Force policy and administration. Cochrane divided the defence problems of New Zealand into three categories. The first was the defence of New Zealand itself which included the defence of the outlying
islands and mandated territories for which responsibility has been assumed. The second was the defence of communications and shipping routes and the third was the defence of the United Kingdom which is "the central partner in the British system."\textsuperscript{51}

Cochrane estimated the scale of attack on New Zealand to most likely be in the form of raids from cruisers, armed merchantmen, submarines, or by aircraft carried in these vessels. Working from this premise, Cochrane examined the use of the air force in New Zealand's defence. He emphasized the danger of an enemy operating from one of the Pacific Islands which was either uninhabited or without means of communication. Because of this danger, Cochrane concluded that New Zealand should be prepared to protect potential Pacific bases and that the best way of doing so was from the air. Thus the suggested tasks of the New Zealand Air Force would not only include the defence of New Zealand territory, against sporadic raids, but also the territory of outlying islands and mandated territories. Consequently the development of civil and military air routes was strongly encouraged so as to provide greater mobility. The route to Singapore was already underway and an extension of the military route to the Pacific Islands would be required. The United Kingdom Government would be asked to help with the provision of facilities in the area.\textsuperscript{52}

The type of aircraft required by New Zealand would need the range for a flight from New Zealand to the Pacific Islands or to Singapore, the largest stretch being from
Darwin to Singapore. After examining the advantages and disadvantages of both land planes and flying boats, Cochrane concluded that if aerodromes could be prepared economically, then land planes would be more efficient, easier to maintain and would cost less initially. The medium bomber, a long-range multi-engined aircraft, would be the most suitable for New Zealand's needs. Cochrane consequently recommended the acquisition of two squadrons of such bombers, which would be capable of attacking enemy raiders before they reached the New Zealand coast. They would also have the range to reach bases in the South Pacific. Even though such an Air Force would be very expensive Cochrane considered that in the long term:

The most effective manner in which economy can be ensured is the provision of a force capable of undertaking a wide range of air duties, and suited to the varying degrees of local and Imperial defence. 53

Cochrane's final recommendations which were to be spread over three years were as follows:

1. That the RNZAF should be constituted as a separate service controlled by an Air Board under the direction of the Minister of Defence.

2. That it should consist of two permanent squadrons of medium bomber aircraft.

3. That a reserve of personnel should be instituted and trained to a standard which would enable them to take part in active service. The question of forming Territorial squadrons would be given future consideration.
4. That civil air transport continue to be encouraged to be in a position to back up the Air Force if necessary. That support be given to the aero club movement.

5. That "The Government of the United Kingdom be invited to co-operate in developing facilities to enable aircraft to operate in the Pacific Islands."54

This final recommendation clearly illustrates Cochrane's opinion of the strategic value of the Pacific Islands to New Zealand. Cochrane also examined the actual area in the Pacific which would need to be covered. An aircraft flying at 170 knots (200 m.p.h) could leave Auckland for Australia, travel through the Fiji Islands, in seven hours, then in another three hours reach the Cook Islands. To reach Singapore from New Zealand it would take twenty-seven flying hours, or thirty-six including refueling stops and other delays.55

Committed as he had to be to the existing Singapore scheme of defence, Cochrane obviously regarded the Pacific Islands as an important aspect of New Zealand's local defence. He did, however, emphasize that the importance of these islands was not in any way equal to the importance of Singapore, that is they were not "in any way a substitute for the present organisation of defence in the Far East, which is, of course, based on Singapore."56

Concentrating on the air aspect of the Dominion's defence, Cochrane saw the Air Force as having a role in imperial defence and also in regional defence. With the emphasis Cochrane gave to the importance of the Pacific Islands
they came to be seen more and more as a vulnerable front line which was vital for New Zealand to defend to ensure her own security.

Cochrane's report was not finally ready until the end of November. Although he had a quick look around New Zealand, he only made very minor changes to his report before submitting it. Fred Jones had a "quick glance" at the report and Cochrane was impressed with his understanding of it. Jones was often regarded as inadequate for the job of defence minister but Cochrane thought otherwise:

I think he is a hardworking, honest and shrewd and they [the Government] might do a lot worse. The real trouble is that he has never been given a proper chance, and has consequently had to descend to subterfuges to get what little he has for the force. 57

Finally, by the end of November, Cochrane who was growing tired of the report and had been suffering from a bad cold, ceased altering and amending it. His diary entry summed up his feelings:

I felt too muzzy to read it so sent it back and told them to go ahead. If I read the BEASTLY THING again I am bound to want to make more alterations.

Originally, Cochrane had thought he would only be in New Zealand for a matter of weeks, but he was asked to stay on and direct the development of the Air Force which he did. Promoted to Group Captain, Cochrane was Chief of Air Staff in New Zealand until 1939.

The Cabinet accepted Cochrane's report and his recommendations resulted in the Air Force Act of 1937. On 1 April 1937 the Royal New Zealand Air Force became a separate service. The Air Department Act was also
passed setting up The Air Department which was responsible for the administration of both military and civil aviation.

Cochrane's knowledge, drive and administrative ability were major contributors to the growth and maturing of the RNZAF. The Labour Government in power and the fear of a Japanese invasion had also given new impetus to New Zealand's defence planning at this time. The availability of longer range aircraft thus made the Air Force the most suitable means of defence for New Zealand as it could be extended into the Pacific region. The Pacific Islands were thus brought into the scope of defence planning and their significance to New Zealand was thus established by 1937.
CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

3. Lissington, New Zealand and Japan, p.77.
4. Ibid., p.78.
5. McIntyre, Singapore Naval Base, p.104.
7. COS 1, New Zealand Committee of Imperial Defence, (NZ CID), The Defence of New Zealand, March 1935, EAl 81/4/3 Pt.1.
11. Ibid., pp.29-30.
13. Ibid., final recommendations.


25. Ibid.


28. Ibid.


30. MET/2, ONS, Report of the Meteorological Sub-Committee, 4-9-1939, EAl 81/6/2 Pt.2.


33. Historical Note AIR 1 102/3/3.

34. Ibid.


36. Ibid., p.8.

37. Ibid., p.10.


40. Ross, RNZAF, p.16.


42. Ross, RNZAF, p.20.

43. Ibid., p.16 and p.22.

44. In 1934 the New Zealand Permanent Air Force changed its name to the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF).
45. Ross, RNZAF, p.23.
46. Ibid., p.24.
47. W.C. Wilkes to GOC, NZ Military Forces, 10-6-1936, AIR 1 102/3/3.
48. Ibid.
51. Ibid., para. 1.
52. Ibid., para. 8.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., para. 24.
55. Ibid., Appendix to the Report.
56. Cochrane to Berendsen 3-2-1937, EAl 85/1/1, Pt.1.
58. Ibid., 26-9-36 (capitals added).
CHAPTER THREE

"ISLAND SCRAMBLE", 1936-1937

The influence of the Labour Government and of New Zealand's expanding Air Force were without doubt important factors in New Zealand's unprecedented focus on regional defence in the years between 1935 and 1937. Although defence policy was still planned within an Imperial framework, the Pacific Islands had emerged with such increased significance that they could not be ignored in defence planning. Two other influences which highlighted the significance of the islands were the role of commercial aviation in the Pacific and the renewal of American interest in the South West Pacific.

The importance of civil aviation in the development of military aviation is undisputed. The New Zealand Government had accepted the value of civil aviation from its beginnings and had since 1928 encouraged Aero Clubs. Whenever it had been possible, the Government had financially assisted civil aviation, for example, with subsidies to the flying schools. The growth of civil aviation in New Zealand had resulted in an increase in aerodromes, repair facilities and wireless and meteorological services. As Cochrane stated, the value of civil aviation:

...is recognised throughout the world as a potential source of military strength, it is therefore necessary to decide what part it should play in New Zealand defence.
The general knowledge and experience obtained through civil aviation would also prove a valuable adjunct to an air force. The function of carrying passengers in civil aircraft could be converted to the carrying of bombs which would increase the availability of aircraft for military purposes if the need arose. Finally, Cochrane pointed out that if civilians have first attended a civilian flying school they would then be easier to train for the Air Force. 2

By the mid thirties New Zealand was witnessing the rapid advance of commercial aviation in the Pacific. Nations claiming sovereignty over islands in the Pacific were keenly aware of their potential value, both for defence and for civil air developments. Japan had been developing the Marshall and Caroline Islands for some years and was believed to have completed a chain of landing grounds linking up with Formosa and Japan. The United States of America had established a network of air routes in the Hawaiian Islands and was now engaged in extending its sphere of influence towards the South West. It thus became urgent that the New Zealand and British Governments should determine which islands were of strategic value to them and then establish sovereignty over those islands. Consequently it was necessary for surveys to be made by ships of the New Zealand Squadron as soon as possible. The islands regarded of particular value to New Zealand were those flanking the main trade route via the Panama Coast, that is the Cook Islands and Pitcairn Island. The Fiji group was always accepted as important, because of its strategic location and provision of refuelling bases on the air routes crossing the Pacific. Recent surveys had concentrated on the location of suitable
bases for flying boats and now bases were required for land planes.\(^3\)

As landing bases became more and more highly sought after in the islands, serious debates over the sovereignty of these islands emerged. And as R.W. Robson, the editor of the Pacific Islands Year Book, recorded:

> New trends in international affairs, so far as they affect the Pacific countries, will be seen...in the appearance of regular air services all round the Pacific, and in the scramble for ownership of islands which may be valuable as aviation stations.\(^4\)

As the United States of America and the British Empire vied for sovereignty over particular islands because of commercial aviation, these islands took an increased significance in defence planning also. Of the nations interested in these islands, the United States was one of the most active, and during the thirties it became firmly entrenched in the South West Pacific.

America's past involvement in the Pacific was regenerated through the activities of Pan American Airways, the United States Navy and certain Government departments. As sovereignty and landing rights were claimed in certain islands by the United States, conflict arose with the British Empire over the validity of such claims and the granting of reciprocal rights if the claims were recognised. The diplomatic debates which emerged were of special interest to New Zealand. As confidence in the Empire's ability to defend the Pacific arm of the Empire declined, the Dominion's traditional, imperial relations and loyalties could have been seriously tested as America loomed as the potential replacement protector. The United States was not, however, seeking political or defence alignment in the
Pacific and New Zealand was still a long way off actually breaking the maternal ties with Britain. New Zealand was, however, sensitive to the possibility of an alternative future ally and was careful not to offend either the United States Government, or Pan American Airways in their dealings in the thirties. Relations were consequently restricted to commerce, that is, aviation and trade.

In the meantime New Zealand continued defence planning within the Imperial context with as much emphasis as possible on regional issues. At the 1937 Imperial Conference, the New Zealand Government took the opportunity to introduce the position of the Pacific Islands in defence policy into the Imperial arena. The conference thus marked a major turning point in New Zealand's defence planning when the Government announced its views on the Pacific Islands and asked for Britain's co-operation and involvement in taking action in the area.

**AMERICA IN THE PACIFIC**

The demand for island bases in the Pacific caused the British Empire to become keener on maintaining a presence in the area. Britain realised the importance of the Pacific Islands for commercial aviation but as yet did not view them as important in defence policy. New Zealand, on the other hand, maintained the islands were important for both commercial and defence reasons. The Dominion was not alone in this attitude. The United States of America was becoming increasingly involved in the Pacific and shared similar interests and objectives to New Zealand. New Zealand's international relations were
primarily with the British Empire and no real attempts had been made to build alternative relations with the United States. Commerce, however, provided the exception. Trade provided the main bonds between New Zealand and America up until 1939. For example, by 1920 the United States constituted New Zealand's second largest overseas market constituting about ten per cent of trade, and was surpassed only by Britain. Apart from commercial relations there was little other contact between the two nations. This was despite the common interest each had in Pacific security and the fact that they had both been involved in the Pacific since early in their histories.

The United States was originally more concerned with the North than the South West Pacific, first establishing a presence in Hawaii and Guam. America then extended its presence into American Samoa and the Philippines. All these islands played an important role in America's defence policy by providing strategic defence outposts necessary for the defence of America's Pacific coast and by fulfilling "The ambition of the United States to hold a place in the Pacific." American involvement in the Pacific was not in character with its international policy towards the rest of the world in the inter-war period. After World War I the United States withdrew from involvement in Europe and retreated into a policy of isolationism. The exception to this policy was the Pacific. At the end of 1921 an international conference was held in Washington. For most nations the main concern of the conference was disarmament, but for America the main interest was Pacific security.
New Zealand and Australia were also very concerned about Pacific issues and the conference provided an excellent forum for discussions. Another major area of interest was the future of, or replacement for, the expiring Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Having never been comfortable with the existence of the Alliance, America advocated its termination. The United States was not to be disappointed.

The Washington treaties did not constitute an alliance or commitment to action, but were rather an agreement to assemble and discuss matters before taking action. The Naval Treaty which restricted the future construction of capital ships and aircraft carriers, gave the fleets of Great Britain and the United States parity with each other but superiority over Japan's, with a five to three ratio. These reductions in naval strength would result in the weakening of the national security of those Powers concerned, and so a further treaty prohibited the building of new fortifications or naval bases in the Pacific. The main territories excluded in this treaty were the Hawaiian Islands, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. The effect of the prohibition on New Zealand was that it included the Cook Islands and Western Samoa, but, in the case of Samoa a similar prohibition already existed through the Samoan mandate.

For the United States, the strategic effect of this Treaty, was to deprive the United States Navy of a major base in the Philippines which rendered it incapable of operating in the Western Pacific. The British Empire, however, still had the naval base at Singapore, which was exempt from the prohibition, but it would take a British
fleet six weeks to arrive at this unfinished base. On the other hand, Japan was within easy and quick reach of both these possessions which enhanced both British and American feelings of vulnerability. With the emphasis on disarmament in the twenties, such feelings were set aside and the security of the Pacific was accepted under these terms.

COMMERCIAL AVIATION IN THE PACIFIC

The advent of commercial aviation during the thirties resulted in renewed interest in the South West Pacific. In New Zealand the growth of civil aviation had been enhancing the already growing value of Pacific Islands for landing bases. Efforts were also being made to establish a commercial service between New Zealand and Australia. In September 1928 Charles Kingsford-Smith and a crew of three completed the first aerial Tasman crossing in the Southern Cross.10 Over the following years similar flights were made, and in 1935 Kingsford-Smith proposed the setting up of a New Zealand-Australian-owned enterprise which would be called the Trans-Tasman Air Service Development Company. Unfortunately Kingsford-Smith lost his life in November 1935 during a flight from England to Australia. The major driving force behind a commercial aviation company thus died. Because the Australian and New Zealand Governments made such slow progress, it was not until May 1940 that Tasman Empire Airways Limited (TEAL) was formed and a commercial air service across the Tasman established.11

In the thirties, however, the growth of aviation in New Zealand was minimal compared to that of the United States of America. One of the most remarkable developments
in aviation in this period was the unparalleled growth of Pan American Airways. As the airline was keen to establish air networks in the Pacific, it consequently required bases in the islands. In the quest to establish such bases the United States Navy came to the company's aid, thereby renewing its involvement in the South West Pacific. For example, in 1934 the United States Navy cruiser Astoria visited Australia and New Zealand while on an Intelligence Cruise in the Pacific. Later that year the Navy indicated quite clearly its desire for airline bases in the islands. During the early thirties it had become quite obvious that American civil and military interests in the Pacific Islands were inseparable. As early as 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the new American President,

...never questioned the need for Pacific defence, whereas the State and Treasury Departments had systematically disregarded it, nor did he accept America "never having a policy for the acquisition of Pacific Islands, except perhaps not to acquire them."12

By 1934 the issue of island sovereignty had become so important that President Roosevelt requested that discussions be held with the British Government on this subject. Unfortunately the British response was not very enthusiastic. Britain's major interests in the Pacific still revolved around trade, communications and airline landing rights, and defence was still not being seriously considered.13

The United States, on the other hand, was very serious about all its areas of interest in the Pacific. On 29 December 1934 an executive order placed Kingman Reef, Johnston Island and Wake Island under the administrative control of the Secretary of the United States Navy.14
American interest in the Pacific escalated. In January 1935 the State Department and Bureau of Commerce established a secret Equatorial Cruise Programme to the Pacific Islands. The purpose of the expedition was to examine the islands' strategic importance to American aviation and defence. In February the Bureau of Commerce, with the support of the United States Navy resolved to populate uninhabited Pacific Islands. Problems, however, were to arise, as the sovereignty of many such islands came under dispute with Britain.

On 26, 30 March and 3 April 1935, Jarvis, Howland and Baker Islands in the Phoenix Group, were, respectively, occupied by the United States Department of Commerce under the direction of William T. Miller. The strategic positioning of the islands indicates the commercial and defence reasons behind their occupation. New Zealand did not react very strongly to the occupation at first because at that time flying boats were the current type of plane being used and none of these islands had suitable lagoons for sea-plane landings. The British response was also reasonably reserved. It centred on whether any of these islands were important enough from a defence, and especially a commercial, point of view to assert a counter-claim of sovereignty. It was decided that:

From defence point of view possession of air base in Central Pacific would be of [importance], but from civil aviation point of view question of nationality would seem of less importance if principle of reciprocity is established.

The issue of reciprocity was to become the biggest obstacle in the establishment of aviational agreements.
The British Government would only support the American claims if they were granted complete reciprocity in the future. In August 1935, Pan American Airways placed some proposals before the New Zealand Government on an air service by clipper flying boat. The service would run between San Francisco and Auckland, stopping at Hawaii, Kingman Reef and Pago Pago. These proposals were received enthusiastically by the New Zealand Government which had become increasingly interested in the possibilities of trans-Pacific flying. The major problem of reciprocity, however, prevented an immediate agreement being made. The British Government strongly advised New Zealand not to make an agreement without complete reciprocity included in it. Pan American Airways did not have the authority to grant reciprocal landing rights in the United States, as only the American Government had such power, but the New Zealand Government did finally accept an amended form of the agreement.\(^{18}\)

The agreement between the New Zealand Government and Pan American Airways was finally concluded in November. Harold Gatty, the negotiator for Pan American Airways, included a clause in the proposals which stated that New Zealand could terminate the agreement if a New Zealand company (later changed to any British Commonwealth Company) was denied landing rights by the United States Government. On 25 November 1935 Gordon Coates, the Minister of Transport, signed the agreement. In brief, the agreement granted Pan American Airways the right to operate a fortnightly flying-boat service between San Francisco and Auckland to begin by 31 December 1936, or later if extended by the New Zealand Minister of Transport.\(^{19}\)
By 1936 the Royal New Zealand Air Force was developing into an effective branch of the armed services and New Zealand commercial aviation was becoming a more real prospect. The Dominion was consequently more aware and worried about the American intrusion into 'British' territories in the Pacific. New Zealand, thus, began to plan action, independently as well as in conjunction with Britain, in order to firmly establish their claims in the Pacific. Over the following years New Zealand vessels would be used to survey islands and determine which ones were of strategic value to New Zealand and to Britain.

In the meantime, the administration of Jarvis, Howland and Baker Islands was transferred from the Department of Commerce to the Department of the Interior. During the change-over there were a few days in June 1936 when the islands were unoccupied because the Commerce Department men withdrew first. The islands were quickly reoccupied, however, when the United States became aware of New Zealand's plans to implement a survey in the Pacific in order to assert British sovereignty in some of the islands. By mid August the United States had established radio stations on all three islands which were transmitting weather reports daily.

RADIO IN THE PACIFIC

Radio stations were invaluable in the development of Pacific aviation and over the past years radio stations had been emerging throughout the Pacific Islands. For example, the Pacific Islands Year Book recorded that:
There is, in the Pacific, a large and growing network of radio communications, most of which has been established in the last ten years. This development has gone forward, hand in hand, with the increasing economic and political importance of the Pacific Territories. 21

In this vast network of radio stations, Suva radio was at the centre of an organisation which collected and distributed wireless messages from and to almost all other Pacific Islands with radios. 22

THE PAN AM AGREEMENT

Towards the end of 1936 Pan American Airways decided that the agreement with New Zealand was not satisfactory. The First Labour Government was also not happy with this agreement made by its predecessor, and the British Government had never liked the obvious lack of reciprocity in the agreement. Consequently Pan American Airways and New Zealand renewed their negotiations on a trans-Pacific air service. When the British Government advised New Zealand of its opinions, it re-emphasized the need for complete reciprocity. This time, however, reciprocal landing rights were to apply to the whole of the Pacific Ocean, as well as the United States of America, otherwise the agreement was totally unacceptable. The British Government consequently advised that New Zealand delay negotiations with Pam American Airways, especially as they hoped:

...to be in a position very shortly to explore with [New Zealand] plans for a British service across the Pacific and the New Zealand and United Kingdom Governments together will then be in a much stronger position to negotiate with the Pan Americans. 23
The British Government viewed this matter with such importance that they requested that the New Zealand Government delay a decision until the matter had been discussed with a senior officer of the Air Ministry who would be sent out as soon as possible. Although the New Zealand Government was very anxious to determine the agreement with Pan American Airways so that a service could be started as soon as possible, they did agree to wait and discuss the matter with the British officer. The New Zealand Government also hoped that he would be "competent to advise on all air questions - Defence and otherwise." 24

Despite the fact that the New Zealand Government was dealing with a private company solely interested in commercial aviation, it still saw defence issues as being involved. For New Zealand civil and military aviation had always been contiguous and this also applied to the dealing with Pan Am. Similarly Pan American Airways had involved the United States Navy and Government departments in its affairs which consequently involved United States defence policy. American commercial aviation in the Pacific, therefore, affected the defence policies of both New Zealand and the United States. The British offer to send an advisory officer to New Zealand was consequently seen as an ideal opportunity to be advised in aviational matters.
The CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE

The arrival of Mr. F.G.L. Bertram, of the Air Ministry and a former Deputy Director of Civil Aviation, was welcomed in New Zealand. The importance of his visit is illustrated by the invitation to the Australian Government to join in the discussions. The Australian Government accepted the invitation and sent a delegation to New Zealand. The Civil Aviation Conference was consequently held in Wellington from 26 September to 3 October 1936.25

The New Zealand delegation to the Conference consisted of four Cabinet Ministers: The Minister of Defence, Fred Jones, the Minister of Transport, Robert Semple, the Minister of Marine, Peter Fraser and Walter Nash the Minister of Finance. The Australian Minister of Defence, Sir Archdale Parkhill attended the Conference accompanied by four other Australians including Captain E.C. Johnston, the Controller-General of Civil Aviation. Mr. F.G.L. Bertram represented the United Kingdom, assisted by Mr. P. Leisching, a member of the High Commissioner in Canberra.26 Discussions at the Conference focused on trans-Pacific and trans-Tasman aviation and were of a very preliminary and exploratory nature. Several resolutions resulted from the Conference and were submitted to the Governments concerned. The main substance of the resolutions focused on changes being made to the 1935 agreement with Pan American Airways. It was also suggested that the Governments of the United Kingdom,
Canada, Australia and New Zealand first discuss the establishment of a Pacific air service with each other and then with the United States of America with a strong emphasis on complete reciprocity. Finally discussions were held on the establishment of a Trans-Tasman Air Service jointly owned by the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.\(^27\)

The Civil Aviation Conference marked an important point as the Commonwealth Governments assembled recognized the importance of Pacific aviation. Also, the presence of the Australian and New Zealand Ministers of Defence illustrates how defence issues were accepted as becoming involved. After the conference was disbanded, negotiations were renewed between the New Zealand Government and Pan American Airways.

In February 1937 Pan American Airways communicated to the New Zealand Government that they required an extension of time and that they would be prepared to operate under the 1936 agreement as it stood without amendment.\(^28\) The advice of the British Government was consistent with its past stand and insisted that the New Zealand Government try and obtain reciprocal rights for a future British Commonwealth service across the Pacific.\(^29\) The New Zealand Government received no such guarantee but went ahead and granted the extension to Pan American Airways. There was, however, an underlying expectation that reciprocal rights would be granted if they were requested. Meanwhile Harold Gatty gambled that a rival British service was a long way off in the future and
"that the [American] service would prove so popular that the New Zealand Government could only terminate it at great political expense."\(^3^0\) Finally, in March 1937, the Samoan Clipper set out on the first commercial flight in the South West Pacific.

**DISPUTE OVER CANTON AND ENDERBURY ISLANDS**

By March 1937 the British and New Zealand Governments appreciated the value of Pacific Islands as air bases. Islands, which had been ignored in the past, were now keenly sought after for meteorological and radio stations, as well as landing grounds. Many islands also had obvious potential for military aviation. Although New Zealand did not see America as a potential enemy, she was still keen to see British Commonwealth control over any islands which might be needed in wartime or which would pose a threat if occupied by a potential enemy, namely Japan.

The American claims over Holland, Baker and Jarvis Islands still caused some anxiety, especially as Britain still claimed sovereignty over the Phoenix Group. There was also a very strong fear that the United States would extend its claims to other islands, perhaps even ones actually administered by New Zealand. In March 1937 the British Government decided to add the Phoenix Group (including Canton, Enderbury and Hull Islands) to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony by an Order-in-Council.\(^3^1\) The United States refused to recognize the British claim.
especially as they were now focusing attention on Canton Island. The islands already claimed by America were not proving to be that suitable for air bases, whereas Canton did look suitable. In reply to the British Order-in-Council, on 3 March 1938 an executive order of the President of the United States placed Canton and Enderbury Islands under the administrative control of the Secretary of the Interior. The question of sovereignty over Canton and Enderbury Islands remained unsettled throughout 1938, causing much debate between the nations concerned. Finally on 6 April 1939 the American and British Governments agreed to a joint control over these islands. The agreement provided for joint uses for aviaational purposes of British and American companies over the following fifty years. In reaching this agreement the issue of use took precedence over that of sovereignty and thus commercial aviation could proceed unobstructed.

DEFENCE POLICY QUESTIONED

The growth of commercial aviation and resulting "island grabbing" in the Pacific had without doubt firmly placed the Pacific Islands on the map. New Zealand's military authorities were well aware of the concept expressed in Parliament in August that:
The frontiers of New Zealand might well be the Pacific islands situated between this country and the northern part of Australia. I can imagine that a very powerful air force... based on that chain of islands from the Cook Islands to Samoa, Fiji and New Guinea, would form, probably, one of the best protection screens we could find...

Parallel to the advent of the Pacific Islands was a decline in confidence in the Singapore strategy among New Zealand's defence planners and politicians. Serious doubts had arisen concerning the priority of Singapore in Imperial defence. Italy's aggression against Abyssinia in 1934 had resulted in the inclusion of Italy as a potential enemy for the British Empire, that is alongside Germany and Japan. The New Zealand Government consequently feared that in the event of a simultaneous war in Europe and the Far East, that the Atlantic and the Mediterranean would take precedence over the Pacific in Imperial defence strategy. Such a possibility was viewed with grave foreboding in New Zealand. If Singapore were not reinforced by a British fleet, or worse, if Singapore itself fell into enemy hands, then New Zealand would be left defenceless. These doubts in Britain's ability to defend both ends of the Empire occurred at the same time as the awareness of the importance of the Pacific Islands to New Zealand's security. Answers were required in New Zealand on details of the Singapore strategy and on Britain's attitude to the Pacific Islands in defence policy. The forthcoming Imperial Conference in 1937 was to provide the occasion for discussions on both these issues.

THE 1937 IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

The Imperial Conference in 1937 was a major turning point in the recognition of the importance of the
Pacific Islands. At the Conference, New Zealand promoted its views in the Imperial arena, and requested a British assessment of the strategic value of the Pacific Islands. For the Dominions the issues of primary concern to be discussed would be defence issues. In the months before the Conference New Zealand's defence planners began to organize their agenda.

In February of 1937 Cochrane advised Berendsen on the importance of the islands from the air point of view. As Berendsen was going to be attending the forthcoming Imperial Conference, it was consequently most important that he be fully informed. Cochrane listed four general areas about the islands which ought to be considered:

(i) Their geographical and strategical position in relation to New Zealand, i.e. on the route of any expedition or raid.

(ii) Their value as centres from which a watch can be kept on activities in the Japanese mandated islands.

(iii) Their present vulnerability and the possible consequences if they fell into Japanese hands.

(iv) Their commercial value - special products - air routes, etc. 36

In March 1937 in a Combined Staff Paper prepared for the Imperial Conference, the Chiefs of Staff advised that Empire co-operation be sought in the Pacific and they recommended that there be discussions between Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand with the object of making a thorough survey of the islands in the Pacific:
Another area in which Empire co-operation may be essential, is that portion of the Pacific situated between the Japanese mandated islands and Australia and New Zealand. Apart from naval considerations, the rapidly increasing strategical mobility of [the] air force has given added importance to the islands in that area, and their possible use in any scheme of defence involving Australia and New Zealand. 37

At the Conference co-operation would not only be sought among the three aforementioned countries, for example, in the provision of facilities such as wireless and meteorological stations and landing grounds, but it would also be sought among the three services, that is, Navy, Army and Air, in matters of defence. 38

The Chiefs of Staff also wanted the British authorities to give advice on what Empire policy was to be followed in the event of hostilities breaking out with either a European power or an Asiatic one or both simultaneously. They wanted clarification on what action would be taken and what New Zealand's role would be in such a situation and also what scale of attack New Zealand might expect and at what time. 39

The New Zealand delegation to the Imperial Conference thus had a clear idea of the information which was required by New Zealand's military authorities concerning the Dominion's defence policy. The two major issues were firstly, the Singapore strategy and secondly, the strategic value of the Pacific Islands. The British authorities knew that Australia and New Zealand would want details about these subjects and the British Chiefs of Staff 40 produced two major documents for the Conference, that is, *The Review of Imperial Defence* and the *Far East Appreciation*.

The *Review* stated the general principle that the security of the United Kingdom and of Singapore were the keystones for
the survival of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Singapore's priority was reaffirmed in that the security of the Mediterranean was not to interfere with the despatch of a fleet to the Far East. 41

The Imperial Conference in 1937 was, as usual, a somewhat grandiose Commonwealth occasion. The Coronation of George VI and the change of Prime Minister from Stanley Baldwin to Neville Chamberlain, took place at the same time as the Conference which resulted in added pomp and pagentry to the occasion. The Conference focused on important international affairs, the League of Nations, shipping, communications and other Commonwealth matters, as well as on defence policy. 42 However, it was the discussions and statements on defence that mark the Conference as an important occasion for policy in the Pacific.

The New Zealand Delegation which attended the Conference included the New Zealand Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, the Minister of Finance, Walter Nash and Carl Berendsen, the Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department. Before the Conference opened on 14 May some preliminary meetings were held between the Australian and New Zealand delegates and the British Chiefs of Staff so that the latter could gain some more specific idea of the issues the Dominion would raise. At these meetings, New Zealand's representative, Walter Nash, created awkward problems because of his obstinate lobbying for the New Zealand Government's intended preferential policy towards air defence and the consequent possibility of giving up the cruisers, Leander and Achilles. Nash insisted that two medium bomber squadrons would be far more suitable to New
Zealand's needs than the cruisers. Predictably, the British Chiefs of Staff strongly opposed this idea and heated arguments ensued.43 At a later date, Savage did acknowledge that aircraft alone would not be sufficient to protect trade on the long sea routes, and that the cruisers would be needed for this role and also for that of local defence in wartime. Although Prime Minister Savage admitted the cruisers would be better kept by New Zealand, he insisted that the final decision would be made by the New Zealand Government.44 Eventually early in 1938 the New Zealand Cabinet made the decision to maintain both cruisers and to also develop the bomber squadrons.

In May 1937 the British Cabinets new Defence Policy (Plans) Sub-committee met to consider how honest they would be with the Dominions at the Conference. Not wanting to commit themselves to a positive or a negative policy about defending Singapore, it was decided to 'leave them guessing' so as to avoid the possibility of the Dominions abandoning Imperial defence policy.45

On 26 May Savage read a list of prepared questions to the Conference which asked:

1. For advice on the division of funds among the armed services.

2. Why it is not possible in peacetime to maintain a force in the Far East sufficient to contain the Japanese fleet.

3. That an assurance be made to send a fleet to the Far East even if Britain is embroiled in a European war at the same time.
4. For details regarding the disposition of British vessels during the next few years.

5. What the maximum scale of attack is that New Zealand could expect in the event of a war in both Europe and the Far East.

6. For advice on whether the local defence needs of New Zealand would be better achieved by the air.

7. What role the cruisers would play in a Far Eastern war.

8. That discussions between Great Brittain, Australia and New Zealand be instituted with the object of making a survey of the strategic value of the Pacific Islands.

9. About the development of the principle of Imperial Co-operation in Defence.

10. That a further meeting with the Chiefs of Staff Sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence be held to discuss the above points.

New Zealand's concern about the Pacific Islands had resulted in a report by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-committee entitled The Strategic Importance of the Pacific Islands. The islands were examined from a general strategic point of view. Information was collected about individual islands concerning "naval bases, air bases, commercial airways, meteorology, communications, population and administration, activities of the Japanese fishing craft, review of trade and shipping." The type of anchorages available in each island were listed. Fanning Island, under British sovereignty, was said to be "of great
strategic importance" even though work would be required before an anchorage even suitable for destroyers and submarines would be available.49

On the general strategic value of the islands the Chiefs of Staff's opinion was that:

...the Pacific Islands are of strategic value in so far as they provide us with fuelling bases for our Naval forces, possible landing grounds for our Air forces, and positions for the establishment of wireless stations. Moreover, if our systems of communications can be sufficiently developed then the chances of Japan using any Islands in our possession as fuelling bases, would be considerably reduced.50

The conclusion then drawn was that every possible endeavour should be made to establish British sovereignty over any of the Pacific Islands offering facilities for the above requirements and that such facilities should then be developed as they would be invaluable in war. The Chiefs of Staff also advised that Japanese activities in the Islands be monitored as much as possible.51

At the meeting on 7 June the report on The Strategic Importance of the Pacific Islands and the Far East Appreciation (1937) were both considered as well as the questions submitted by the New Zealand Delegation, and questions on general Far East defence, submitted by the Australian Delegation. In response to Savage's request for advice on the division of defence expenditure between the three Services, Chatfield gladly offered assistance to the New Zealand Government. However, when the Chief of Naval Staff inquired about New Zealand's intentions as regards the two cruisers, Savage replied that the final decision would be made in Wellington.52 After
discussing imperial defence matters, the Committee then turned its attention to the Pacific Islands. The Australian Naval Staff had been requested to submit its opinions on the subject. Unlike the New Zealanders they had concluded that the strategic importance of the Pacific Islands was not high. The Australian opinion was based on the position in the Pacific after war had broken out and on the assumption that in this situation a large proportion of the Main Fleet would be sent to the Far East. Apart from the valuable phosphate trade from Nauru, the Australian view was that only islands "under the Japanese mandate would be of value to us as points of possible raiding attacks, with a view to forcing dispersion on the enemy."\(^{53}\)

The Australian attitude towards the Pacific was noticeably different from that of New Zealand. New Zealand's view that the islands were of strategic value had been clearly illustrated during the Conference. The report by the British Chiefs of Staff represented how seriously they viewed the strategic significance of the Islands. As the meeting continued, Nash concentrated on considering the relative value of sea-planes as opposed to land planes. The only other issue he raised concerned the period before relief at Singapore. Nash still required confirmation as to whether 60 days constituted the maximum period it would take a British fleet to arrive at Singapore. Lord Chatfield, however, could not give him a definite answer on this subject, as it was still being considered by the Committee of Imperial Defence.\(^{54}\)
Consequently when the Imperial Conference formally ended on 15 June Britain had not supplied the Dominions with specific answers to questions concerning the timing and size of the fleet, but it had affirmed the priority of the Far East over the Mediterranean.

The other main issue dealt with at the Conference, which was of special interest to the New Zealand Government, was the question of civil aviation. A Committee on Civil Air Communications, chaired by Sir Archdale Parkhill, met to consider establishing a British Commonwealth air service linking all parts of the Empire. The need to establish such a service in the Pacific had become increasingly urgent because of the advances made by Pan American Airways in this area. The following resolutions were consequently adopted:

(i) In promoting arrangements whereby air lines operated by members of the British Commonwealth of Nations could link them together, it was agreed that there should be co-operation with each other to the greatest possible extent.
(ii) It was agreed that application for air facilities within the British Empire from foreign air services should be the subject of consultation between the Government concerned; that reciprocal rights should be the basis of any concessions and that such rights should be made available to other members of the British Empire generally.

After the Imperial Conference, Walter Nash renewed discussions in the United States on the agreement with Pan American Airways. He officially informed the United States Government of the agreement and announced the New Zealand Government's intention to apply for reciprocal landing rights for a British trans-Pacific Service. By the end of 1937 the New Zealand Government
had received no guarantee of such rights by the United States Government which "could not consider itself bound by agreements made between foreign Governments and private American companies." The problem was soon resolved however, when Pan American Airways discontinued the service to New Zealand because the Samoan Clipper crashed on 11 January 1938.

In the two years prior to the 1937 Imperial Conference, civil and military aviation literally "took off" in New Zealand. By 1937 the concept of an air force constituting the best means of defence for New Zealand itself had been recognised. Parallel to this development was that of the Pacific Islands being of great strategic significance in New Zealand's defence policy. The Imperial Conference marks a major turning point in this concept as it was endorsed in the Imperial arena. The Conference saw the islands examined in detail by the British Chiefs of Staff at New Zealand's request. Their strategic value was consequently discussed alongside other imperial defence issues. It was also suggested at the Imperial Conference that a future conference specifically on Pacific defence issues should be held. From this point on new impetus was given to action taken in the Pacific by the New Zealand and British Governments.
2. Ibid., paras. 17 and 18.
3. Ibid., "Summary of Air Facilities in the Pacific Islands" Item IV, Note D.
8. McIntyre, Singapore Naval Base, pp.31-32.
11. Ibid., pp.21-22.
13. Ibid., p.80.
17. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (SSDA) to Governor-General New Zealand (GGNA), 17-9-1935, AIR 1 123/11/1.
19. Ibid., pp.6-8.
20. Ibid., pp.16-17.
22. Ibid.
23. SSDA to GGNZ 29-7-1936, AIR 1 123/11/1.
24. GGNZ to SSDA 11-8-1936, AIR 1 123/11/1.
25. "Air Conference between Representatives of Governments of United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand" AIR 1 123/11/1.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Memo for NZPM 3-2-1937 AIR 1 123/11/1.
29. SSDA to GGNZ 15-2-1937 AIR 1 123/11/1.
33. Ibid.
36. Cochrane to Berendsen 3-2-1937 EA1 85/1/1 Pt.1.
37. Imperial Conference 1937, Combined Staff Papers by COS Committee, AIR 1 123/11/2.
39. Imperial Conference 1937, Combined Staff Papers, AIR 1 123/11/2.
40. The British Chiefs of Staff were: Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff; Field Marshal Sir Cyril J. Deverell, Chief of the Imperial Staff; and, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Edward L. Ellington, Chief of the Air Staff.
41. McIntyre, Singapore Naval Base, pp.129-130.
42. Ibid., p.131.
43. Ibid., p.130.
44. McGibbon, Blue-Water Rationale, p.299.


47. COS 586/C1D 1327-B "The Strategic Importance of the Pacific Islands" 28-5-1937.

48. Ibid., see annex to the report.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Minutes of Imperial Conference Meeting on 7-6-1937 to discuss Pacific Defence Questions, pp.1-4, EA 1 156/1/1 Pt.1A.

53. Ibid., pp.8-9.

54. Ibid., p.11.


58. Ibid., p.48.
CHAPTER FOUR

"ISLANDS SURVEYED", 1937-1938

The endorsement, at the 1937 Imperial Conference, of the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands was consolidated over the following two years. Although some preliminary surveys had been made in the islands it was not until this period that New Zealand and Britain made a firm commitment to surveying in the Pacific. During these years rivalry with the United States over island sovereignty continued, resulting in acceleration of surveys and work in the islands.

Events in Europe also enhanced the sense of urgency to put defence plans into action. In particular, the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in September 1938, brought home the very real possibility of war. The New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey (NZPAS), which followed the Munich crisis, was the most important of the island surveys. This expedition provided the opportunity to examine islands intended as bases in the air route defence scheme between New Zealand and Hawaii. Included in the NZPAS was a Chiefs of Staff trip to Fiji and Tonga to assess the defence requirements in these island groups. On the conclusion of the NZPAS, New Zealand's defence planners focused attention on the Pacific and preparations began for the Pacific Defence Conference to be held in Wellington in April 1939.
EARLY ISLAND SURVEYS

Preliminary survey expeditions were made to the islands as early as 1936. The Aerodrome Services Branch (ASB) of the New Zealand Public Works Department, formed in 1933, was headed by Esmond Allen Gibson, a civil engineer from the Public Works Department. Gibson, also an adviser to Group Captain Thomas Wilkes, the Controller of Civil Aviation, was appointed Flight-Lieutenant in the Territorial Air Force as well. This enabled him to fly both military and civil aircraft. Two other engineers from the Public Works Department, Eric Smart and D.O. Haskell, also joined the ASB, in 1936 and 1937 respectively. By 1936 the ASB had established about 80 airfields in New Zealand, thereby creating a defence and commercial airline communications system. With New Zealand's current needs satisfied, the ASB staff looked elsewhere for work. Fortunately, because the British Government was showing an interest in the aerial potential of the Pacific Islands, it was decided to employ the ASB staff to undertake surveys and construction work rather than send out a British team.

Squadron-Leader L.M. Isitt had discussed his ideas on a military land plane route between New Zealand and Hawaii as part of a defence strategy as early as 1933. Unfortunately Gibson was unable to take any action on these plans for three years. But in 1936, when he was appointed to Wing Commander Cochrane's staff, Gibson was able to begin investigations into the scheme. Some of the preliminary survey work was done in 1936 when ships from
the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy voyaged through the Pacific. For example, HMS Dunedin carried out aerial surveys in Western Samoa for marine aircraft landing areas.³

On its original passage to New Zealand from Gibraltar HMS Achilles surveyed several islands for their suitability as air bases. The Achilles survey was in fact a direct response to American activities in the Pacific and the opportunity was taken to assert sovereignty in the islands.⁴

As a result of examining the possible anchorages at Christmas, Fanning, Nukunono, Canton and Hull Islands, Kingman Reef and Minerva Reef it was concluded that only Christmas Island had a good anchorage. At Canton Island the anchorage was only found to be suitable for vessels smaller than a sloop. The Achilles survey also concluded that Fanning, Christmas and Nukunono Islands had the most potential for air bases.⁵

In June 1936 HMS Wellington sailed from Auckland to visit several islands, at the request of the Colonial Office, in order to report on their air suitability.⁶ In the same month HMS Leith sailed from Auckland to the Phoenix Islands where some carpenters were dropped off at Hull Island to erect noticeboards proclaiming British sovereignty throughout the islands. The following January HMS Leith then claimed sovereignty over some of these islands.⁷ The main conclusion of all these surveys was to establish that the best air route between New Zealand and Honolulu would be via Suva, Hull or Nukunono Islands, and Kingman Reef or Christmas Island.⁸ Honolulu was an essential stop off base because of its proximity to the United States, and Fiji was another because of its strategic importance to New Zealand and Britain. The only other real achievement of
these voyages was the assertion of British sovereignty in the islands in retaliation to the similar American actions of the previous year.

This Anglo-American struggle for sovereignty over many of the islands in the Pacific seemed to reach a stalemate as neither nation would recognize the claims of the other. An example of this can be seen in the eclipse expeditions of May 1937. Both England and the United States had expeditions which visited Canton Island to view the eclipse. The American expedition was a joint venture of the National Geographic Society and the US Navy, and the Avocet arrived at Canton Island on 6 May. The joint English-New Zealand venture, on board HMS Wellington, arrived after the Avocet, on 26 May. Conflict quickly arose as to which vessel should have the only suitable anchorage with the Americans refusing to recognize the British claims of sovereignty. A compromise, however, was organised whereby both vessels managed to be anchored off the island. The Union Jacks and signs claiming sovereignty left by HMS Leith in 1936 and 1937 were not interfered with but the Americans did erect their own flags. HMS Wellington left before Avocet and due to concern over the American activities on the island it was decided that HMS Achilles would visit the Phoenix Group during its forthcoming Pacific cruise. 9

ACHILLES EXPEDITION, 1937

By April 1937 Wing Commander Cochrane was again stressing the importance of examining potential as well as existing facilities in the islands. 10 His 1936 report had emphasized
this need and it had been listed as one of New Zealand's suggestions for discussion at the 1937 Imperial Conference. Cochrane consequently encouraged the New Zealand Government to take advantage of any forthcoming cruises to examine the islands, especially in regard to establishing landing grounds. The Air Secretary, T.A. Barrow, concurred with Cochrane and was especially interested in determining which islands would be suitable for long-range medium bomber aircraft. The demand for a further, more detailed, examination of the Pacific Islands had thus become obvious and needed to be instigated at the first opportunity. This first opportunity quickly revealed itself in the form of the forthcoming goodwill cruise of HMS _Achilles_ to Hawaii.

The _Achilles_ expedition already intended to survey islands in the Cook and Samoan Groups so it was proposed that it also cover islands under the control of the United Kingdom Government, that is, Nukualofa, Christmas Island, Fanning Island, Rotumah and Fiji. The inclusion of Fiji in the extended cruise plan was particularly welcomed because of its strategic value to New Zealand. As New Zealand would be gaining aircraft capable of the direct flight to Fiji, it was important to establish landing grounds in Fiji as soon as possible. The _Achilles_ cruise was next extended by the Air Ministry to include islands in the Tokelau and Phoenix Groups in order to supplement information already collected.

The survey party for the expedition included a pilot and Eric Smart, an aerodrome engineer. Smart, Assistant Engineer of the ASB, would be primarily concerned with
examining possible landing ground sites in the islands. The type of information which the survey party was required to collect fell into four categories. The first was entitled, 'Operational Requirements for Water Aerodromes' which, in brief, meant discovering suitable sea-plane landing sites of the right size with no surrounding obstructions. The second category, 'Operational Requirements for Land Aerodromes' required examining any potentially level area of at least 1,000 yards square with adjoining unobstructed land and air space. The remaining categories included examining any existing wireless and telegraph facilities, the nature and layout of the terrain and of the soil, and finally examining meteorological conditions.¹⁴

On 14 June 1937 HMS Achilles sailed from Auckland for Fiji where Eric Smart made a survey of the islands in the cruiser's Walrus amphibian aircraft.¹⁵ In the Fiji Group, apart from a main aerodrome at Nandi, on the island of Viti Levu, suitable land and water alighting areas were found near Lautoka and in the Rewa River region.¹⁶ The predominant handicap faced by the survey party was the extremely limited time allowed for work in each island. The few allocated hours for each visit should have been a few weeks in order to obtain the type of information which was desired. Consequently, because of the lack of time, the surveyors often had to rely on information collected in the past and add what they were able to it. For example, in Christmas Island, where Achilles landed William Cowie, a relief wireless operator, the area surveyed in 1936 was extended. As a result the survey established that it had some very good possibilities for building an aerodrome, especially along
the Northern Shore. In Canton Island a complete photographic survey of the island was made and a ground party was landed inside the lagoon to investigate possible sites there. The survey party concluded that landing strips could be made in the area examined but on current examinations it was decided the lagoon was unsuitable for flying boat operations.

In the Phoenix Group, Smart believed that Hull and Gardner Islands would be the most economic to develop. However in the final report on this cruise there was little added to the 1936 findings, that is, that there was a lack of suitable land area to construct a runway of the required length. The report also concluded that the lagoon in Nukunono would be ideal for a water aerodrome but that there was only space for a small emergency land aerodrome on the island. Sydney Island was not found to be suitable for either a land or a water aerodrome as it would require a great deal of work to establish either of them. There were also no suitable sites for water aerodromes in Samoa but there were land areas which could be made into aerodromes after they had been cleared and levelled.

The information gathered by HMS Achilles was by no means as detailed or extensive as had been desired by the planners of the expedition and especially those involved. Apart from making further notifications of sovereignty the Achilles cruise resulted in a solid start on surveying of Pacific Islands for the British and New Zealand Governments.

The arrival of HMS Achilles at Hawaii was welcomed by Pan American Airways. Fuelled by their ambitions for an air service to Auckland, the Pan Americans were friendly
and helpful hosts to the visiting New Zealanders. Because of this goodwill Eric Smart learnt a great deal during his visit, spending four days examining the Pan American methods of establishing island air bases. Smart thus left Hawaii impressed with the large scale which Pan Am undertook its projects and its consequent higher rate of success than the comparative small scale of the New Zealanders. Smart was also convinced of the vital need for an efficient supply ship to support New Zealand's expeditions. The lessons Smart learnt in Hawaii were to come to the fore the following year when New Zealand was planning a further expedition to the islands. Finally, on the voyage home from Hawaii HMS Achilles picked up the carpenters who had been left on Hull Island the previous year and took them to Suva. 22

DEFENCE PLANNING INFLUENCED

New Zealand's request for an assessment of the Pacific Islands had resulted in the report from the Committee of Imperial Defence on The Strategic Importance of the Pacific Islands. 23 The British Chiefs of Staff maintained that Japan was the only potential enemy in the Pacific and the plan to send a British Fleet to Singapore was still a deterrent. However, the Pacific Islands would be vulnerable to attack because of their value as advanced fuelling bases for Japanese raids on trade and communications and possibly also on Australia and New Zealand ports. Consequently Australia and New Zealand Air Forces, air facilities and wireless stations in the islands would all play a major role in operations against such raiding in the Pacific. Therefore, by developing a
system of communications in the islands, and more firmly establishing a presence there, the possibility of a Japanese intrusion would be considerably reduced. The Chiefs of Staff consequently recommended that efforts be made to establish British sovereignty over these islands and they encouraged the development of facilities in the islands.24

Naturally the New Zealand Government welcomed this endorsement of the value of the Pacific Islands. A few months later in October 1937, the Organisation for National Security produced a report on "Fanning Island" and then in February the following year one on the position of the "Pacific Islands". These reports were partly a response to the British report but they also came at a time when New Zealand military authorities were beginning to put their Pacific plans into action. Preliminary island surveys had already been made and further expeditions were being planned.

The report on Fanning Island was primarily concerned with reaffirming the commitment made by the New Zealand Government in August 1930 to despatch a force to Fanning Island when requested by the British Government to do so.25 The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff not only wished to reaffirm this commitment but also wanted Britain's opinion on whether the size of the force should be increased from 60 to 150 men, for example in order to cover any possible wastage because of sickness. The report also examined the likely scale of attack on Fanning Island. Of the four possibilities: attack by cruisers, attack by armed merchant vessels, attack by raiding parties landed from vessels and occasional light raids by aircraft from these vessels; defence measures would only be possible against raiding parties. In the case
of the other types of attack it was assumed that British forces, namely the 'Fleet', would command the surrounding waters. Cabinet approved the paper on 7 February and then in a meeting on 6 May the increase of the force from 60 to 150 men was approved.

Cabinet also approved the paper on the Pacific Islands on 6 May. This paper although completed in February 1938 was being prepared soon after the Imperial Conference closed in June 1937. In August the Chiefs of Staff began examining means of countering enemy attacks on the islands and how the islands could be used by New Zealand. In the final report, which was completed in February 1938, the Chiefs of Staff examined the programme of air development in progress, which aimed to produce, by 1940, two long-range squadrons capable of reaching the Pacific Islands and concluded that air route facilities were an urgent necessity in the islands. However because of the scarcity and vagueness of information on the islands at this stage the Chiefs of Staff were only able to draw tentative conclusions. It was hoped that future surveys would soon change this situation. In the meantime, Cochrane put forward his plans for a network of air routes in the Pacific.

PACIFIC AIR-ROUTE POLICY

Wing Commander Cochrane had in fact advocated Pacific air routes in his 1936 report. In February 1937 in preparation for the Imperial Conference he informed Berendsen about a scheme for an air route network in the Pacific. He proposed four routes radiating outwards from Fiji, the central point of the network:
(i) From Fiji through the Solomon Islands, New Guinea and Borneo to Singapore, thus forming a link between Fiji and the main Empire air route at Singapore.

(ii) From Fiji northwards along the Gilbert and Ellice Archipelago to Ocean and Nauru Islands.

(iii) Fiji-Samoa-Northern Cook Island to Christmas Island and Fanning Island.

(iv) Fiji-Friendly Islands [Tonga], Cook Islands to the Pitcairn Group.

A year later in the Chiefs of Staff's report, Cochrane proposed a new network of four air routes which differed only slightly from these routes. Fiji was still seen as the possible central point, because of its size and good facilities, even though there were other suitable areas in both the Fijian and Tongan Groups. It was essential, though, to establish bases in both island groups so as to deter enemy infiltration into the area and thus moving within attacking range of New Zealand. Thus the development of air facilities would be "an important addition to the existing means of defence" in the islands already.

In developing the air routes priority was planned for the route between New Zealand and Fiji. Future development would then extend the route to the north, the north-east and the east. The four routes proposed by Cochrane "would enable aircraft to reach the greater part of the South Pacific if the need arose."

Route A would run from Fiji north to the Gilbert Islands. This route was particularly desirable because it would bring the Marshall Islands within aircraft reconnaissance range and thus Japanese movements in this area could be monitored. Landing grounds in these islands could arguably also assist in the administration of the islands, for example by providing medical aid and assisting local trade. The
New Zealand to Fiji, Routes A, B, C and D.
majority of the islands possessed sufficient land area for aerodromes but further surveys would be needed before construction could be considered.

The second air route, Route B, would run north-east from Fiji to the Phoenix Islands then through to Fanning and Christmas Islands. New Zealand had already committed herself to garrisoning Fanning Island in war and this route would provide a means of connecting up with that garrison. So far surveys had only established that this air route would be possible.

Route C would run north-east to Samoa, the Northern Cook and Line Islands. Although landing strips could probably be found in the majority of these islands, far more detailed information was required about this route. The final route, Route D, would run east from Fiji to Tonga and the Cook Islands, and would also need further surveys before being established.

Until further surveys had been made in the islands the Chiefs of Staff were not able to make any final decisions on the air routes. They did recommend, however, that the United Kingdom Government be asked to agree in principle to the establishment of these routes and that a full survey of Route A be instigated. Because of the importance of this air route to the security of New Zealand it was proposed that New Zealand offer to undertake the technical work of the survey. 32

Copies of the Pacific Islands defence report were circulated to the governments and people concerned in May 1938. Apart from supporting the air routes, Savage also suggested:
His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom might possibly think it advisable that representatives of all three countries (Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand) should meet at some suitable point to discuss Pacific Island matters.

The idea was for a defence conference specifically on Pacific affairs as had been raised before at the Imperial Conference. By this time New Zealand's enthusiasm for such a conference had become far stronger and the possibility of its occurrence more real.

The Australian Prime Minister, J.A. Lyons, also expressed his views on the defence paper. Whilst the Australians were understandably more concerned with the Pacific Islands nearest to Australia, they did appreciate the value of establishing the air routes proposed by New Zealand in the interests of Imperial defence as a whole. The Australian Government had in fact been considering establishing air bases in the Solomons, New Hebrides and Norfolk Island. Survey expeditions were planned for August and September 1938; however, due to an outbreak of infectious diseases they had to be cancelled. At this same time Lyons also expressed his support for New Zealand's ideas for a conference to discuss Pacific matters as this could bring about better co-operation in developments in the Pacific.

With Fiji intended as the focal point of the planned air routes, it was not surprising that the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific informed New Zealand of Pacific opinion. The reference, in the report, to landing grounds and other facilities being "an important addition to the existing means of defence" prompted the Commissioner to examine what did in fact exist. The extremely meagre
'existing means of defence' did not include any anti-aircraft guns or artillery. However, because raiding parties from cruisers constituted the main danger, air facilities would prove valuable as they would enable New Zealand to send air reinforcements if necessary. The Commissioner consequently concluded that an aerodrome would require anti-aircraft guns and other defences. In arguing this point it was pointed out that the air routes opened up a new danger, that is that the air routes could be used in reverse by an enemy. For example, Route A from Fiji to the Gilbert Islands, could be used by Japan to come from the Marshall Islands through the Gilbert Islands direct to Fiji, thus attacking from the air instead of raiding from the sea. Despite this added danger the advantages of Pacific air routes outweighed the disadvantages and the Commissioner offered his wholehearted support for the air routes and every possible assistance in the forthcoming surveys.35 This offer of assistance was to prove invaluable later that year with the New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey.

The United Kingdom Government was also in favour of New Zealand's proposals for air routes and extended its appreciation to New Zealand for the offer to finance the technical side of the necessary surveys.36 Upon receiving the support of the United Kingdom, the New Zealand Government began to put its plan into action with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Fiji, the nucleus of the planned air route network, was already witnessing some progress. In June 1938 Gibson had been sent to Fiji by Cochrane to examine Smart's proposals for the development of a military airfield there. For
Gibson this was a major step towards realising "a landplane lifeline linking New Zealand and Hawaii for defence purposes." In Fiji, Gibson discussed Smart's recommendations with Clifford Gordon Fenton, a New Zealand pilot. Both men decided in favour of Smart's proposals and E.W. Lee, from the ASB, was sent to Fiji where he supervised the construction of aerodromes at Nandi and Nausori.

THE MUNICH CRISIS

Progress in surveying in the Pacific Islands was given added impetus by international events in 1938. The international situation had been steadily declining throughout the thirties with Germany, Japan and Italy emerging as potential simultaneous enemies for the British Empire. During 1938 the situation in Europe regressed to the point where war seemed imminent. As Berendsen stated, the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in September "created an entirely new and very menacing situation." Although Britain and France had assured Czechoslovakia of their support, they reneged on their promise. Unprepared for war it was not surprising that Britain adopted a policy of appeasement towards Germany. Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler in Munich, however, only resulted in 'peace in our time' for the near and not the far future.

Despite occurring in Europe the implications raised by the Munich crisis were felt across the world. This was especially the case in the Pacific. One reason why the Pacific was so affected was due to the discovery during the crisis of German plans for commerce raiding in the Pacific. Consequently it was not surprising that
many Pacific territories reacted so strongly to this European crisis. The Cook Islands, in particular, responded with imperial loyalty to the dangers the Empire could be facing. As the Rarotonga News reported:

During the days when war clouds were gathering and all the Nations of Europe feared war would break out, we also have feared that war would break out. The Returned Soldiers of the Cook Islands held a meeting and discussed the situation. Those resident at Rarotonga and Aitutaki and other islands of our Group who took part in the last great war met and discussed and decided what they would do. The response was one of particular fervour. Captain J.D. Campbell, President of the Returned Soldiers Association, immediately telegraphed Savage offering the services of the Cook Island returned soldiers to the Empire. Although Savage replied that he appreciated the offer he pointed out that he did not see such steps as necessary at this stage.

Captain Campbell's correspondence with the New Zealand Prime Minister, although undoubtedly inspired by patriotism, must have caused some embarrassment when it was discovered that Campbell was not exactly whom he claimed to be. In November the Resident Commissioner of the Cook Islands, Judge H.F. Ayson, wrote to A.B. Ross, the Assistant Secretary of the Cook Islands Department in Wellington, on a personal basis to inquire what "Captain" Campbell's actual rank was. It consequently turned out that Campbell was in fact only a "Lieutenant" and was on the retired list of New Zealand's territorial forces. Despite this discovery Ayson repeated the Cook Islands' offer of assistance even though the situation no longer seemed urgent.

The Munich crisis also inspired quite a reaction in Samoa. In September Berendsen wrote to A.C. Turnbull, the Acting Administrator, and requested a copy of Samoa's
defence plans. Turnbull replied with a copy of the 1933 Defence Scheme for Apia and a police report. He suggested New Zealand send two fully-equipped infantry companies with a machine gun platoon, artillery section, transport and also a long-range Moth plane for reconnaissance. Plans were also made for the evacuation of New Zealand families from Samoa. Berendsen could not see the need for such plans especially as the defence proposals were "intended for the defence of the territory against external aggression and not for the purpose of internal security." Turnbull also included a list of German nationals in Samoa with the defence report. The local Germans had in fact been closely following the events in Europe and had, according to the Inspector of Police, in the event of war being declared with Germany, planned:

To physically seize the principal Government Institutions in Samoa - disarm the Police - seize all Government Arms, etc, and hold Apia, with the German Flag Flying.

Overly ambitious and unrealistic, these plans were soon forgotten as the European crisis disappeared. They did, however, clearly illustrate how seriously the Munich crisis was viewed by Germans in the Pacific. Although the sense of urgency created by the Munich crisis faded in Samoa defence planning was not totally abandoned. Over the ensuing months plans continued to be worked out for the establishment of a local defence Force in Samoa.

In New Zealand reactions to the Munich crisis were muted. This was primarily because of preoccupation with the approaching general election. "There was no doubt, however, of the keen interest and anxiety with which [some] New Zealanders responded to the crisis," keenly following the Daventry news bulletins which were broadcast
over the national network. Although the New Zealand public were still loyal to the Empire, this crisis was seen by most as an European problem, far from the shores of New Zealand, especially as there were domestic concerns prevalent at the time. On the other hand, the New Zealand Government, although busy with the election, did not totally ignore the European developments. New Zealand refused to support Britain's policy of appeasement and unlike the Australian and Canadian High Commissions did not congratulate Chamberlain on his peace settlement even though requested to do so.

THE SYDNEY CONFERENCE

At about the same time as the Munich crisis an unofficial conference on British Commonwealth relations was held near Sydney. The Conference was organised by the Royal Institute of International Affairs and its sister Institutes in the Dominions and India. The aim of the Conference was to look at co-operation in trade, foreign policy, defence and other matters of common interest. The Munich Crisis added to the realism of the Conference but otherwise did not affect it. In fact the nations involved had prepared their submissions before the crisis occurred. For example, New Zealand's submission: Contemporary New Zealand: A Survey of Domestic and Foreign Policy, was completed by June.

Although not a conference specifically on defence policy the Sydney Conference did examine co-operation in defence and the importance of regional efforts. It proposed:

That each member country of the Commonwealth should work outward from its own national defence problem, making a whole region the subject of its defensive studies.
Such a proposal was well in accordance with developments in New Zealand defence planning, that is the recognition of the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands.

DEFENCE PLANNING INSPIRED

The sense of urgency inspired by the Munich crisis felt in many Pacific territories was also felt by New Zealand's defence planners. In October 1938 the Chiefs of Staff produced a paper on the Defence of New Zealand Interests. The German plans to raid shipping in the Pacific, divulged during the crisis, demanded a fresh appreciation of the dangers to which New Zealand's interests could be exposed and the means of defence required for their protection.

The Chiefs of Staff still maintained that Japan constituted New Zealand's major, potential enemy. The scale of attack determined in past years was reaffirmed. That is, New Zealand was vulnerable to raids rather than a full-scale invasion. Consequently the revelation of the German raiding plans reinforced the feelings in New Zealand of vulnerability to Japanese raids. Because the Marshall Islands were Japan's nearest possession to New Zealand, it would seem likely that Japan would try and establish a closer base in one of the Pacific Islands. Such a possibility resulted in emphasizing the importance of the islands to the north of New Zealand, particularly Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, New Hebrides and New Caledonia as they all had first-class harbours. The possession of any of these islands by an enemy would provide it with more effective raiding and would be virtually impossible to retrieve. It was thus necessary to take precautions in peacetime and immediately
on the outbreak of war to prevent such an occurrence. Although it would be impossible to garrison the islands during peacetime, the presence of small, well-armed and trained, local forces would act as some deterrent to Japan. The Chiefs of Staff thus saw the need for further defence planning in the Pacific and they concluded that:

> Detailed plans for the defence of the islands cannot be prepared until a full survey has been undertaken and it is therefore recommended that an early opportunity be taken to discuss the whole question. 52

Within the next six months both these recommendations had been fulfilled. In November 1938 the New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey was instigated and then in April 1939 the Pacific Defence Conference was held in Wellington.

**THE NEW ZEALAND PACIFIC AVIATION SURVEY**

The events of 1938 all pointed towards the need for a more thorough and comprehensive survey expedition to the Pacific Islands. Cochrane had worked out a network of air routes which would be a vital part of a Pacific defence scheme and the Munich crisis had renewed the sense of urgency to set up defence measures in the Pacific Islands.

By October plans were beginning to emerge for a survey expedition to the islands. After further consideration of New Zealand's proposed air route scheme, the Imperial Government altered its views on which routes it thought should take priority. Fearful of the United States claims in the Pacific, Britain had decided to assert her sovereignty in any islands where it might be disputed. At this stage Christmas Island was of primary concern, and
Members of the NZPAS expedition (left to right):
Lt Ritchie, CPO M.W.Hay, E.A.Gibson, R.A.Wimbush,
Jack Paton and Harlon.

Noticeboard Proclaiming
Sovereignty at Hull Island.

Leander off Hull Island.
Although the British claim to sovereignty is regarded as strong, a possible United States counterclaim must be reckoned with, especially as this island is of first-class importance both for air route and defence purposes...and it is thought that only actual preparations for an airport would make it secure against possible United States intrusion.

The United Kingdom Government thus advocated the surveying of Christmas Island for a marine alighting place and a land aerodrome. It was also intended that notices of ownership be erected quickly and discreetly on the island. After Christmas Island it was suggested that Nukunono and Hull Islands be examined. The British Government was, in effect, proposing that Route B take priority over Route A, that is, reversing New Zealand's choice of priority in the air route network. This alternative plan did however have some appeal in that it was accompanied by an offer from Britain for the use of special echo-sounding apparatus and an officer for marine surveys.

The New Zealand Government accepted the British offer and accordingly altered the survey plans to fit in with the British desires. Eric Smart was already in Fiji, surveying for a landing ground and he could be made available to survey Christmas, Nukunono and Hull Islands. The intended visit of HMS Leander to Suva in November could also be extended to take a survey party to Christmas Island.

The United Kingdom was also anxious to survey and mark out a base at Hull Island. Gardner Island, to the west of Hull, had good potential for an alternative alighting area, and consequently the United Kingdom required the inclusion of these islands. If necessary, steps were to be taken in both to safeguard ownership. In order to ensure America was not informed of the expedition, it was classified
as 'Top Secret'. Britain did not want a repeat of 1936 when American colonists were rushed to the islands. The British Government was particularly concerned about New Zealand maintaining the secrecy as a sympathetic hint from New Zealand to Pan American Airways could be then "leaked" to the United States Government. Cochrane, who was given overall responsibility for the expedition, faced some conflicting loyalties over this issue. As a British officer serving New Zealand, Cochrane had to reconcile the different ambitions and attitudes of New Zealand and Britain to the United States. There can be no doubt that "Cochrane was concerned at the absence of even an informal understanding between London and Washington on Pacific defence strategy." 57

Secrecy did prevail with the New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey. The New Zealand Government, the Chiefs of Staff, and members of the survey party were only advised of the barest details. For example, until a few days before the expedition left New Zealand, many of the concerned parties were only aware of the intended visit to Fanning Island to assess defence requirements for the cable station there. As it turned out this was only one aspect of the expedition which would include surveys for land and sea aircraft operating facilities in Gardner, Hull, Washington and Nukunono Islands as well as the original Christmas and Fanning Islands. 58

On 5 November 1938 HMS Leander sailed from Auckland for Suva with the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and a small survey party from the Public Works Department on board. The New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey was officially
underway. Because of the secrecy surrounding the expedition the survey party was not fully assembled until after Leander arrived in Fiji. Gibson, who was already in Suva, was not informed by Cochrane that he would be leading the expedition until this point. Cochrane not only left it to the last possible moment to enlighten Gibson but he did not even fully inform him at this stage. Gibson was neither told of the very limited and brief surveys intended by London, nor of the emphasis on aviation as a part of a 'defence lifeline' between New Zealand and Hawaii. As a result of the secrecy imposed on the expedition Gibson was left with very little time to make any of the necessary preparations. 59

Bill Lee was the only ASB officer brought into the operation and that was because he happened to be in Fiji already. Like Smart, Gibson believed the methods of Pan American Airways were the best for surveying. In April 1938 Gibson had, therefore, made a case to the ASB for a special vessel for surveying the islands properly. The Public Works Department supported his proposals and an interdepartmental committee was formed to discuss the issue. Gibson's ideas were at the point of being accepted when they were quashed by Captain R.D. Oliver, RN, Naval Advisor to the New Zealand Government, when he assured the committee that the Royal Navy could handle everything. Gibson disagreed. The Royal Navy did not have the experience to deal with the particular conditions of the Pacific Islands and its tight schedules would not allow the time necessary for such work. Unfortunately for the NZPAS, Oliver's arguments prevailed and Gibson did not succeed in gaining
Predictably HMS Leander was on such a tight schedule during the expedition that she was only able to visit each island long enough to disembark a survey party and stores. As a result three separate survey parties were required so that work could be undertaken simultaneously at Hull, Gardner and Christmas Islands. Even this far from perfect situation would not have been possible without the help Fiji provided. Supplies and equipment were obtained in Suva, but more importantly so too were many members of the survey parties. Apart from those already mentioned, Roberts, a civil engineer from the Fiji Public Works Department, and Harlon, a land surveyor, were assigned to the Leander. Many local Fijians were also called upon to participate. In Suva, Gibson met with the Chiefs of Staff and achieved a major breakthrough by convincing them of the need for a depot ship for the survey expedition. The Yanawai, a river boat from Hong Kong, was consequently chartered.

While in Suva, Captain V.H. Deane, RM and Lieutenant R.J. Bailey, RN surveyed the Suva Peninsula to find a position for the 6 inch gun battery. The battery would be required to protect the entrance to Suva harbour, the surrounding sea passages, and also cover any raiding cruisers attacking Suva. Of the three suitable ridges examined the best position was selected and subsequently named "Leander Hill" for the purposes of their report.

On 17 November HMS Leander left Suva on its 'secret mission' to the Central Pacific. Cochrane finally admitted
the exact nature of the expedition to all those involved. Although Cochrane personally supported Squadron Leader Isitt's defence scheme, for a 'lifeline of airstrips' linking New Zealand and Hawaii, he was bound by the British Government's demand for secrecy. Consequently he had not been in a position to divulge this nature of the expedition until the cruise actually began. Differences of opinion and conflicts also emerged at this stage between Cochrane and Gibson over the nature and methods of the expedition and Gibson was quick to assert his leadership of the expedition.64

The NZPAS's first call was at Hull Island, on 21 November. Because of Leander's tight schedule the visit was very brief. A survey party, consisting of Harlon and a local Fijian, was landed ashore to survey the island and also to erect notices proclaiming British sovereignty. A brief inspection of Hull Island, building on past information, concluded that good runways for flying boats could be laid out in the lagoon after some of the coral heads had been blasted away. There would also be ample area available for land plane runways once the loose and broken surface had been fixed.65

After leaving Hull Island the Leander continued on to Christmas Island. Gibson and Cochrane still disagreed on the objectives and methods of the expedition. Gibson was continually frustrated with the limited time allowed for surveying in each island. On the other hand Cochrane was keen to move on and he saw the New Zealander's ideas as being far too elaborate for what the United Kingdom Government wanted to achieve. Because Leander was only
spending two days at Christmas Island before continuing on to Fanning Island Gibson decided to stay there with Robert Wimbush, and his survey party, and be picked up by the Yanawai later. The main advantage at Christmas Island was that the land area available was far greater than at Hull Island. Christmas Island thus offered one of the best potential land airstrips between Fiji and Hawaii. While Wimbush concentrated on marine alighting areas, Gibson and Roberts examined possible land airstrips. Although trees were not seen to be a potential hazard birds could pose a serious problem. Two landing grounds were marked out, however, and the one near the edge of the lagoon was given a trial run by the Walrus aircraft. By marking out these grounds the surveyors were establishing that developments were in progress.66

On arriving at Fanning Island the survey party from Leander only had time to make a very brief inspection. The lagoon, although not very large, had a suitably deep area for a water aerodrome. Unfortunately there was no time to make a land survey despite the belief that there was a potentially good site for an aerodrome. After visiting both Christmas and Fanning Islands Cochrane concluded that:

With its better climate, cable communications, white settlement, and defence force, it is clear that the relative merits of Fanning and Christmas Islands will have to be weighed. Fanning is moreover better placed on the air route. It will probably be desirable to have landing facilities at both, one to be the main, and the other an emergency base...67

From Fanning Island the Leander proceeded to Gardner Island where she arrived on 28 November. Although the Yanawai arrived on the same day she had dropped a survey
party off a week earlier. Unfortunately one of the
surveyors, Jim Henderson, injured himself and had to be
taken out of the expedition and on to the Leander. Several
other difficulties and problems arose at Gardner Island,
with the transportation of supplies ashore from the Yanawai
and also with the local water supply situation. On the
island the surveyors found there was potential for both a
water and a land aerodrome. Cochrane concluded Gardner
Island was more suitable for aviation purposes than either
Canton or Enderburg Islands and could prove to be a
valuable alternative to Hull Island. 68

In early December the NZPAS party on Christmas
Island was visited by three foreign vessels. The two
American yachts, Sea Spray and Moana, and a French Government
schooner, L'Oiseau des Isles, were followed by the Yanawai
which reached Christmas Island on 17 December. Gibson and
Wimbush continued surveying on Christmas Island until
25 December when they departed with the Yanawai leaving
Roberts behind to continue the survey work. From Christmas
Island the Yanawai sailed for Fanning Island where she stayed
for about a week because of influenza on board and the
consequent quarantining of the ship. Consequently Gibson
and his team had time to complete some survey work on the
island. On discovering a possible problem with blasting
the coral rocks to make a runway they then moved on to
examine Washington Island as a possible alternative. They
discovered, however, that the lagoon was too small to be of
much use and the shores were too soft for a land runway.
The NZPAS encountered a series of problems over the
following weeks ranging from damaged equipment to boating
accidents. 69
On 24 January 1939 the *Yanawai* picked up Roberts from Christmas Island and then headed to Suva via Gardner and Hull Islands. The full NZPAS team was reassembled at this stage. During the expedition the Japanese presence in the Pacific did not go unnoticed, for while at Hull Island the *Yanawai*'s radio was jammed by the Japanese throughout an entire day. The *Yanawai*'s final port of call before Suva was Nukunono Island in the Tokelaus. A brief inspection of the island determined that it would be suitable as a flying-boat base. The NZPAS then embarked on its final leg of the journey and arrived in Suva on 22 February. A strong sense of urgency then penetrated the expedition as they were informed that Gibson and his reports were required back in Wellington for the Pacific Defence Conference in April.

**DEFENCE PLANNING ACCELERATED**

The New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey had very important implications for New Zealand's defence policy. Although the New Zealand Government still supported Britain and Imperial defence, in practice the emphasis in New Zealand had turned towards local defence policy. It was often argued that:

Local defence efforts were in themselves a significant contribution to Imperial defence: Britain, relieved of concern for the South Pacific, would be able to concentrate its resources upon other, more vital points.70

Although not all New Zealand's military advisers agreed on the order of priority between Imperial and regional defence there can be no doubt that by 1939 the latter was recognised as of vital importance. The strategic
The significance of the Pacific Islands was obvious, which the NZPAS had clearly illustrated. The principle of an air route network as part of a Pacific defence scheme had been accepted and the surveying of islands was the first step of putting the plan into action.

The increasing lack of confidence in the Singapore strategy and the prospect of facing war in Europe and the Pacific simultaneously resulted in an urgent need for a full re-assessment of New Zealand's defence policy. In the latest report by the Chiefs of Staff, *The Defence of New Zealand Interests*, attention had been drawn to the danger of Japan establishing a base in the Fijian or Tongan Island Groups, thereby increasing the threat to New Zealand shipping and territory. Through their participation in the NZPAS the Chiefs of Staff were able to examine these specific problems and assess the defence requirements of Fiji and Tonga. They first established that Suva was the most vulnerable to attack. Suva was not only the landing place for the British cable routes and at the centre of New Zealand and Australian shipping and air communications, but also contained valuable stocks of oil. Suva would also soon have the most modern and powerful radio installation in the British Pacific Islands. The sparse population and fertile land would add to these advantages and make Suva an enticing prospect for Japan. The importance of Fiji to New Zealand thus made it imperative that it be adequately protected. The COS reassessed the scale of attack and increased it from small raiding parties to a potential invasion by an Infantry Brigade. The defences of the islands therefore needed to be strengthened as soon as
possible to meet this new scale of attack. They recommended the Fijian Military Forces be expanded from 400 to 1300 men with proper equipment and reserves. The protection of Suva would require two naval 6 inch guns and two searchlights, a small local force could be raised to institute an Examination Service and two local craft could be fitted for minesweeping.

Although the Chiefs of Staff recommended the small Royal Guard in Tonga be expanded to one battalion of infantry they still maintained that Fiji and Tonga were so important to New Zealand if it were needed

a force of 1 Brigade Group should be ready in New Zealand to move at short notice to reinforce the local defence forces.

The need for landing grounds in Fiji had already been accepted and surveys and estimates had been made. In fact, work had actually already begun on the sites. In the Tongan Group two landing grounds would be necessary and surveys for these would have to be made by a New Zealand aerodrome engineer. The final recommendation in the report was that part of New Zealand's fuel and ammunition reserves be held in Fiji and Tonga which would enhance the effectiveness of operating aircraft in the area.

The importance with which the Chiefs of Staff viewed the defence of Fiji and Tonga was reiterated in a further defence paper also produced in December. New Zealand Defence Preparations recommended that the Government approve a Five Year Plan of defence measures and also asked the Government:

To draw the attention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to the condition of the defences in the Fijian and Tongan Groups and the effect of their present weakness on New Zealand's defence.
Not all the recommendations of these reports were approved by the New Zealand Government but their content was planned into the agenda of the forthcoming Pacific Defence Conference. The need for a Conference on Pacific issues had been becoming increasingly obvious over the past year. However, before it took place in April 1939 there were several other developments in New Zealand's defence planning in the Pacific.

In January 1939 the Chiefs of Staff examined what immediate action New Zealand would need to take in the event of a possible crisis. The importance of the Pacific cable route was emphasized, especially if the Mediterranean route was severed as it would "then constitute the only cable communication between England, New Zealand, Australia and the Far East." The importance of Fiji as a fuelling base and potential jump off base for a Japanese campaign against New Zealand was again emphasized. The COS thus recommended that the United Kingdom Government be informed of New Zealand's views, especially concerning the protection of Fanning Island and of Fiji, and the New Zealand Government proposed the following action:

(a) To despatch the force to Fanning Island by ordinary mail steamer on 21st February. The force to be of the size already agreed to.
(b) To despatch to Fiji at the earliest possible date a force of approximately one brigade and attached troops with personnel to man the two 6 inch guns referred to in (c) below.
(c) With admiralty concurrence to despatch to Fiji two 6 inch guns and ammunition from Admiralty stocks at Auckland to be mounted on Arrol mountings to be made in New Zealand.
(d) To despatch to Fiji sufficient rifles and machine guns to allow for the expansion of the local defence force up to two battalions.
It was also proposed that the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific be asked to proceed with work on the aerodromes and gun positions in Fiji, and that:

Men should be enlisted forthwith for special service overseas, comprising forces for the garrison of Fanning Island, the reinforcements for Fiji, and the coast artillery personnel for Fiji.82

The rest of this paper concerned New Zealand's own local defence but these above recommendations again emphasized the strategic importance for New Zealand's defence of adequately defending particular Pacific Islands, especially Fiji and Fanning Island.

Plans and work were soon underway in Fanning Island which included the appointment of officers and personnel for the Defence Force platoon, the selection of defensive positions and construction of defence works, and the selection of observation posts and evacuation camps.83

In March 1939 the Chiefs of Staff prepared a further report on the Despatch of Force for Fanning Island.84 New Zealand had accepted responsibility for the defence of Fanning Island since 1930 and in 1938 the size of the force had been approved at 150 men. The Chiefs now faced the problem of determining how long it would take a force to reach Fanning Island from New Zealand if war broke out. An interesting parallel can be seen here with the problem of determining the delay period before the arrival of the British fleet at Singapore. Various possibilities were examined of despatching a force to Fanning Island in wartime and in peacetime. Because it was not advisable to despatch a force in peace time it was decided that detailed plans and arrangements should be made so that the force was ready to leave New Zealand immediately it was required. One way
of ensuring less delay was to have the force come from New Zealand's Permanent Force rather than from the Territorials or Special Reserves. The Chiefs of Staff consequently recommended that the regular force in New Zealand be increased by 150 men so as to hasten the assembly of the force when it was required. The Council of Defence subsequently approved these recommendations on 31 March.

By the beginning of 1939 New Zealand's defence plans were all pointing towards the need for a Conference on Pacific issues. Recent defence planning had shown a strong emphasis on Pacific issues and the priority of regional defence policy was now recognised. Developments over the past three years had all reached the stage of needing clarification and co-ordination. Although the Singapore strategy was still the pivot of New Zealand's defence policy, its weaknesses and fallibility had to be considered. New Zealand needed to take other measures to enhance her security and the most obvious was the defence of the strategically placed Pacific Islands. The prominence of the islands had risen with the development of military and civil air power in the Pacific and the consequent competition to establish island bases. Thus competitiveness was due not only to the threat of Japanese occupation to New Zealand's security but also American occupation would undermine Imperial control and freedom throughout the islands. The surveying of islands had consequently been the next step in the bid to establish British sovereignty and bases in the islands. By the end of the NZPAS however, the time had come for co-ordination
of Pacific policy within an Imperial framework. Detailed examinations and discussions of Pacific issues were needed between New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. Consequently by the beginning of 1939 the time was right for the Pacific Defence Conference.
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63. COS 16, 'Defence Problems of the Fijian and Tongan Groups' Dec.1938, Appendix IV.
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CHAPTER FIVE

THE PACIFIC DEFENCE CONFERENCE, 1939

The position of Pacific defence planning within the Empire needed serious consideration by the beginning of 1939. New Zealand especially felt this need. Developments over the past three years had all come to the point where a conference specifically on Pacific issues was required before further progress could be made. For example, Imperial defence policy, as related to New Zealand, needed re-examination as doubts increased about the reliability of the Singapore strategy. Detailed answers were required on the size and timing of the fleet. The position of Japan in the Pacific and the likely scale of attack New Zealand might expect also demanded attention. Although raids were still accepted as the most likely scale of attack, an actual invasion of New Zealand, using the Pacific Islands for jump-off bases, was by no means ruled out at this time. Consequently, the emphasis on regional defence in the Pacific, and the actual defence of the islands, were major issues needing examination.

A parallel development in the Pacific had been the growth of aviation. By the late 1930s trans-Pacific air travel, both military and commercial, had become realities for New Zealand. Landing bases were required in the islands for both commercial purposes and for the network of air routes which comprised a "lifeline defence scheme" between
New Zealand and Hawaii. The establishment of an English Pacific service, however, came into conflict with similar American plans which had resulted in the "island scramble" of the thirties. New Zealand survey expeditions and assertions of British sovereignty had gone ahead but by 1939 clarification and co-ordination of, and co-operation in, policy were needed among the nations concerned. The scope of the proposed Pacific Conference would thus be based on defence policy, as related to the Pacific, and Pacific aviation.

The most unique characteristic of this Conference was that the initiative in calling it had come from New Zealand. This is not surprising considering the importance with which the New Zealand Government viewed the Pacific Islands and the sense of priority they had assumed in New Zealand's defence planning. The idea for a Pacific Conference had been first put forward by Savage at the 1937 Imperial Conference. Throughout 1938 the New Zealand Government continued to promote the idea and by early 1939 the Australian and British Governments had announced their intentions to participate. Held in Wellington from the 14 to 25 April, the Pacific Defence Conference is sometimes referred to as the "Wellington Conference", or the "New Zealand Defence Conference".

Apart from New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom which sent delegations to the Conference, the other potential participants would have been the United States of America and Canada. The New Zealand Government had expressed its desire for Anglo-American discussions on
aviation, particularly island sovereignty and reciprocal landing rights, on several previous occasions. Negotiations, however, had been consistently restricted to issues involving Pan American Airways and the United States Government had avoided involvement as much as possible. As late as 5 April 1939 the British Embassy in Washington was urging the United States to accept the invitation "to participate in the proposed four-party conference at the earliest date that may be practicable." The United States of America, however, did not send a delegation to the Conference.

By December 1938 the British Government had committed itself to participating in the Conference. Enthusiasm for a British trans-Pacific air service had been increasing and Britain was keen to move ahead on this issue. British sovereignty in the islands had been asserted where possible and the survey expeditions had been mostly a joint British-New Zealand venture. Defence in the Pacific did not rate quite as highly as aviation with the British Government, but it was beginning to gain acceptance as an important aspect of Imperial defence. Part of the credit for this must be attributed to New Zealand's continual insistence that the subject be considered. In fact "one of New Zealand's primary objectives in arranging the Conference was to ensure that British defence planners obtained 'a wider appreciation of our problems and those of the Pacific'."

In February 1939 the British Chiefs of Staff prepared a paper on New Zealand's position in Imperial defence which arrived in New Zealand in March with Sir Harry Batterbee, the first British High Commissioner to New Zealand. The paper was intended as a basis for discussions at the
Conference. It gave the views of the British COS on the strategic situation and on the contribution the New Zealand Government might be able to make to Imperial Defence. The Chiefs of Staff also reaffirmed the commitment to defend Singapore in very definite terms, stating that:

No change has occurred to affect the considerations which governed the undertaking given at the Imperial Conference in 1937, that in the event of war with Japan we should send a Fleet to Eastern Waters IRRESPECTIVE of the situation elsewhere.

This was the most categorical promise yet made on the commitment to send a fleet to the Far East, but still no indication was given about the time it would take for the fleet to arrive at Singapore. The issue of time was to be one of the most important questions raised at the Conference. By the time of the Conference, however, the international situation had worsened and the British Government had begun to reconsider its promise. In fact the discussions in London with France, held at the same time as the Wellington talks were not based on this same view for the Singapore strategy at all. The British policy was in the course of being revised and there had been 'a considerable scaling down of our undertaking to the Dominions' to send a fleet to Singapore in all circumstances.

The other participants at the Conference, the Australians, although a Pacific nation themselves, had only just come to recognize the importance of the Pacific Islands in defence as well as aviation policy. The Australian attitude tended to have been a step behind that of New Zealand for example, at the 1937 Imperial Conference Sir Archdale Parkhill, the Australian Minister of Defence, stated quite categorically that "... the strategical
importance of the Pacific Islands is not high." In 1938 however, the Australian Government became increasingly concerned about Japanese aggression turning southwards and thus began to recognize the strategic relevance of the Pacific Islands in Australian defence planning. Action was then taken in the construction of Island bases in Port Moresby and other adjacent islands. By the time of the Wellington Conference, Australia was well aware of the strategic importance of the islands and "New Zealand's representations about the strategic importance of Fiji confirmed the legitimacy of Australian concern." The Conference thus provided the opportunity to discuss the idea (already under the consideration of the Air Board) of Australia taking responsibility for air reconnaissance between New Guinea, Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides.

In January 1939 the New Zealand Government had been keen to hold the Conference within the next two months. Disturbed at the British Government's preference for April, the New Zealand Government circulated the following series of proposals for the agenda:

(a) Possible lines of action by enemy powers against Empire interests in the South West Pacific in the period before the arrival of naval reinforcements, (including...)

(b) Measures necessary to defend (i) Pacific Islands and Mandated territories, notably Fiji, Tonga, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands. (ii) Ships trading with United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. (iii) Australian and New Zealand territories.

(c) Most effective means of co-operation with the United Kingdom in the defence of British Commonwealth after providing for security in the South Western Pacific, including schemes for mutual reinforcement.

(d) Co-ordination of defence policy in peace and war.

(e) Sources of supplies and equipment after the outbreak of war.
(f) Scales of reserves of supplies, including fuel and equipment.

(g) Possible effect of German demand for the return of Mandated territories.

(h) Economic aspects of war, including probable effects on trade and shipping.

(i) Policy in relation to Trans-Pacific Air Route and the United States activities in the Pacific.⁹

These items were to form the base for the final agenda which was worked out over the following months. The Conference, which was not held until April, was divided into three sections. The first concerned strategic problems, the second supply problems, and the third section would deal with Trans-Pacific aviation and American activities in the Pacific. Papers were then prepared on all aspects of the agenda, ranging from strategic questions to a diagram of the seating for the conference. Items (a) and (b) of this agenda were covered in Defence of South Western Pacific which based its findings on recent COS papers 6, 15 and 16.¹⁰ The dangers of Japan occupying islands, attacking shipping and even invading New Zealand were reiterated, and thus the consequent need for adequate defence measures was emphasized. More details on the security of Singapore and the timing of the fleet were put forward as major issues to be raised at the Conference. It also proposed that the defence of air routes, particular islands, for example Fiji and Tonga, and the Pacific cable be discussed and that 'evasive routing' for shipping be considered. Finally, it proposed that each country's areas of responsibility for air operations be defined.¹¹

Papers were prepared on the other items suggested for the Conference agenda, for example, concerning item (c) the New Zealand Government was of the opinion that only
after the situation in the South West Pacific had been stabilized would they be able to consider the question of helping elsewhere. The need for co-ordination and interchange of information among New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom in peacetime and during war was also emphasized. The paper Trans-Pacific Air Route Policy emphasized the need for reciprocal landing rights in the establishment of a British service. It also proposed that the defence aspect of such a service be discussed. Finally, policy needed to be formed on the situation of joint ownership of islands when either the Empire or the United States were involved in a war and the other remained neutral. Other papers dealt with supply questions, the effect of war on shipping and the various details of arrangements for the Conference.

The Australian and British Governments although in support of the Pacific Defence Conference, did not reach quite the same level of enthusiasm about the forthcoming Conference as their hosts. These differences in attitudes were to be reflected in the delegations which attended the Conference. The New Zealand Government was in fact quite disappointed that none of the visiting delegates were of ministerial status. On the other hand, the New Zealand delegation included Prime Minister Savage, the deputy Peter Fraser, and Walter Nash (Finance), Fred Jones (Defence) and D.G. Sullivan (Industries and Commerce). The Chiefs of Staff, Major-General Duigan, Commodore Horan and Group-Captain Saunders, and Wilkes, the Controller of Civil Aviation
also attended. Carl Berendsen was there of course with three other top civil servants.\textsuperscript{15}

The Australian and British delegations were of a lower status than their hosts. New Zealand had wanted a highly ranked naval officer, able to represent the Admiralty's latest policies, to attend, but instead had to be satisfied with Vice-Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin acting in a dual capacity. The Chief of Naval Staff in Australia, he was the Australian delegation's leader as well as the Admiralty representative. The rest of the British delegation was made up of: Sir Harry Batterbee, the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in New Zealand; Sir Harry Luke, the Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific; Major-General Macksey representing the War Office and Air-Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore for the Air Ministry. Apart from Admiral Colvin, the Australian delegation was represented by Colonel Sturdee of the Military Board, Wing-Commander Jones of the Air Board and Captain Johnston of the Civil Aviation Department.\textsuperscript{16}

The Pacific Defence Conference was officially opened on Friday 14 April 1939 by the Governor General, Viscount Galway. Savage welcomed the delegates and reply speeches were made by Batterbee and Colvin. Although officially underway, the Conference received limited public attention because it was shrouded in secrecy. As the Christchurch Press reported:
Greater secrecy than has ever before been known in New Zealand surrounds the Conference... Not even the opening address...was allowed to be reported, although the Conference is admitted to be one of the most important held in New Zealand.¹⁷

Access to the Conference was monitored very strictly with the Parliament Buildings being carefully guarded by the police. Although the public's attention was not captivated by the Conference, there can be no doubt of its importance to New Zealand's defence planners, especially in relation to regional issues.

After the official opening Savage launched into a general discussion on strategic problems. He emphasized New Zealand's fears about the Pacific situation if Britain became engaged in a simultaneous war with Japan, Germany and Italy. The vulnerability of Fiji and the possibility of it falling to Japan was stressed, as was the consequent need for adequate defences in these islands. This was especially important to New Zealand as her security would be weakened if Fiji fell and the Dominion would, as a result, be further isolated from the Empire as well as being brought closer to the enemy. However, before introducing Berendsen, Savage did stress that New Zealand would do its best to co-operate with the defence of the Empire as well as working for its own defence.¹⁸

Berendsen, as described by Savage was "the man who has the main job of co-ordinating and shaping things for the Government of New Zealand."¹⁹ He addressed the Conference with a long analysis of the defence advice New
Zealand had received over the previous two years. Avoiding strategical, tactical or technical issues, Berendsen concentrated on the need to determine the strength and timing of reinforcements for the Pacific. Assuming the worst possible situation, a war with three enemies in which Japan had been involved since the beginning, Berendsen examined defence policy in the Pacific. Naval defence, based on the British Fleet in Singapore, was recognised as still paramount in the Pacific. After surveying the Singapore strategy, since the 1937 Review through to the recent report brought to New Zealand by Batterbee, Berendsen then questioned the assurance of a fleet coming to the Pacific "IRRESPECTIVE of the situation elsewhere." The two-power naval standard of 1938 which placed a fleet in the Far East while keeping a force in home waters had never been approved. Although this latest assurance seemed very definite, it still gave no indication of the strength, time of departure, or of arrival at Singapore, of the fleet. Finally, most recently, on 5 April 1939 - the eve of the Pacific Conference, New Zealand was informed that in the event of a war with Germany, Japan and Italy, the size of the fleet would depend on: "(a) the moment which Japan entered the war and (b) what losses, if any, our opponents or ourselves had previously sustained."20 Still no definite details were given concerning the actual size or timing of the fleet. Berendsen was not suggesting that a fleet should go to Singapore if it would prejudice the situation in Europe, but he did think it was necessary "to isolate the facts of naval reinforcements in order to enable a proper estimate to be made of the time in which
they will be available."\textsuperscript{21} It was, however, not possible to indicate the strength of the fleet. In fact "His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom may find it impossible to send to Singapore a fleet of \textit{sufficient} strength..." especially in the early stages of a conflict.\textsuperscript{22} On the timing, Berendsen concluded that the minimum period of delay would be 70 days plus a variable of $x$ (the period before departure). During this indeterminate time-span Japan would have complete naval control in the Pacific. After addressing the Conference, Berendsen passed the subjects of scales of attack and necessary defence measures over to the technical experts for discussion.\textsuperscript{23}

Berendsen's analysis of the Singapore strategy as it presently stood was indeed a "real broadside" as Air Marshal Longmore described it, and was indeed quite shattering. The British delegation had to be very careful in their response not to make the situation seem too secure or too insecure as they did not want to discourage defence efforts by New Zealand by saying all was well nor encourage further doubts about the Singapore strategy which could alienate New Zealand's support and contributions for Singapore.\textsuperscript{24} At the same time this analysis of the Singapore strategy highlighted the importance of the Pacific Islands to New Zealand's security. If there was a considerable period of time when Japan had dominance in the Pacific, before the arrival of the fleet, New Zealand, and Australia, would have to do the best they could to maintain the security of the islands. Defence measures in the islands thus took on increased priority in New Zealand's defence planning.
Air Marshal Longmore was first to reply to Berendsen. He maintained, while not intending to belittle the importance of Fiji, that New Zealand would not be entirely isolated if Fiji fell into enemy hands. That is for example, if evasive routing of merchant shipping was undertaken. Admiral Colvin voiced his agreement, especially as he believed Japan would concentrate on denser trade areas, around Panama, India and New South Wales for example, and on Singapore as opposed to New Zealand or Fiji. The New Zealand Minister of Defence, however, disagreed with these views. Jones believed it was quite feasible that Japan would come down through the Marshall and Caroline Islands to capture Fiji and use it as a base for operations against New Zealand and Australia. The importance of Fiji to New Zealand was clearly recognized by New Zealand but Australia failed to agree on this point. Discussions then returned to the Singapore strategy and the maximum period before relief was set at 90 days from the outbreak of war with Japan. With the period before relief lengthened to 90 days the vulnerability of the Pacific was consequently intensified and Jones again stressed the possibility of Pacific bases being captured by Japan. Commodore Horan pointed out the danger of Fiji being captured immediately on the outbreak of hostilities and once occupied it would be impossible to regain. It was at this point that Nash asked how to defend New Zealand if the Singapore strategy failed entirely to which Longmore replied: "I think the answer
to that is to take to the Waitomo Caves.  

This discussion clearly illustrates New Zealand's dependence on the Singapore strategy, however, regional defence was still recognised as vital. The importance of Fiji was again discussed with special reference to its oil reserves and cable station. Suva was a vital port for the refueling of ships, and if the Mediterranean cable was destroyed, the Pacific cable would constitute the only means of communication with Britain.

The despatch of a brigade group to Fiji before the outbreak of war and the stationing of aircraft there were more controversial issues. The Australian delegation did not regard Fiji as nearly as important as New Zealand did but rather saw Port Moresby in this light. The difference between the two, however, was that Port Moresby was defended and Fiji was not which would make the latter far more appealing to the Japanese. Also, "Suva, Fiji, is the only equipped harbour anywhere in the area on an island on which the Japanese could live on the land and where they would not need a line of supply." Feelings of vulnerability in the Pacific were also enhanced because it was believed the Japanese had fortified at least three island bases in the Caroline and Marshall Islands. The New Zealand delegation consequently continued arguing for Fiji to be adequately defended. So long as Fiji was adequately defended Samoa should be left alone. That is, if Japan occupied Samoa without controlling Fiji her lines of communication would be closed off. Also, a brigade in Fiji would be available to defend other islands and would act as a deterrent for the whole area. Security of the area would also be brought about by the construction of
two aerodromes and the installation of 6 inch guns in Fiji and the establishment of an air patrol between Port Moresby and Fiji.⁴²

The possible scale of attack on New Zealand was again assessed at raiding parties of 200 men, but if several ships each landed 200 men there would be a tremendous increase in this scale of attack. For the defence of New Zealand, it was accepted that a balance between all three armed services was the best alternative. On this note discussions of the first day of the Conference concluded.

The next day began with a wind-up of strategical issues before moving on to a new topic. New Zealand had already committed herself to sending a force to Fanning Island and it was now discussed when to send this force. New Zealand's regular military forces were being increased by 150 men so that a force could be sent at a day or two's notice, but, no decision was made at this stage whether to send the force in peacetime or after war had broken out. However, the Committee which later met to consider "Strategic Problems" recommended that a platoon be stationed at Fanning Island during peacetime.⁴³ A further step was thus taken towards defending the islands during peacetime so as to help deter a potential Japanese invasion.

The Conference then turned its attention to the subject of defence co-operation with the United Kingdom. The British Chiefs of Staff had already recommended that there should be a division in New Zealand ready for service overseas if war was declared but as yet there were no real plans for such a force.⁴⁴ The transfer of trained pilots to Britain was also discussed and the report on
"Strategic Problems" recommended that whatever personnel were available should be sent overseas. It also recommended that the peace strength of the Territorial Force be increased by 6000 men and that the Regular Force be expanded.

Recommendations were made for the manning and maintenance of a third cruiser, the fitting of three vessels with "asdics" and the "stiffening" of merchant vessels for gun mounting. The question of discussing New Zealand's contribution to Commonwealth defence came under scrutiny during the Conference because Jones maintained that it was an issue for an Imperial Conference. Although the defence of Singapore was seen as an Imperial issue, Fiji, which was also a British responsibility, was regarded in a different light. For New Zealand the difference was the vital strategic significance of Fiji and its consequent inclusion in New Zealand's regional defence planning. There was still agreement, however, that New Zealand's contributions to imperial defence would aid the Dominion's own security. Therefore, whether the defence of Fiji came under an imperial or regional banner would not affect the end result of enhancing New Zealand, Pacific and Imperial security.

Other recommendations of the report on "Strategic Problems" also reiterated recommendations already put forward by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff. It recommended the establishment of an air base, two landing grounds and stores of fuel and ammunition in Fiji. An emergency brigade group for Fiji was suggested and the provision of two 6-inch guns, two searchlights and New Zealand military personnel were also recommended for Suva.
For Tonga the Conference recommended limiting the raising of a local force to one company and that the New Zealand and British Governments provide certain equipment and munitions. Surveys were also advocated at the earliest possible date for the proposed emergency landing grounds.\textsuperscript{38}

Mutual co-operation between New Zealand and Australia was next discussed. Naval protection of trade and Air Force co-operation, especially in air reconnaissance were major concerns. The respective areas of responsibility of New Zealand and Australia needed to be defined, for example, so that landing grounds and refueling bases could be established.\textsuperscript{39} Preliminary surveys had already been made and soon there would be land planes with a range of 1000 miles which could operate throughout the Pacific as a reconnaissance force and perhaps even as a striking force as well. Combined with the fear of a Japanese invasion through New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, Fiji and Tonga to Australia and New Zealand, the decision was made to keep this area under observation. The Conference therefore recommended Australia assume responsibility for air reconnaissance in the area from New Guinea through to the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides. New Zealand would then take responsibility for the area from the New Hebrides to Fiji and Tonga.\textsuperscript{40}

The Conference next turned its attention to the problems concerned with the supply and exchange of information. Co-ordination of information among Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain was focused upon with suggestions for a New Zealand military liaison officer in London. Proposals were also made for Australia and New
Zealand to have a mutual exchange of observers at each other's Defence Councils. There was some concern, however, that political problems might emerge, for example, if the subject of compulsory military training were brought up. Information systems among the Pacific Islands were next examined. The current system was based on telephone, telegraph and wireless, with Fiji already passing information on to Wellington. Jones suggested there should be better co-operation and more joint control among New Zealand, Australia and Britain in this field. It was also suggested that if he were able, Sir Harry Luke should arrange an exchange of information with the French on their position in the Pacific.

On the third day of the Conference, General Mackesy re-examined some aspects of co-operation in the defence of the Commonwealth and co-ordination of defence policy in peace and war. Mackesy stressed the importance of New Zealand contributing to a peacetime garrison at Singapore on the grounds that:

Nothing is impregnable [and] one does one's best to make a defensive line secure... although one hopes Singapore is safe - everything possible is done to make it safe - no human being can predict the outcome of a battle which may take place...if Singapore went then New Zealand would be open to the very highest form of invasion.

The importance of the security of Singapore had been emphasized again. If Singapore fell New Zealand would be open to a far greater scale of attack than just raids. Similarly, if the premiss of Singapore's security were accepted then the most likely scale of attack for New
Zealand was still raids. Consequently New Zealand's defence planning needed to take this into consideration. That is, the Pacific Islands needed to be protected from raids and prevented from falling into enemy hands and acting as jump-off bases for raids on New Zealand.

Attention then turned to Samoa and Berendsen outlined the intended steps for its defence, including the supply of equipment and ammunition. The raising of a local force was also examined. It was currently planned to consist of 150 men, but would ultimately reach 600, and it was believed it would be capable of repelling an enemy raid. The possibility of Samoa ending up under German control, and the Germans consequently coming within striking distance of New Zealand, was also discussed. However, it was hoped that the local defence force would act as a deterrent and such a situation would not occur.

The Conference next tackled supply problems after the outbreak of war. Nash maintained that arrangements should be made immediately to get necessary supplies before war broke out. Oil reserves were estimated to last between three and six months. The reserves at Fiji were included in the assessment and Jones suggested the United Kingdom be asked to provide an extra tank for Suva. One of the other major issues examined was the supply and storage of phosphates. Because New Caledonia was more secure than Nauru it was contemplated as an alternative source of trade by New Zealand. A report on "Supply Problems" was consequently prepared by the relevant committee and constituted Part III of the Defence Conference Report.
Before the Aviation Committee met to prepare its report, the Conference briefly assessed the general opinion of the Conference on trans-Pacific Air Routes and American activities in the Pacific. New Zealand was especially concerned about how soon a British Trans-Pacific air service could be established and whether reciprocal landing rights could be obtained in America. There were, however, continual problems because the New Zealand Government was dealing with Pan American Airways and not the United States Government which only had the power to grant the rights New Zealand wanted. Before adjourning into committees for the afternoon, Fraser commented on Gibson's report of the New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey which would be used extensively. He wanted to clarify the point that if a special party were appointed responsible for the entire Airway investigation and construction, it would be responsible to the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand and would not exclude any of them.48

Gibson's interim report of the NZPAT was invaluable to the Aviation Committee in its formation of Trans-Pacific Air Route policy. It was quickly agreed that the primary objective was to establish a British Pacific air service running alongside, and in co-operation with, an American service. The Conference supported the idea of air routes which would run from New Zealand via Suva, Nukunono and Fanning and Christmas Islands to Hawaii, San Francisco and Canada. Emergency alternative stops would be at Tonga, Western Samoa and possibly Hull Island.49 The report also recommended that survey flights be made to these
islands as soon as possible so that it could be seen that the plans for a British route were underway. Because six of the Line islands were not regarded as strategically very important, it was suggested that they be offered to the United States in a bid to gain reciprocal landing rights in American bases for the British service.\textsuperscript{50}

If an air route between New Zealand and South America was desired, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands would be needed as bases. Therefore, if possible, the British title to these islands should be strengthened, for example, by being visited by British ships.\textsuperscript{51} The Aviation Committee also recommended that action be taken immediately to establish the first leg of the service to Suva, that the future TEAL should undertake survey flights to Fanning and other islands and that landing rights at Suva should be offered to Pan Am.\textsuperscript{52} TEAL should also apply to the United States Government for permission to use Hawaii and San Francisco and at the same time put forward a suggestion for a conference on the subject of reciprocity in the Pacific. If unsuccessful, the Conference recommended that the New Zealand Government should consider termination of the agreement with Pan American Airways. The only alternative remaining would then be to share a Pacific air route. Care would have to be taken to maintain friendship and co-operation in the Pacific with an American Company operating the northern half of the route and the British Commonwealth looking after the southern half.\textsuperscript{53} The report finally recommended that Canada's co-operation be sought in the establishment of the Trans-Pacific service and that the New Zealand Government take the initiative and take immediate action on these recommendations.\textsuperscript{54}
The three committees had worked extremely hard to prepare their reports which were finally completed by the end of the weekend. The British, Australian, New Zealand, Fijian and Canadian Governments, and the Western Pacific High Commission, would all receive copies of the Conference recommendations. However, as Fraser pointed out:

These reports are only reports on paper. It is the way in which they are received that is the real test of the importance of the Conference, or otherwise.\textsuperscript{55}

Although Fraser's comments could have been rather sobering, the Conference was in its final stages and the atmosphere was positive and full of optimism for the future. Furthermore Savage assured the Conference that New Zealand would do its best to implement the recommendations of the Conference.\textsuperscript{56}

The Pacific Defence Conference closed on Wednesday 26 April, but for symbolic reasons the report was dated on 25 April - ANZAC Day. The closing speeches were characterised by enthusiasm and praise for the Conference. As Savage declared:

If nothing worthwhile came out of the Conference I would be disappointed and annoyed, because assembled at the Conference table we had men who knew something of the task that they had taken up...I am sure that out of this Conference will come good for the whole of the British Empire. I am doubly sure that out of the Conference will come good for little New Zealand. We are small in stature, perhaps, but we are big in ideas and after all, it is ideas that count most.\textsuperscript{57}

The future would soon show how successful the Conference had been and how influential the ideas expressed at it were on New Zealand's defence plans. The next six months were
to be the last period of peacetime defence planning before war was declared with Germany in September. In such a short period there would of course be constraints and limitations on putting the recommendations of the Conference into practice. However, there can be no doubt about the effect of the Conference on defence thinking in New Zealand. Where there may have been differences or doubts before there was now a consensus of opinion on the necessity to defend the Pacific Islands. The strategic significance of the Islands had already been recognised and the Conference endorsed this view and confirmed the next step of defending the Islands as part of the front line of the defence of New Zealand. The Dominion continued to support the concept of imperial defence of course, and was still dependent on the Singapore strategy in the main for its defence. But, at the same time, New Zealand was not blind to its fallibility. If Singapore fell the Pacific was open to Japanese domination and so New Zealand willingly accepted the responsibility of undertaking whatever defence measures it could in the Pacific Islands.

In May 1939 the Council of Defence met to consider the recommendations of the Conference. The proposals regarding the third cruiser and two escort vessels were deferred until Nash concluded his financial negotiations in London. The Naval Board would take up the question of stiffening merchant vessels and the arming of two merchant cruisers needed to be costed before any decisions
could be made. Approval had already been given to the fitting of three miscellaneous vessels with "asdic" and the Council agreed to ask Australia and Britain for their views on evasive routing. Australia would also be approached for its agreement on the division of responsibility for air reconnaissance. The Council also agreed to communicate with the United Kingdom about the establishment of an air base, construction of two landing grounds and arrangement for fuel reserves and supplies at Fiji. It was also agreed that preliminary surveys be carried out at Tonga for possible emergency landing grounds, and the Air Ministry's views would be sought on the type and amount of pilots New Zealand should train.

The recommendations concerned with the army were all deferred until General Mackesey completed the report which he had stayed on in New Zealand to prepare. He submitted this in May. It strongly criticised the state of the army and advocated its expansion. The Defence Council debated enlarging the Regular Force but decided to concentrate on increasing the Territorials. On 22 May the Government announced its policy, as recommended by the Defence Conference, of increasing the Territorials by 6000 men. Savage then launched into a recruitment campaign with the emphasis on "home defence, that is, the defence of New Zealand in New Zealand." The campaign was an immediate success with 1550 men joining the Territorials in June and in the last three months of peace over 6000 men joined up.
Meanwhile action was also being taken in the Pacific Islands. On 1 June 1939 the *Matua* left Auckland, with the Chief of Air Staff, Group-Captain Saunders, and the Chief Aerodrome Engineer, Squadron-Leader Gibson, for a survey expedition of Tonga, Western Samoa and Fiji. Tonga was visited first and a day was spent examining sites and discussing future progress with Prince Tugi, the Tongan Prime Minister, and the British Consul. Arrangements were made to commence work on the survey of the aerodrome site on the Crown Estates. Approximately four months would be needed for the survey but on a brief inspection, Saunders was satisfied a suitable "strip" landing ground was feasible at a reasonable cost. Two ASB men, Williamson and Mackay, were left in Tonga to continue with this work. Additionally, Holden and Wimbush were left behind to survey two possible sites for seaplane alighting areas. Finally, Saunders suggested that the Tongan offer of land for the aerodrome and the maintenance of it be confirmed through official channels.  

The expedition next visited Western Samoa where land and sea aerodromes were inspected and questions of local defence were discussed with the Acting Administrator, Mr. Turnbull and the Officer Commanding the Samoan Defence Forces. In Saunders' opinion the only suitable land aerodrome site yet discovered in Samoa was at Vailele and therefore it was important to prevent the construction of any buildings on the site. Work on a church had already
been stopped and Saunders suggested the building be moved and that compensation be offered for the resulting loss of work. Preliminary surveys had already been made on two water aerodromes and the final surveys ought to be completed within the next few months. The local Samoan Defence Force was then discussed and it was pointed out that there would be no trouble in raising the force from 125 to 250 men. Saunders consequently recommended arms and equipment for 250 men be despatched to Apia as soon as possible. The status of the force was also discussed, that is whether it formed part of the New Zealand Military forces or whether it was a purely local force. A decision was requested from New Zealand on this question. 

The expedition then left Samoa for Fiji where, in character of recent island survey expeditions, time was extremely limited. Consequently it was not possible to inspect all the sites which were being considered. The landing ground site at Vuthi Mucca, near Nandali, was visited and Saunders left satisfied that a "strip" landing ground could be provided on the site. A quick visit to the seaplane alighting areas at Lauthala Bay and Suva Bay resulted in the recommendation that both be thoroughly tested. Various defence problems were discussed and Saunders:

stressed the necessity for providing a satisfactory Intelligence organisation in time of emergency which will meet local requirements and at the same time ensure that the New Zealand Government is kept fully informed of the situation.

The Fijian authorities would consider the details of such an organisation and then forward the information when it was worked out. The expedition then left Fiji and
arrived back in Auckland on 14 June. Another whirlwind survey expedition had been made to the Islands and further work been instigated in the establishment of landing bases.

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As regards the Conference recommendation for a brigade Group for Fiji, it was deferred and did not eventuate until after the Second World War had begun. New Zealand was, however, still committed to the defence of Fiji. Work was well underway in establishing aerodromes in Fiji with the recent survey leaving four ASP men behind to work. Financial responsibility for Fiji were shared by the Fijian, British and New Zealand Governments. On the outbreak of war Fiji's skeleton defence organisation was quickly expanded. New Zealand was quick to honour her commitments sending 500 rifles and at the end of September HMS Leander dashed to Suva with two dummy heavy guns as part of a deception plan.66

Fanning Island had been recognised as a New Zealand responsibility for many years and the commitment to send a force there in peacetime was approved by the Council of Defence. There were however several delays before the force got to Fanning Island, for example, in August 1939 HMS Leith, which was going to transport the force, was ordered to Singapore.67 The force finally left New Zealand on 30 August in HMS Leander and arrived at Fanning Island on 5 September.
The Pacific Defence Conference marked a consolidation and culmination of developments which had been taking place in New Zealand's defence policy since the Labour Government came to power at the end of 1935. It gave the attention and focus to defence planning in the Pacific that was needed in 1939. The New Zealand Government, as the initiator and host, was, overall, well satisfied with the Pacific Conference. Although initially disappointed with the absence of visiting delegates of ministerial status as it turned out the delegates all contributed well and knew something of the issues involved. With the Singapore strategy under revision in London, while being used in Wellington, the strategic rationale of the Pacific Defence Conference thus became outdated as it was formed. However, the emphasis in New Zealand on Pacific defence planning was not really affected. Whether Singapore stood or fell it was still vital for the Pacific Islands to be defended so as to enhance the security of New Zealand. The mere holding of the Pacific Defence Conference with its emphasis on Pacific defence policy, illustrates the legitimacy of the strategic importance of Pacific defence in the Empire. It could no longer be ignored and New Zealand's insistence on the need to defend the islands was finally acknowledged by delegates of the Empire at a major Conference, and commitments were made to take action in the immediate future.
1. Aide Memoire 5-4-39 AIR 1 132/1/7.
3. COS 832 "New Zealand Co-operation in Imperial Defence" 1-2-39, EAl 156/1/1.
4. Ibid (capitals added).
6. Minutes of Imperial Conference Meeting, 7-6-37, EAl 158/1/1 Pt1A.
8. Ibid.
9. GGNZ to SSDA, 22-1-39, EAl 81/6/2 Pt.4.
10. DC 1, Defence of South Western Pacific, 1-3-1939.
11. Ibid.
12. DC 2, Most Effective Means of Co-operation with the UK in defence of the British Commonwealth after providing for security in South Western Pacific, including schemes for mutual reinforcement, 1-3-1939.
13. DC 3, Co-ordination of Defence Policy in Peace and War, 1-3-1939.
14. DC 7, Policy in Relation to Trans-Pacific Air Route and US Activities in the Pacific, 1-3-1939.
15. DC 13, List of Delegates, 4-4-39.
16. Ibid.
19. Ibid., C4.
20. Ibid., Berendsen's Speech, E3.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., E5.
25. DC 1st Day 14-4-39, F1-G3.
26. Ibid., H1-2.
27. Ibid., J3.
28. Ibid., L2.
29. Ibid., L3.
30. Ibid., L4.
31. Ibid., M2.
32. Ibid., M3 and N3-N5.
33. DC 1939 Report, Part I "Strategic Problems" para. 39. AIR 1 103/6. For full details see Appendix at end of thesis.
34. DC 2nd Day 15-4-39, T2.
35. DC Report, I, paras. 69, 70, 81, 87 and 99.
36. Ibid., paras 24 and 40-42.
37. Ibid., paras. 33, 34 and 39.
38. Ibid., paras. 45 and 46.
40. DC Report, I, paras. 23 and 24.
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47. Ibid., 1I1.
48. Ibid., 1I7.
50. Ibid., paras. 7 and 8.
51. Ibid., para. 9.
52. Ibid., see Summary of Recommendations, numbers 6-8.
53. Ibid., paras. 16-20.
54. Ibid., paras 21 and 22.
55. DC, final day, 26-4-39, 2F2.
56. Ibid., 2G2.
57. Ibid.
58. CD3, Council of Defence, 10-5-39 EAL 81/12/3 Part I.
60. Wood, People at War, pp.81-82.
61. Ibid., p.83.
62. Memo from Saunders, 20-6-39, AIR 1 103/2/7 (and also in EAL 86/1/1 Part 1).
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
CONCLUSION

The Pacific Defence Conference held in April 1939 exemplifies the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands in New Zealand's defence policy by that time. Over the preceding four years the importance of the islands had become recognised and engrained into New Zealand defence thinking. When the first Labour Government came to power at the end of 1935, defence policy was characterised by Imperial guidance and dependence. Although the Dominion was aware of the responsibility of defending her own territory she had not yet extended that local attitude to a more regional one applying to the Pacific area. That is, New Zealand supported Imperial defence by contributing to the Royal Navy and to the Singapore Naval Base, but had not yet taken any responsibility for the defence of the Pacific Islands. From 1935 to 1939, however, New Zealand's defence policy expanded to include regional responsibilities which took on equal importance to established Imperial ones. This new development did not replace existing ones, but rather existed alongside of them. New Zealand would maintain its attitude of "stand or fall" with the Empire right through to the Second World War.

The emergence of Japan as a potential aggressor in the Pacific and the fear that New Zealand itself might be invaded by Japan had a major influence on the focus of defence planning away from Europe and into the Pacific
arena. The possibility of Japan coming down to New Zealand, using the islands as jump-off bases for raids on the country, continually enhanced the awareness of the strategic value of the Pacific Islands throughout the thirties. The first Labour Government also had a major influence on this defence development. Less imperialistic than its predecessors it had a natural tendency to focus on local and regional issues as opposed to European ones. Most important, however, was its support for aviation and an air force as the most appropriate armed force for local defence. Consequently when Wing-Commander Cochrane arrived in New Zealand, to lead and direct the future growth of the air force, it developed into a realistically effective armed service during this period. Cochrane had recognised the strategic value of the Pacific Islands immediately and had emphasised their significance in his report, as well as advocating a network of Pacific air routes for defence purposes. As aircraft improved and their flight range increased, it was obvious that their scope of defence also increased, for example, from local reconnaissance around New Zealand to regional reconnaissance from New Zealand to the Pacific Islands and back.

At the same time that the Air Force was thus developing, commercial aviation was also featuring in the Pacific. United States interest and involvement in the Pacific had been increasing and with the growth of commercial aviation Pan American Airways sought to establish a Pacific air service. Island bases suddenly became highly sought after which resulted in the "island scramble" of 1936 and 1937 between the United States,
and, Britain and New Zealand. Civil objectives had thus merged with defence ones in the race for island bases. A British air service in the Pacific was planned for the future and so landing bases and rights in the island were needed straight away. Consequently the New Zealand Government which was keen for a Pacific service, was pressurized to gain reciprocity from America before agreeing to a Pan Am service. But, Pan Am did not have the power to grant such rights and so the agreement with New Zealand faced continual problems. The Civil Aviation Conference in 1936 endorsed the importance of Pacific aviation and also recognised the relationship with defence issues with the attendance of the Australian and New Zealand Ministers of Defence.

It was, however, the 1937 Imperial Conference which really marked the major turning point in attitudes towards the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands. New Zealand so believed in the importance of the islands that she insisted on an assessment of their value in an Imperial arena. The resulting assessment by the British Chiefs of Staff acknowledged the value of the islands and concluded that every possible effort should be made to establish British sovereignty over the islands, especially those with the most suitable facilities for air bases. The Imperial Conference thus acknowledged the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands alongside of other important Imperial issues discussed and from that point onwards new impetus was given to action taken in the Pacific.
Preliminary surveys had already been made in the Pacific but during 1937 and 1938 New Zealand and Britain undertook far more extensive surveying in the islands. The deteriorating international situation also added to the sense of urgency to make progress in the Pacific. The Munich Crisis especially emphasized the possibility of war, and soon after it the New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey (the most important expedition so far) - took place. The Pacific air route scheme radiating from Fiji, proposed by Cochrane, had been accepted as a vital aspect of New Zealand's defence policy and work thus had to be instigated to establish the routes. The NZPAS was more thorough and extensive than previous surveys but, still, it had limited resources and time. Completed early in 1939 the reports of the expedition were to be extremely useful at the Pacific Defence Conference.

By the beginning of 1939 defence planning in New Zealand demanded serious consideration. The Dominion Government still supported Imperial defence, but the obvious fallibility of the Singapore strategy and acceptance of the value of the Pacific Islands resulted in the need for a reassessment of the situation. The islands needed to be defended so as to prevent Japan occupying any of them and thus coming within striking distance for an invasion of New Zealand. Urgent action needed to be taken in Pacific defence. The principle of a "life-line defence scheme" of air routes between New Zealand and America had been accepted and commitments already made to surveying in the islands. Equipment and ammunition were also needed in many of the Islands and a decision needed
to be made on when to send the force to Fanning Island. By 1939 the time had arrived for a Conference specifically dealing with Pacific issues to be held. The resulting Pacific Defence Conference consequently marked the importance of Pacific defence, and, initiated and hosted by New Zealand, it was also a statement of the strategic significance of the Pacific Islands in New Zealand's defence thinking.
The declaration of war with Germany on 3 September 1939 took the focus of New Zealand's defence planning back to the European arena. The Dominion was quick to respond to the British appeal for an expeditionary force and in January 1940 the first Echelon embarked for Egypt. In August 1940 the Third Echelon left New Zealand also for Egypt where, like its predecessor, training would be completed. The Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 2NZEF, was not entirely in Egypt at this stage because towards the end of 1940 the Second Echelon was diverted to Britain due to fears of an invasion. Although attention was thus focused on Europe, at this same time, New Zealand also maintained her commitment to Pacific security. In June 1940 the decision was made to send the Brigade Group to Fiji which had been advocated by the Pacific Defence Conference and in October it left for Fiji. At the same time that this "B" force was sent to Fiji, it was decided to station an air reconnaissance force there as well and at the end of 1940 New Zealand took over full responsibility for Fiji. New Zealand's other responsibility, Fanning Island, still had priority in defence commitments, and in March 1941 another platoon was sent to reinforce the garrison there.

New Zealand thus had a strong presence in the Pacific on the eve of the Pacific War. With a Brigade and two squadrons of the Air Force in Fiji and a Company in Fanning Island, New Zealand had honoured her commitments
of the Pacific Defence Conference. Additionally New Zealand had a fighter squadron and an airfield construction unit in Malaya. Therefore, by the time Japan entered the war, New Zealand had not only committed itself to a force in Europe but at the same time had honoured her Pacific responsibilities.
I wish to thank all the people who have encouraged and supported the writing of this thesis. My mother's guidance over the past years has been invaluable. The enthusiasm of my brothers and support of my father have been very much appreciated. Friends too have played a vital role, especially in the maintenance of my sanity and sense of humour. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor McIntyre for his advice and aid throughout the course of my work. I am especially grateful for the loan of many documents and for allowing me to read parts of his latest book before its publication.

The staff of the National Archives in Wellington were most helpful and considerate to a visiting researcher with a strict time limit. The Wigram archivist was particularly kind in finding photographs and material at quick notice. Librarians in the Canterbury University Library were characteristically pleasant and helpful. I am especially grateful to the staff of the Canterbury Public Library who have aided and supported the completion of "the other job" of their fellow worker. The cheerfulness and enthusiasm of Mrs. Glenys Lamb have only been surpassed by her speed and professionalism in the typing of this thesis.

It is not possible to do such a work alone, and I am thankful to all the above for helping me.
NOTE ON SOURCES

The majority of primary sources used for this thesis are from the National Archives in Wellington. Because of their location in that city, and mine in Christchurch, my access has been somewhat limited. Although some documents may have been consequently neglected, I believe the most pertinent ones to this thesis have been examined. Special appreciation must be extended at this point to Professor McIntyre for his guidance in the usage of these archives and especially for the loan of his copies of many documents; in particular the Verbatim Report of the Pacific Defence Conference, many Chiefs of Staff Papers and the John A. Lee Papers from the Auckland Public Library.

The Archive Department of the RNZAF Museum at Wigram only became accessible to researchers in 1987, so again I have been limited by time in my usage of these sources. There is, however, wonderful scope for future researchers who take advantage of this newly available material.
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## APPENDIX

### PACIFIC DEFENCE CONFERENCE REPORT

#### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**NEW ZEALAND**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reference Paragraph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Assume responsibility for air reconnaissance Tonga to New Hebrides (Sandwich Island).</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Establish air base at Fiji.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Provide for Fiji Defence Force material as in Appendix I and also key personnel of 2 officers and 14 other ranks.</td>
<td>31 and 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Consider formation of Brigade Group in New Zealand as reinforcements for Fiji to be despatched when the emergency arises.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Construct two landing grounds at Fiji and arrange to hold there part of New Zealand's Air reserve of fuel, ammunition and bombs. New Zealand to share equally with the United Kingdom the capital costs incurred, over and above New Zealand's present programme, for air defence measures at Fiji.</td>
<td>40 to 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Provide material for Tonga Defence Force as in Appendix I.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Conduct surveys at Tonga for possible emergency landing grounds.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Station a garrison of one platoon at Fanning Island in peace.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Advise Cable Company to hold minimum of six months' food supplies at Fanning Island.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Control evasive routing East of New Zealand through Navy Office, Wellington</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Inquire from Admiralty regarding risk of shipping losses on Vancouver, Panama and Cape Horn routes.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Fit three miscellaneous vessels, if constructed, with &quot;asdics&quot;.</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Consider defraying cost of conversion of two armed merchant cruisers and maintaining them in war.

14. Increase peace strength of Territorial Force by 6,000 and make adequate expansion of Regular Force.

15. Consider manning and maintaining third cruiser and two escort vessels, and stiffening of 27 merchant vessels of over 1,600 tons.

16. Reconsider on outbreak of war proposals in Serials 12 and 15 if not fully done in peace.

17. Obtain views of Air Ministry as to whether New Zealand should train in war 1,000 pilots or 650 pilots and a total of 650 observers and air gunners, annually.

18. In war, after initial local requirements are met, train flight fitters and riggers for R.A.F.

19. In war, provide whatever air personnel reinforcements are available for overseas service.

20. Investigate desirability of system of liaison officers with United Kingdom.

21. Exchange with Australia to the maximum extent information on procedure, etc., on national defence and allied matters.
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Assume responsibility for Air Reconnaissance; New Guinea to New Hebrides (Sandwich Island).</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Advise British Phosphate Commissioner to hold a reserve of six months' food supply at Nauru Island.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Obtain additional arms, equipment and ammunition for Nauru Island Defence Force.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Provide flying boat facilities at Sandwich Island (New Hebrides) and investigate landing ground same locality.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Carry out similar action as in Serial 4 at or near Tulagi in Solomon Islands.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Expedite steps to raise local defence force at Norfolk Island.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Control evasive routeing in Tasman Sea through Navy Office, Melbourne.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Inquire from Admiralty regarding risk of shipping losses on Vancouver, Panama and Cape Horn Routes.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Consider increasing its force of flying boats available for reconnaissance duties.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Exchange with New Zealand to maximum extent information on procedure, etc. on national defence and allied matters.</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial No.</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Reference Paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Provide material for Fiji Defence Force as in Appendix I.</td>
<td>31 and 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Share equally with New Zealand the additional capital costs incurred, over and above New Zealand's present programme, for air defence measures at Fiji.</td>
<td>42 and 44</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Provide material for Tonga Defence Force as in Appendix I.</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Determine allocation of annual cost (£5,000) of proposed Tonga Defence Force.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Earmark two ships for armed merchant cruisers for New Zealand.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Investigate desirability of system of liaison officers with New Zealand.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIJI

Serial No. | Item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Reference Paragraph
-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------
1.         | Increase Fiji Defence Force to one complete composite battalion at Suva and two European Companies at Lautoka.                                                                                                                                                           | 30
2.         | Instal Coast Defence Battery of two 6 inch guns and two searchlights at Suva and enlist necessary personnel of 6 officers and 106 other ranks.                                                                                                                                  | 36 to 39
3.         | Obtain information from Australia regarding improvised searchlight equipment for Serial 2.                                                                                                                                                                                  | 38
4.         | Obtain additional material for Serials 1 and 2 as in Appendix I, from United Kingdom sources.                                                                                                                                                                              | 31 and 37
5.         | Assist New Zealand Government to prepare two landing grounds.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 44

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR WESTERN PACIFIC

1.         | Advise Plantation Company at Fanning Island to hold reserve of six months' food supply.                                                                                                                                                                                  | 50
2.         | Advise British Phosphate Commissioners to hold a reserve of six months' food supply at Ocean Island.                                                                                                                                                                    | 52
3.         | Obtain additional material for Ocean Island Defence Force (see Appendix I for details).                                                                                                                                                                                | 52
4.         | Discuss with French Authorities the formation in New Hebrides of joint defence force and provision of air facilities at Sandwich Island.                                                                                                                               | 54 and 55
5.         | Exchange with French Authorities in New Caledonia information on defence matters under specific heads.                                                                                                                                                                  | 58