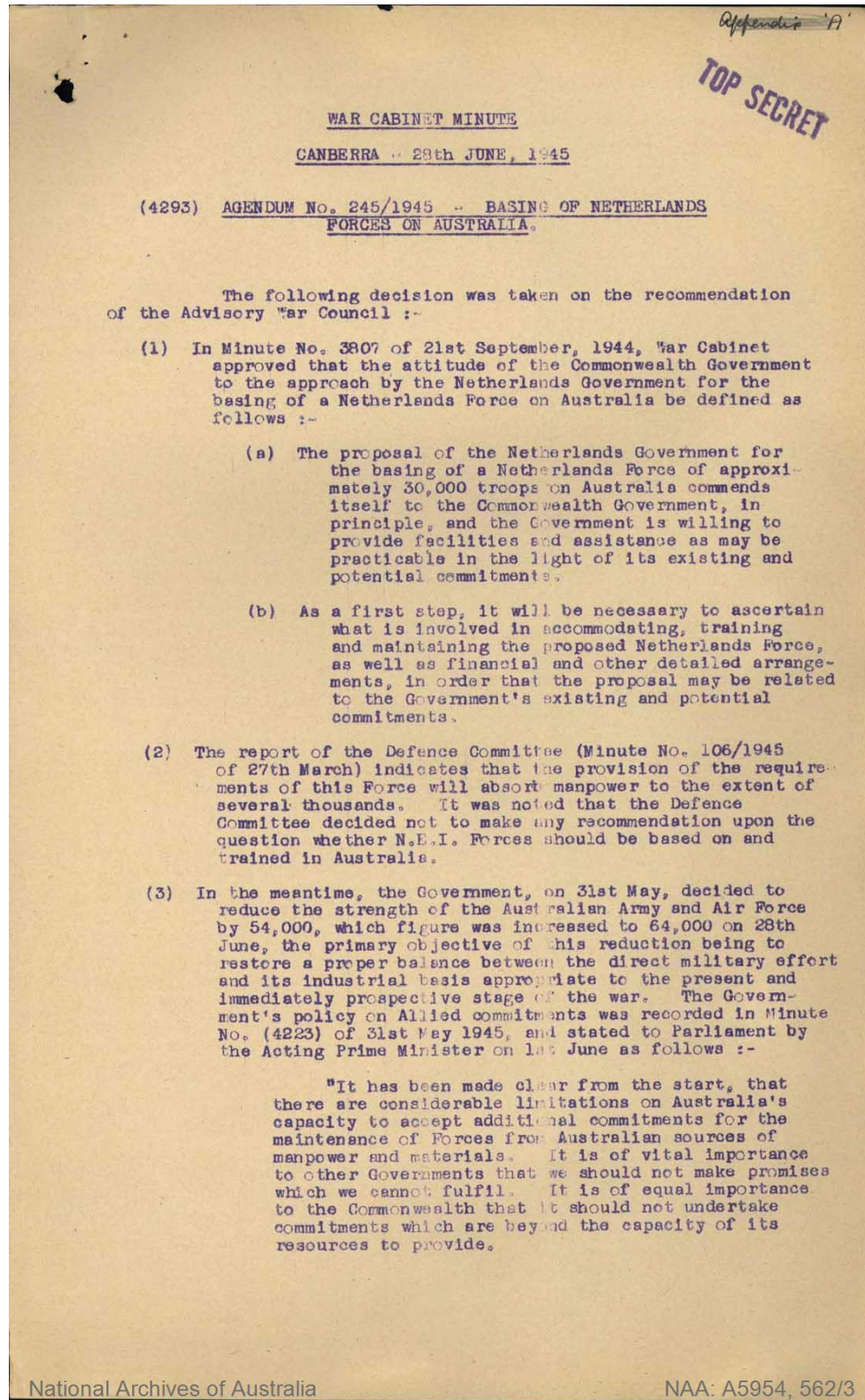


AA File. A5954. ID 647803. Basing of Netherlands East Indies Forces on Australia. File No. 2
(Following War Cabinet's decisions in Minute No. (4293) of 28th June 1945. 1944-47.

On the agreement that the Dutch can have 30,000 troops based in Australia – these troops are planned to be used in the NEI after training.



It is the duty of the Production Executive to consider Allied proposals in relation to other aspects of the war effort in order to assess the capacity to provide for them. To guard against the neutralisation of the measures being taken to establish equilibrium in the war effort, the Production Executive has been requested to fix ceilings for the Allied commitments that can be undertaken."

- (4) In a separate Minute (No. (4292)) - Review of the Works Programmes for the Royal Navy - it has been decided, in view of the imperative needs of the housing situation, its manpower and material requirements, and the measures being taken to restore a proper balance between the direct military effort and its industrial basis appropriate to the present and immediately prospective stage of the war, that no additional works commitments are to be accepted for the Royal Navy unless :

- (a) They can be met by the diversion of manpower at present employed by the Allied Works Council which cannot be diverted to housing.
- (b) Revisions can be made in the present Royal Navy works programme which can be carried out by the present labour bloc employed on the Royal Navy works, after providing for the reduction in strength which has been in suspense, and the further reduction which is to be effected by the end of 1945.

It was noted that commitments totalling over £25-millions have already been accepted for the Royal Navy.

- (5) It is now evident that the existing and potential commitments referred to in Minute No. (3807) of 21st September, 1944, preclude the acceptance of commitments involving demands on Australian manpower as outlined in the Defence Committee's report for a Force of 30,000 men. In regard to the Force of 5,600, the Government is unable to accept any commitment at present and desires to be informed of the precise manpower commitment involved for the various classes of requirements. The needs proposed to be met from Service stocks are to be shown clearly, together with an indication as to whether they will be provided from surplus stocks or will entail additional production for replacements.

J. Channon

Secretary,
War Cabinet.

A timeline of information regarding the possible 30,000 Dutch servicemen in Australia

TOP SECRET

BASING OF NETHERLANDS FORCES ON AUSTRALIA.

- NOTE: 1. "E" refers to Dutch Forces now in Eastern Australia or in NEI.
 "W" refers to Dutch Forces proposed to be based in WA.
2. No detail is inserted re proposals to train Dutch Air Forces, this being a matter for RAAF.

Serial No.	Date	Event
1 E	- May 44	Approval by CGS for issue of two NI Coys.
2 W	4 Sep 44	Netherlands Minister informs Dept of External Affairs of Netherlands intention to send from Holland force of about 30,000 to Far East on liberation of Holland. Asks if Australian Govt. would let him know whether, in principle, they are agreeable to the arrival, accommodation, training and maintenance of the force in Australia, details being left to be discussed between the Aust. Army authorities and the Netherlands C-in-C.
3 W	- Sep 44	Defence Committee advises that before acceptance in principle even, Commonwealth Govt should consider (inter alia) - (a) Allotment of forces to SWPA is for CCS Washington - effect on. (b) Nature of ultimate employment in SWPA of troops in relation to priority of resources available in Australia.
4 W	21 Sep 44	War Cabinet Minute No. (3807) defines Govt's attitude - (a) Proposal commends itself to Commonwealth Govt in principle, and the Govt is willing to provide facilities practicable in light of existing and potential commitments. (b) To relate proposal to these commitments, army staffs, and later, other Commonwealth representatives should discuss with Netherland authorities what is involved in accommodating, training, and maintaining force. (c) Approval of CCS assumed.
5 W	22 Sep 44	Dept of Defence directed Dept of Army that discussions by Aust. Army Staffs with Netherlands Indies authorities as directed by Minute No. (3807) should be held, and a report forwarded as a basis for further consideration by the Defence Committee.
6 W	25 Sep 44	Netherlands Minister informed by Dept of External Affairs in terms of Serial 4 - "glad to provide facilities and assistance practicable in light of existing and future commitments."
7 E	- Oct 44	Approval given by CGS for issue of personal arms and equipment. NO clothing for one battalion (including issues in Serial 1).

Serial No.	Date	Event
8 W	18 Nov 44	Dept of Defence forwards to Dept of Army summary of discussions of Minister for Defence with Gen MacArthur on subject. "Gen MacArthur agreed with the decision to approve in principle the request of the Netherlands authorities."
9 W	23 Jan 45	Report in accordance with Serial 5 forwarded by Dept of Army to Dept of Defence. Recommends reception, accommodation, clothing, equipment, feeding and training by and in Australia. First arrivals (4,000) expected in or soon after APRIL 45.
10 W	31 Jan 1 Feb 45	Defence Committee Minute No. 32/1945 refers report to JAPSC for an assessment of extent to which Australian resources would be committed if proposal accepted and to report on practicability of accepting commitment in whole or in part.
11 W	17 Mar 45	Report of JAPSC (NEI/21) recommends acceptance of commitment - labour involved about 2000-3000 workers, male and female, in the proportions of about 3 to 2.
12 W	- Mar 45	Defence Committee by Minute No. 106/1945 forwards report to Minister of Defence with certain comments.
13 E	14 Apr 45	A/Minister for Army approves of issue of vehicles for one technical battalion (clothed and equipped by US) approximate value £70,000. Noted by Business Board and Treasury informed.
14 E	17 Apr 45	CGS approves of issue of clothing, armament and equipment for one battalion (for recovered PWs).
15 W	18 Apr 45	Signal from Gen Lavarack to CGS advising CGS approved despatch of 5,600 Dutch to Australia.
16 W	19 Apr 45	Signal from CGS to Gen Smart asking for advice of arrangements for shipping and moving forces in Serial 15 to Australia.
17 W	23 Apr 45	Letter from Gen Van Oyen to C-in-C AMF states that forces in Serial 15 only portion of ultimate total of 30,000.
18 W	27 Apr 45	Matter referred again to JAPSC in view of Serial 15.
19 W	30 Apr 45	JAPSC reports (NEI/25) advises in view of Serial 17, no material alteration in position.
20 W	30 Apr 45	Reply from Gen Smart to Serial 16 - no firm information. Asks for priority as with returning Aust PWs.
21 W	4 May 45	Defence Committee Minute No. 148/45 referring to Serials 15, 17 and 19 states Committee's belief that there had been significant changes since Minute No. 106/45; that Dutch should state strength, composition and dates of arrival, and that reduction in strength below 30,000 would result in proportional reduction in size of commitment.
22 W	4 May 45	Reply by CGS to Serial 20.

Serial No.	Date	Event
23 E	28 May 45	RNI Army, in view of increase over anticipated numbers of Dutch PWs released at Tarakan, asks for supply at Morotai or Tarakan of clothing, equipment, armament and vehicles for one more battalion.
24 W	31 May 45	War Cabinet Minute No. (4223) Production Executive and War Cabinet to give early consideration to capacity to accept Netherlands commitment and to prepare broad statement for communication to NEI Govt & CGS.
25 W	14 Jun 45	Signal from Gen Smart stating 600 Dutch leaving JUNE to arrive end JULY, W.O. assuming Australia accepts 5,600 commitment and asking for confirmation.
26 W	19 Jun 45	Letter from Secretary, Dept of Army to Secretary for Defence asking for directions in view of Serial 25.
27 W	20 Jun 45	Reply to Serial 26. War Cabinet will consider matter at its next meeting.
28 W	28 Jun 45	War Cabinet Minute No. (4293) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Unable to accept commitment involving demands on Australian manpower as outlined in Defence Committee's report for force of 30,000. (b) Unable to accept commitment for 5,600 at present, further investigation required.

The agreement of 5,600 NEI force in Australia, and possibly in the future expanding to 20,000-30,000.

DRAFT

TOP SECRET

MINUTE BY DEFENCE COMMITTEE AT MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 31ST JULY, 1945.

<u>PRESENT</u>	(Lieutenant-General J. Northcott, Chief of the General Staff { C.B., M.V.O.	
	(Air Vice-Marshal G. Jones, Chief of the Air Staff { C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C.	
	(Commodore H.A. Showers, Second Naval Member { C.B.E.	
	(A. J. Wilson, Esq., Assistant Secretary, { M.B.E. Department of Defence	
	(A. A. Fitzgerald, Esq. Representing Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction.	

Agendum
No.
21/1945
Supp. 4

NO. 312/1945 - BASING OF NETHERLANDS FORCES ON AUSTRALIA.

Previous Consideration by War Cabinet:

In Agendum No. 245/1945, War Cabinet had before it the question of acceptance of a proposal to base on Australia a Netherlands Force from Holland of 5,600 at the outset, possibly expanding to approximately 30,000 by 20,000 from Holland and by units already in Australia and Prisoners of War to be freed in future.

2. The force of 5,600 which is the only one approved to date by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to be sent to Australia, comprises :

- 4,000 Army
- 1,000 Air
- 600 Civil Affairs (Military personnel).

3. The decisions on this Agendum recorded in Minute No. (4293), included the following as paragraph 5 :

"It is now evident that the existing and potential commitments referred to in Minute No. (3807) of 21st September, 1944, preclude the acceptance of commitments involving demands on Australian manpower as outlined in the Defence Committee's report for a force of 30,000 men. In regard to the force of 5,600, the Government is unable to accept any commitment at present and desires to be informed of the precise manpower commitment involved for the various classes of requirements. The needs proposed to be met from Service stocks are to be shown clearly, together with an indication as to whether they will be provided from surplus stocks or will entail additional production for replacements."

4. Defence Committee Consideration:

The Defence Committee, having been called upon for advice in respect to the above decision, obtained a report from the Joint Administrative Planning Committee and reached the

following conclusions as indicating the extent of the commitments involved in respect to the Force of 5,600:

A. ARMY

- (a) Personnel: The Australian Military Forces could assist by training both administrative cadres and instructors for the Netherlands Indies Forces, by fostering the first elements of the forces to arrive, and by providing in Australian Depots, stores and supplies in bulk for the Netherlands Indies Forces.
- (b) Supplies: Q.M.G. supplies (including food) provided on a scale of initial equipment, eight months' maintenance and 30 days' reserves would cost £349,000. These requirements could be wholly supplied from stocks in excess of Australian Army requirements and would not require replacement.
- (c) Equipment: Assuming the Netherlands Forces were equipped to the same degree as the A.M.F., the whole equipment could be provided from Army assets without replacement at a cost of about £450,000 to £500,000. This represents 85% of the total War Equipment Table requirements and the balance of 15% would comprise items which at the present time are not available to the Australian Army and which, in the case of the Netherlands Forces, could no doubt be dispensed with temporarily and probably permanently.
- (d) Works: In regard to works, existing camp accommodation in Western Australia could be used and any additional expenditure on account of the Netherlands East Indies Forces would be negligible.

B. R.A.A.F.

(a) Personnel:

- (i) The peak additional requirement of R.A.A.F. Staff for flying training would be approximately 800 and the total period for which flying training would continue would be 14 months. The peak additional requirement of R.A.A.F. Staff for training of ground personnel would be 190 and the length of ground training would extend over 11 months. The total R.A.A.F. manpower commitment is therefore 990.
- (ii) The training could be undertaken by the R.A.A.F., but only at the expense of deferring the release of personnel who would otherwise become available for other purposes, i.e. discharge, etc.

A letter from van Aerssen Beyeren to the Australian Prime Minister Mr Chifley about reconsidering the 30,000 troops into Australia. He expresses disappointment that the Australian Government has decided to not go ahead with this agreement. (10th August 1945)

C O P Y

T 18/2089

ROYAL NETHERLANDS LEGATION

MELBOURNE.
10th August 1945.

My dear Prime Minister,

Since I had a conversation with you on August 2nd in Canberra concerning the training of Dutch troops in Australia, the matter under discussion has, greatly to my displeasure, been aired by the press.

I am not primarily interested in what is being published in this matter; I made it a point not to comment on it, however strongly I have been pressed to do so. I further can assure you that not only I, but the Netherlands Indies Government and the Netherlands military authorities, thoroughly disapprove of this publicity and deplore the mischief it brews.

As an immediate reaction on the first publications in the Melbourne "Herald", I have therefore issued a communique, together with the abovementioned authorities, copy of which I enclose for your information, in which communique it was made quite clear that no Netherlands or Netherlands Indies official had a hand in the publication, and that we regret all publicity given to the matter.

I may add that we expressly prohibited or refused any publicity on this subject. I have told you and I repeat, that, being accredited with the Australian Government, I decline to discuss these things with anybody but the Commonwealth Ministers.

What you told me on the 2nd of August, my dear Prime Minister, means such a serious disappointment for us and such a serious setback in our efforts to increase our participation in the war against Japan, that I venture to approach you once again.

Although, of course, the Commonwealth Government has the ultimate decision in this matter, the change of attitude has come so unexpectedly and so late that our position has been complicated by it in an almost irreparable manner.

Ever since the Commonwealth Government, by the letter of the Minister for External Affairs of September 25th 1944 agreed in principle to the plan of training about 30,000 troops here, preparations and details have been discussed between the Australian Army authorities and the N.E.I. Army Command, both by experts and on the highest level, on the assumption that the project would stand, provided they could agree about its execution. As you will know, these discussions took place, inter alia, between General Sir Thomas Blamey, Admiral Helfrich and General van Oyen. Full agreement on the execution was reached, and it was never even intimated that difficulties of the nature mentioned in the letter of Mr. Makin of July 11th 1945 would stand in

The Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley,
Prime Minister,
CANBERRA.

Secretary to see
Original to Colonel Wilson
21/8/45

its way. There was the less reason for us to expect any objections, as the letter of September 1944 explicitly stated that a further communication would at once be made to me concerning the progress of the discussion; from which it may be concluded a fortiori that I was entitled to a warning if the whole plan would be endangered. Such a warning, however, did not reach me until very recently, by rumours to the effect that something was wrong, but even then no communications were made to me until I asked for them in my letter of June 16th 1945 and in the conversation which the Lieutenant Governor-General Dr. van Mook, General van Oyen and I had with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Forde, on July 2nd 1945.

The fact that a partial demobilisation was contemplated in this country had added to our conviction that the project would meet with no obstacles; it also increased our desire to expedite the execution in order to contribute to the alleviation of the burden of war carried by Australia.

It is true that the original schedule provided for a much earlier arrival of the first troops. The delay, however, is not of our making, but was caused by difficulties raised, first by S.H.A.E.F. with regard to the release of the first batches of volunteers, and then by the Combined Chiefs of Staff with regard to the provision of transport. We could not foresee that just when these difficulties were solved or being overcome, the whole project would be made impossible by a completely unexpected change of attitude of the Commonwealth Government.

I told you the other day, and I repeat, that I fail to understand and that I am at a loss how to explain to the Netherlands nation that - as intimated in Mr. Makin's letter - the training of 27,000 troops, who provide their own Service personnel and for whom a great part of the equipment is already in stock, would upset the balance of the Australian manpower position.

I may stress that this decision of the Commonwealth Government comes at a moment, when a change in the limits between the American and British operational theatres is pending, which change may imply a relatively greater share and a greater responsibility of Australia in the liberation of her nearest neighbour. This will render the decision still more inexplicable in the eye of the public.

On the other hand, the development of the last few days may hasten demobilisation and as a consequence thereof, the availability in the nearest future of more manpower than originally expected. This will make a revision of the problem easier.

I may emphasise once more that a definite withdrawal of the Australian Government's agreement in principle would have most serious consequences and completely upset our military preparations.

Taking all this into consideration, you will agree with me, my dear Prime Minister, that a deterioration in the relations between our two nations as a result of these unhappy events, should be avoided.

We on our side have, I can assure you, always tried our very best, from the first days after the occupation of the Netherlands East Indies, to stimulate co-operation and friendly feeling between our countries. I may perhaps remember the fact that in those days we made available to Australia, at the shortest notice, all the war material on its way to this theatre in our ships. I cannot help thinking of the Hospital ship "Oranje" which entered an Australian port one of these days on her 37th voyage since she was handed over by us to the Australian and New Zealand Governments after transformation to a hospital ship at very high cost.

Personally, I have had the privilege to maintain excellent relations with your Government and the Australian nation during three and a half years, and it would be the greatest deception of my career to see the relations between our countries, who cherish the same principles and are fighting the common enemy, endangered by difficulties which, I am convinced, can be overcome with goodwill on both sides.

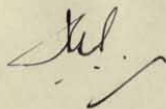
I therefore venture to suggest that the decision be reconsidered. On my side, in order to facilitate the attainment of a modus vivendi, I would propose a modification of the original plan consisting in a slight reduction in numbers.

I hope and trust that a satisfactory revision of the problem will soon be reached. However, I must insist on the urgency of an answer with the least possible delay. We shall have to promptly inform the Netherlands Government, the British Chiefs of Staff and the Combined Chiefs of Staff, as decisions are pending which may have to be fundamentally revised.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. Evatt, and I hope to be favoured with an answer from you, my dear Prime Minister, at your earliest convenience.

Very sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Van Aerssen Beyeren.



26/08/1947. Air bases around Australia are being told not to refuel Dutch aircrafts

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION.

Copy of INWARDS Teleprinter Message.

From: Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Canberra.

To: Secretary, Department of Air, Melbourne.

Date 26.8.47 *Time of Receipt* 1200PM *Hours* *No.* 563 *just*
C.2219/40.

SHOULD APPRECIATE YOUR URGENT ADVICE ON THE QUESTIONS
RAISED IN FOLLOWING NOTE FROM ROYAL NETHERLAND LEGATION:

BEGINS:

THE ROYAL NETHERLAND LEGATION PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS
AND HAS THE HONOUR TO BRING THE FOLLOWING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:-

ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE COMMANDING
OFFICER 19TH TRANSPORT SQUADRON ROYAL NETHERLANDS INDIES ARMY
AIR FORCE, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE AT AMBERLEY (BRISBANE)
HAS RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SUPPLY AND
EQUIPMENT OF AIR BOARD, GROUP CAPTAIN ACTON, AT MELBOURNE NOT TO
REFUEL THE AIRCRAFT OF THE 19TH SQUADRON.

IT HAS ALSO BEEN INDICATED THAT THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR
FORCE AT DARWIN (N.T.) WILL RECEIVE SIMILAR INSTRUCTIONS. FURTHER-
MORE THE SHELL COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA PTY.LTD. HAS INFORMED THE
COMMANDING OFFICER 19TH SQUADRON THAT THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO
SUPPLY 19TH SQUADRON WITH DRUMS OF AVIATION SPIRIT AND OIL, AS A
CONSEQUENCE OF THREATS ALLEGEDLY MADE BY CERTAIN AUSTRALIAN TRADE
UNIONS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS INDIES REGRETS THE
EXTREMELY UN-COMPROMISING ATTITUDE TAKEN BY THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN
AIR FORCE - AN ATTITUDE WHICH STRONGLY CONTRASTS WITH THE HOSPITALITY
AND CO-OPERATION PREVIOUSLY SHOWN BY THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVED THE
LEGATION DESIRES TO DRAW THE EARNEST ATTENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT
TO THE FACT THAT THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE STILL ENJOYS THE
HOSPITALITY AND FULL CO-OPERATION OF THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS INDIES
ARMY AIR FORCE AT MOROTAI (NETHERLANDS INDIES). IN THIS CONNECTION

IT IS STRONGLY FELT THAT BOTH SERVICES RENDERED BY THE R.A.A.F. ON AUSTRALIAN TERRITORY AND BY THE RNIAAF IN NETHERLANDS INDIES TERRITORY ARE A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ~~XXXX~~ FORMER ALLIED CO-OPERATION WHICH SHOULD NOT BE UNILATERALLY DISRUPTED BY ONE OF THE PARTIES.

IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE THE LEGATION HAS BEEN DIRECTED TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT THAT THE NECESSARY STEPS BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE 19TH SQUADRON WITH THE DESIRED FACILITIES ON AUSTRALIAN TERRITORY.

THE LEGATION AVAILS ITSELF OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO STATE THAT EIGHT TO NINE FLIGHTS ARE STILL CONTEMPLATED TO CARRY MATERIALS OF THE SQUADRON, AT PRESENT IN AUSTRALIA, AS WELL AS THE PERSONNEL OF SAID SQUADRON TO THE NETHERLAND INDIES.

A REPLY AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE CONVENIENCE OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

ENDS.