NETHERLANDS

PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE
NETHERLANDS REGARDING MUTUAL AID IN THE PROSECUTION
OF THE WAR AGAINST AGGRESSION, SIGNED JULY 8, 1942

[For text of agreement and exchange of notes signed at Washing-
ton, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 259,
or 56 Stat. (pt. 2) 1554.]

MILITARY SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND THE NETHERLANDS

[The agreement was effected by exchanges of notes signed at Wash-
ington March 31, July 2, and September 24 and 30, 1942. For text of
notes, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 306,
or 56 Stat. (pt. 2) 1900.]

REPRESENTATIONS BY THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT WITH
RESPECT TO THE REQUISITION BY THE UNITED STATES OF THE
S. S. “WILHELMINA”

311.50654 Wilhelmina/3

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State
(Long)

[WASHINGTON,] April 7, 1942.

The Dutch Minister ¹ came in this morning at my request. We dis-
scussed the situation out of which the tie-up exists on the S.S. Wilhel-
mina. He said that the vessel had been owned by two Dutch subjects;
that it had been chartered to the Japanese along with another vessel,
the Beatrice; that the Beatrice was unreported and presumably in the
hands of the Japanese; that the Wilhelmina had escaped along the
northern route and had arrived in an Alaskan port; that the Dutch
Government had sent to that port a Dutch officer who took charge of
the vessel and requisitioned it in the name of the Crown; that the
vessel had then been brought to Seattle.

After arriving at Seattle the crew were dissatisfied because they had
been without pay for a long time. The crew were entirely Chinese.

¹ Alexander Loudon.
Because of the long voyage through the northern Pacific and efforts to escape the Japanese naval vessels there had been no opportunity for shore leave and they had not been able to pay them. Naturally they were dissatisfied. However, on arrival in Seattle they were approached by the Chinese Consul who began making trouble with the crew. The captain of the vessel is a Dutchman but all the others are Chinese, and the foreman of the crew refused to move the vessel from one berth to another without the permission of the Chinese Consul General in Seattle. The Chinese Consul General’s action was predicated upon an internal political situation in China. He did not recognize the authority of the Ambassador and would only take orders emanating directly from Chiang Kai Shek.² The Kuomintang on one side and the Communist elements in China on the other side created difficulty and a divided authority.

The Minister said that he would be very glad to see the vessel go to work immediately, but that he must protest at the thought that the American Government would requisition the vessel because it was the property of the Dutch Government and even requisitioned by them from its Dutch owner. It still flew the Dutch flag. He realized the obligation of the Dutch Government to use its vessels in the war effort and would be very glad to have this vessel proceed immediately but that it was blocked not by Dutch authority but by an irresponsible Chinese official.

It developed in the course of the Minister’s conversation that there was probably a flaw in the title to the vessel in so far as ownership by the Crown is concerned because the vessel had not complied with certain royal regulations in registering the change in Dutch East Indies. The vessel had not been in the Dutch East Indies and was unable to proceed there and report to the seat of authority in order to effect the details of the transfer of title from the private owner to the Crown.

I told the Minister that I was going to see the Chinese Ambassador and discuss the whole subject because it affected not only this particular vessel in one port but did affect other vessels with Chinese crews in different ports.

The Minister stated that the action of the Chinese Consul was not unrelated to the American Maritime Union and intimated that the consular officials were working in cooperation with certain representatives of American labor unions on the Pacific Coast.

I told the Minister that our principal concern was that vessels lying in American ports did not remain idle and that they get into the war effort. I stated that the Dutch Government as well as the United States Government was principally interested in the war effort and

² President of the Chinese Executive Yuan (Premier).
should do everything in their power to contribute, even down to the use of this one vessel.

While the Minister said very definitely that he would protest in case the vessel was requisitioned by the United States Government, it would appear that his protest might not receive the sanction of his Government—considering the circumstances.

B[reckinridge] L[ong]

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Long)

[WASHINGTON,] April 7, 1942.

The Chinese Ambassador ⁹ came in at my request. I presented to him the situation as we understood it in regard to the S. S. Wilhelmina. The Ambassador telephoned to his Counselor to refresh his memory about certain phases of it and after he had discussed it with the Counselor he said that this was not an isolated instance but one of a category which they were now making an effort to liquidate. There had been called in London, under the auspices of the British Government, a conference to discuss the attitude of the British, Dutch, and other governments as regards Chinese members of the crew. The crew in the case of the Wilhelmina had been signed on at a rate to be paid in Hong Kong dollars. They now found themselves in the United States and the payoff to them was worth three American dollars a month. The conditions aboard the vessel were very unsatisfactory. The Chinese Consul reported about it and the Embassy was kept advised but not very recently. At the first there had been some dispute about the title to the vessel, it having been claimed that it was of Chinese registry. An inquiry was made in China and it developed that she had been of Chinese registry but was not now so considered. The principal problem was a local one and the Chinese members of the crew had appealed to the Consul for protection and for an amelioration of their condition. The Ambassador hoped that the conference at London, now proceeding, would result in a general understanding which would prevent cases like this from happening. He did not know what he could do in this case as long as the dispute was one of the treatment and condition of labor of the crew which from any standard he thought must be considered of a very inferior order. His prime object and that of his Government was to do everything they could to promote the war effort. As part of their policy each ship should be kept busy in the war effort. He had taken the position some weeks ago that this dispute

⁹ Hu Shih.
should be adjusted with the principal thought that the vessel should be used for war purposes. However, the attitude of the owners or the representatives of the owners who had offices in San Francisco was such as to prevent any kind of settlement. The Ambassador realized the situation of the United States Government in its desire to have vessels moving at sea rather than sitting in port. He was quite sympathetic and was willing to cooperate to the fullest extent. He said he would make an investigation immediately and request his Counselor to report and see if there was some basis upon which there might be a settlement of this if possible ahead of the decision to be arrived at in London. Incidentally, he said that the Dutch owners had refused to participate in the conference in London and said that they were awaiting the decision to determine whether or not they would conform. Consequently, the decision in London might not affect this vessel because of the attitude of the Dutch owners. The Ambassador had believed that this vessel was still the property of private Dutch owners, their representative having an office in San Francisco, and had not heard that the vessel had been expropriated by the Crown. Their contacts had been through their Counsel with the Dutch owners or the persons who had been the owners and whom they still consider to be the persons responsible for the vessel.

However, he will request a report on the conditions and will communicate with me and see if some solution can be arrived at.

B[RECKINRIDGE] L[ONG]

311.5654 Wilhelmina/5

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Long)

[WASHINGTON,] April 15, 1942.

I asked the Dutch Minister to come in this morning to dispose of the case of the S. S. Wilhelmina. The Minister was ill and confined to his bed so I asked the Minister-Counselor, Baron van Boetzelaer, to come in.

Baron van Boetzelaer said he had very little knowledge of the Wilhelmina and attempted to get additional information on the telephone, but was unable to do so. He promised that he would get information and telephone me this afternoon about 4 o'clock. He is only certain that arrangements have not been made for the release of the libels and for the use of the vessel, though he is under the impression that that arrangement is imminent.

I told him that unless the Netherlands Government made some immediate arrangement that the interest of the United Nations cause would
seem to indicate that the United States should exercise its rights under American law and operate the vessel.

B[RECKINRIDGE] L[ONG]

311.5654 Wilhelmina/12

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Long)

[WASHINGTON,] May 4, 1942.

The Minister of the Netherlands came in today at his own request, and presented to me the attached note no. 2844* on the subject of the Wilhelmina. The Minister reminded me that on the occasion of my first conversation with him about the vessel, at which time I told him that unless the Netherlands Government arranged its affairs so that it could put the vessel to work in the immediate future that the United States Government would feel justified in expropriating the vessel to be put to work in the United Nations cause, he had stated that if the American Government did so it would be necessary for him to protest in the name of his Government. The Minister continued to say that he was now formally protesting as a matter of principle.

The Minister orally took exception to a statement I recently made to a representative of his Legation who called upon me on the same matter. The Minister said that he wanted to point to my remarks that the American Government had taken over vessels belonging to Denmark and to Rumania. I told the Minister there was no unpleasant analogy. The gentleman in question had said that the American Government had not the right to take over a vessel belonging to another government. I had told him that we would exercise that right and considered ourselves justified in exercising it, and in explanation had told him that two vessels, one belonging to Denmark and one to Rumania, had been expropriated. This action was taken while the United States was neutral. The use of the names of the two governments concerned had no unpleasant reference as far as the Netherlands Government was concerned, and the action of the American Government in this case should not be related to the governments named in the other expropriations, and that I simply named the governments to sustain the statement that as a matter of principle and in law the United States Government had the right.

The Netherlands Minister said he understood, but nevertheless he felt it would be necessary to leave the attached note and make the oral statement that they would be glad to make the vessel available pro-

*Infra.
vided it was returned to the Dutch flag and that the American Government would use it on a charter party, but he denied the right of the United States Government to take title to the ship.

B[reckinridge] L[ong]

311.5654 Wilhelmina/10

The Netherlands Minister (Loudon) to the Secretary of State

No. 2844

The Minister of the Netherlands presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of State and has the honor to respectfully request Mr. Hull's attention for the matter explained in this note.

Since 1938, the Netherlands Ship Wilhelmina had been lying in the Yangtze river in the port of Hankow, unable to proceed to sea, as the Japanese military authorities prevented her from sailing. In order to put an end to this difficulty the owners of the vessel, the Java-China Trading Company, Ltd., a corporation of Amsterdam and later of Batavia, Netherlands East Indies, entered into a charter agreement, with the consent of the Netherlands authorities, with a Japanese shipping concern. The intention of the owners was to have the ship at sea so that in case of war there would be at least a chance for the vessel to escape seizure.

In the beginning of December, the wireless operator, who against explicit Japanese government instructions and at the risk of his life listened in to the shortwave broadcast, learned of the treacherous attack of Japanese forces on Pearl Harbor and of the declaration of war by the Netherlands Government on Japan. The operator immediately informed the master. The master, acting on secret instructions with which the Netherlands Government had provided him, ordered a change of course so as to try and reach a safe port in order to prevent the ship from being taken by the Japanese. After considerable difficulties—the master being handicapped by the lack of charts—the ship reached Dutch Harbor. In the meantime, on January 14, 1942, the Commander of the Netherlands Indies Naval Forces—the competent authority—had, by telegraph, requisitioned the use of the vessel. In Dutch Harbor the Wilhelmina was boarded by Lieutenant Breedveld, a Netherlands Naval Officer, who had been sent from San Francisco by order of Dr. van Mook, Lieutenant Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies, to confer with the master. Lieutenant Breedveld acquainted the master with the fact that the use of his vessel had been requisitioned and on January 30, 1942, the master made an entry of this fact in this logbook. The entry was worded:
"Werden overgenomen door N.E.I. Gouvernement en wachten op orders."

which literally translated means:

"Have been taken over by Netherlands East Indies Government and are awaiting orders."

Upon instructions from Lieutenant Breedveld, the master then continued his voyage to Seattle, Washington. The period of validity of the ship's sailing permit which had been set at six months by Netherlands Consul General at Shanghai, acting on instructions from the Batavia authorities when the ship was still in China, having expired, the Company entrusted by the Netherlands Indies Government with the management of the vessel, subject to the Government's instructions, took immediate steps to obtain an extension, but pending the granting of this extension, the communication with Java was interrupted and finally ceased. It became necessary, therefore, to first of all transfer the seat of the Java-China Trading Company, Ltd., from Batavia to Curaçao, Netherlands West Indies, and to apply for new registration of the vessel in the port of Curaçao. Several weeks had to lapse before these formalities could be completed. In the meantime the ship had been libeled, but this fact would not have interfered with the possibility of the ship's departure, as the owners of the vessel were quite prepared to put up the bond for the required amount. Moreover, the Netherlands Government was and still is considering the question whether in the case of a Government requisitioned ship a libel can attach.

In the meantime all communication with the Netherlands Indies had ceased and the Netherlands Government in London had issued a Decree by which it took over all the requisitionings made by the Netherlands Indies Government. The Wilhelmina had thus become a vessel the use of which had been requisitioned by the Netherlands Government in London. However, just before arrangements could be made by the owners, who now took orders from the Netherlands Government to despatch the ship on a new voyage and use her for the prosecution of the war, the United States War Shipping Administration had taken over the vessel, thereby depriving the Netherlands Government of the use of the tonnage involved. The Netherlands Government does, of course, welcome the efforts of the United States authorities to avail themselves of the tonnage in question for war purposes, and would have very readily agreed to have the United States authorities charter the vessel, but it feels that it cannot consent to have a vessel which it had—acting fully within its sovereign rights—requisitioned, and which had therefore become a Netherlands Government vessel, simply taken away from it and taken over by the United States authorities.
The Netherlands Minister has therefore been instructed urgently to request that in view of the special circumstances of this case, the United States authorities concerned restore the vessel *Wilhelmina* to the Netherlands flag. However, in order not to deprive the United States Government of the immediate use of this vessel, for which it has probably made arrangements, the Netherlands Government is quite willing to have the *Wilhelmina* chartered by the War Shipping Administration—on a bare boat basis—for a limited period to be agreed upon. In that way there will be no interference with the activities of the War Shipping Administration.

This will furthermore avoid the undesirable situation by which the United States Government takes over a ship belonging to a power with which the American Government is united in a common war effort.

The above mentioned action on the part of the United States Government has created a situation against which the Netherlands Government cannot but strongly object.

**WASHINGTON, May 4, 1942.**

311.5664 Wilhelmina/12

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] May 27, 1942.

The Netherlands Ambassador* called to see me today at his request. The Ambassador said he felt it necessary to call to my attention the situation which had arisen from the expropriation by the War Shipping Administration of the Dutch steamship *Wilhelmina* expropriated at Seattle and now in use under the American flag. The Ambassador stated that he had discussed this question at length with Assistant Secretary Long. The Ambassador said he wished to make it clear that the Dutch Government fully recognized our shipping needs and was entirely willing to charter this vessel and any other available Dutch vessel to the United States on a bareboat basis, but that the Dutch Government could not agree to the expropriation of its properties in this cavalier fashion by the United States Government. I told the Ambassador that I was quite unfamiliar with the facts and that I would look into this in order to see what might be done that would be helpful under the circumstances.

**SUMNER** [WELLES]

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*The diplomatic representation between the United States and the Netherlands was raised from the rank of Legation to that of Embassy on May 7, 1942.*
The Secretary of State to the Netherlands Ambassador (Loudon)

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Netherlands and has the honor to refer to his note of May 4, 1942 in which, on behalf of the Netherlands Government, he makes representations with respect to the actions of the Government of the United States in requisitioning title to and possession of the S. S. Wilhelmina.

On April 18, 1942, the War Shipping Administration, by an order issued pursuant to the Act of June 6, 1941, (55 Stat. 242) requisitioned title to and possession of the S. S. Wilhelmina.

It appears from His Excellency’s note that the Java-China Trading Company, Limited, was the owner of the vessel.

The records of this Government disclose that the Wilhelmina, a merchant vessel, arrived at Dutch Harbor, Alaska on or about December 25, 1941 without cargo consigned to that port and with no intention to transport cargo from that port, and subsequently left that port for Seattle, Washington where it arrived on or about February 20, 1942.

The vessel had been, for a number of years, lying in the Yangtze River at Hankow and had been under Chinese registry and, it appears, Chinese ownership. The appropriate authorities of this Government state that, at the time of its arrival in American jurisdiction, the legal status and nationality of the vessel were not clear and that, while it was flying the flag of the Netherlands, it does not appear to have had appropriate evidence to show a valid transfer from the Chinese flag. The records also suggest the possibility that the Netherlands Indies registration of the vessel had not been effected.

This Government is unable to share the view expressed in the Ambassador’s note that the Wilhelmina had become a “Netherlands Government vessel” which was simply taken away from that Government. The note itself elsewhere states that merely the “use” of the vessel was requisitioned by the Commander of the Netherlands Indies Naval Forces, stated to be the competent authority, by telegram on January 14, 1942. It also refers to the vessel’s having been libeled and states that in the meanwhile the communications with the Netherlands Indies had ceased and the Netherlands Government in London had issued a decree by which it took over all the requisitionings made by the Netherlands Indies Government, and that “the Wilhelmina had thus become a vessel, the use of which had been requisitioned by the Netherlands Government in London.” Copies of pertinent laws and decrees have not been submitted.

This Government seriously doubts that the status of the vessel was such as to permit its use being requisitioned, while under American
jurisdiction, by the Netherlands Government. It furthermore doubts that the Commander of the Netherlands Indies Naval Forces could, by telegram, effectually requisition the use of a vessel in a port of the United States. However, assuming that the use of the vessel had been requisitioned by the Netherlands Government, this fact would not preclude the United States from requisitioning title to and possession of the vessel, in the exercise of a well-established right of a sovereign to take, in the case of necessity, property of any kind, situated within its jurisdiction.

It may be furthermore observed that, at the time the *Wilhelmina* was requisitioned by the appropriate authorities of this Government, it was not in the possession of the Netherlands Government but had been libeled and was in the possession of the District Court of the United States, for the Western District of Washington.

In view of the circumstances in this case, and since title to the vessel has now been taken by the United States, this Government is not in the position to comply with the request contained in His Excellency's note that the *Wilhelmina* be now restored to the Netherlands flag.

WASHINGTON, July 30, 1942.

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR SENDING AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES TO THE NETHERLANDS ISLANDS OF CURAÇAO AND ARUBA TO ASSIST IN THEIR DEFENSE

8568.20/18 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, January 2, 1942—6 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 2. Your Netherlands Series 67, December 31, 9 p. m.? Please transmit the following message from the President for Queen Wilhelmina.

"I greatly appreciate your helpful and understanding message concerning the imperative need that prompt action be taken with regard to the security of the islands of Curacao and Aruba. I am hopeful that a satisfactory arrangement may immediately be concluded between your Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr. Biddle. I feel however that I must ask again that, with regard to Venezuela, an arrangement be made quite similar to that which was reached between your Government and that of Brazil in the case of Surinam. I fully recognize the special circumstances which exist in your relations with Venezuela and to which you refer, but I am convinced that the accordance of any different treatment to Venezuela from that accorded to Brazil

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*Not printed.

*Eelco Nicolaas van Kleffens.*

*See Foreign Relations, 1941, vol. ii, pp. 311 ff.*
would create profound resentment on the part of the former country which would give rise to a situation which might have unfortunate consequences. As you know, Venezuela spontaneously has broken relations of every character with the Axis powers, she is now negotiating a bilateral mutual defense agreement with the Government of the United States, and if she is treated in a friendly way and is accorded reasonable confidence in the arrangements involving Curacao and Aruba, I am positive that the mutual defense agreement which we will make with Venezuela will remove any ground for suspicion on the part of your Government as to the attitude of Venezuela concerning the two islands. More than that, for the sake of hemispheric solidarity, it is highly important that Venezuela should not be able to present any justified grievance at the Conference which is to take place at Rio de Janeiro on January 15. For all of these reasons, I hope therefore that your Minister for Foreign Affairs will agree to the suggestion I make.  

In your conversation with Dr. Van Kleffens you should make it very clear that this request on the part of the President is firm and must be adopted in view of the defense interests of the United States itself. The sending of a three-man military mission by Venezuela would be under the supervision of the American military authorities and would constitute merely a gesture, and could in no event be legitimately regarded by the Venezuelan authorities as prejudicial to their own interests.

HULL

856B.20/20 : Telegram

The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, January 5, 1942—8 p.m.
[Received January 5—4:15 p.m.]

Netherlands Series 2. Your 2, January 2, 6 p.m. President’s message was transmitted to Queen Wilhelmina on Saturday, January 3 and imperative necessity of associating Venezuela with Curacao arrangements through a mission on model of Brazil–Surinam arrangement was discussed with Prime Minister Gerbrandy same day. At that time he said he would take up matter with members of Government as early as possible.

While I have no answer as yet, I feel I should acquaint you with present state of mind of Netherlands Government which is a state of anger verging on intransigence. They are incensed that they were given less than a day in which to reach decision on General Wavell's

20 See Foreign Relations, 1941, vol. vii, section under Venezuela entitled “Cooperation between the United States and Venezuela in plan for warding off possible action by Axis agents against oil installations in Aruba and Curacao.”
appointment and that it was announced before they could advise us or the Governor General at Batavia of their decision. The resultant mood seems likely to reinforce their deep opposition to the Venezuelan proposal.

This was brought out today when I again called on Dr. Gerbrandy to reemphasize importance of favorable action on Venezuelan aspect of Curacao arrangement.

At the end of my remarks Dr. Gerbrandy who has been the consistent ally of this mission said: "Mr. Biddle you find the Netherlands Government in a very angry frame of mind. In fact it is in no mood to accept any suggestions". After explaining in detail the unsatisfactory time table of the Wavell negotiations he said it was difficult even in normal circumstances to be certain of the complete cooperation of the Netherlands East Indies and occurrences such as described might well prove disastrous to essential cooperation. He could not be sure what attitude Batavia would assume in the matter. It might even decide to choose its own independent commander in so far as Java was concerned.

He went on to say that he personally always tried to think in terms of the broader aspects of the war. But in this instance he understood the Queen's and the Government's feeling. He would do his best to find a formula for bringing the Government into line in both the Wavell and Venezuela matters but this incident had greatly aggrivated the difficulties.

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[BIDDLE]

SSB 20/36

The Netherlands Minister (Loudon) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

No. GA 35               WASHINGTON, JANUARY 6, 1942.

MY DEAR MR. WELLES: With reference to our last conversation (January 5th) concerning Curacao and Aruba, I wish to confirm here-with that the Netherlands Government has instructed me to request the United States Government to be good enough to consider the dispatch of American troops to assist in the defense of those islands. This is now of prime importance in view of the forthcoming withdrawal of the British troops stationed in the islands since the entry of the Kingdom of the Netherlands into the war on May 10th, 1940, for the purpose of aiding the regular Dutch garrison in the defense of those islands. The number and the composition of the necessary troops will be communicated by the Netherlands Government in due course.

The Netherlands Government points out that the British troops were present in the islands as an allied force, the costs of which were borne

\[11\] Joint announcement by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill of Unified Command of South West Pacific area under General Wavell was made on January 8, 1942.
by the British authorities while they were placed under the command of the Dutch military commander in Curaçao acting under the supreme command of the Governor as Commander in Chief. The United States presently being an associate in the war against the Axis powers, the Netherlands Government presumes that this arrangement will be maintained with regard to the American forces.

I may add that Dutch troops newly trained in Curaçao will be assigned a task in the defense in addition to the regular garrison.

The Netherlands Government suggests that the arrangement be announced by the White House. In the opinion of the Netherlands Government the communiqué should clearly point out that the American aid is of a temporary nature, necessitated solely by the allied and associated interests. Moreover, my Government wishes to point out that all interpretation or comments should steer clear of using the word “occupation” which apart from being untrue, is an all too welcome weapon in the hands of enemy propaganda.

Believe me [etc.]

A. LOUDON

856B.20/21: Telegram

The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

London, January 6, 1942—10 p.m.  
[Received January 6—6:20 p.m.]

Netherlands Series No. 3. My 2, January 5, 8 p.m. In a conversation this afternoon, Foreign Minister Van Kleffens fully reflected the frame of mind conveyed in my telegram of yesterday. He was if anything more categorical than Dr. Gerbrandy had been. First of all, he said he desired to state with regard to a possible invitation to Venezuela to send a three man military mission to Curaçao that there was no such word as “muvt" [must?] in the Dutch dictionary.

Apart from this he wished to say that pending the adjustment of the arrangements connected with the setting up of the staff in the Pacific under General Wavell, the Government here should not entertain any suggestion whatever regarding Venezuelan mission to Curaçao. He added that the revision which had been recommended by the Netherlands Government were regarded as a minimum and it considered our acceptance of them as a “test of the New World.”

He referred with intense emotion both to the manner in which the Wavell arrangements had been made and to their deficiencies as to substance. On the former point he spoke indignantly of the announcement of the arrangement before the Netherlands point of view had been heard. He then pointed out how prejudicial to the Government had been the noninclusion of any Dutch military personality in the arrangements. This disregarded the pivotal military position of the
Dutch Empire in the Far East. It undermined the position of the Government with its own people both in Holland and in the East Indies. And it played into the hands of those elements which were fond of accusing the Government of losing control of its empire.

Dr. Van Kleffens showed me a telegram from the Governor General at Batavia which not only endorsed the point of view which the Government here had taken but went beyond this in that he insisted that not only should there be a Dutch chief of staff but that annex number 2 of the Wavell arrangements should mention the Dutch Prime Minister in the same manner as the President and the British Prime Minister. The Government here, however, has not itself insisted upon this to me.

Van Kleffens was inflexible for the better part of the 2-hour conversation regarding Venezuelan military mission for Curacao but toward the end stated that after the Wavell matter was adjusted the Netherlands Government, although it had gone as far as it could by its offer mentioned in my No. 68 of December 31 and although it opposed a military mission, would consider any counter suggestions that we might make.

He also said a telegram from London reported we were on point of negotiating a bilateral agreement with Venezuela which would contain a clause guaranteeing that Venezuela would take no action against Aruba or Curacao during the war.

He emphasized that the Cabinet unanimously took the view that it could not admit that such a question should be the subject of negotiation by any third power.

Van Kleffens told me that Mr. Churchill had sent a message to Dr. Gerbrandy which was in the nature of an expression of regret over the circumstances surrounding the Wavell matter. I gather that this has had some effect in mollifying the members of the Government. It is my impression that if some soothing word could come from us this would have a beneficial effect as it was clearly intimated that the Government and the Queen herself had been deeply hurt by what they regarded as a lack of consideration for their position.

[BIIDLE]

The Under Secretary of State (Welles) to the Netherlands Minister (Loudon)

WASHINGTON, January 7, 1942.

MY DEAR MR. MINISTER: I have received your letter of January 5 [7] with regard to the proposed arrangements concerning Curacao and Aruba in which were contained the desires of the Netherlands...
Government regarding the participation of the United States in the defense of those islands.

I submitted immediately to the President your letter under acknowledgment.

The President has asked me to let you know, in the name of this Government, that the desires of the Netherlands Government, as outlined in your letter under acknowledgment, are satisfactory to the President, with one exception.

The exception to which I refer is the statement made in the first paragraph of your letter referring to the dispatch of American troops to assist in the defense of the islands where it is stated that “the number and the composition of the necessary troops will be communicated by the Netherlands Government in due course”.

The President desires me to say that inasmuch as the United States is participating in the defense of the islands at the request of the Netherlands Government, in the interest of the cause in which our two countries are so deeply and vitally concerned, as well as because of the need of assuring the defense of the Western Hemisphere, the Government of the United States cannot agree that the number and the composition of the troops to be sent by the United States should be determined solely by the Netherlands Government. The President desires me to say that he believes that the decision in this regard should be a matter for determination by our two Governments, as a result of consultation between them.

Believe me [etc.]

SUMNER WELLES

8563.20/21: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London

WASHINGTON, January 7, 1942—8 p. m.

From the Under Secretary. Netherlands Series 5. Your Netherlands Series 3, January 6, 10 p. m., penultimate and antepenultimate paragraphs. I have spoken this afternoon with the Netherlands Minister. I have requested him to inform his Foreign Minister that the information received by the Foreign Minister, as reported in your two paragraphs above cited, is completely inaccurate. The defense agreement now under negotiation between this country and Venezuela will contain no reference whatever to Aruba or Curaçao. This Government has never had the slightest intention of making any such reference to the Netherlands West Indies in any agreement with Venezuela. What I previously stated to the Netherlands Minister was that it would surely be clear to the Netherlands Government that the proposed defense agreement between Venezuela and the United States would offer the best possible safeguard to the Netherlands Government that
Venezuela during the period of the war would undertake no steps regarding the Netherlands West Indies which could possibly create any concern on the part of the Netherlands Government.

The Netherlands Minister informs me that he understood this fully and has reported to his Government in the exact sense above indicated. Please make this point absolutely clear as soon as possible. [Welles.]

HULL

8563.20/25: Telegram

**The Vice Consul at Aruba (Standish) to the Secretary of State**

ARUBA, January 12, 1942—7 p.m.
[Received January 13—1:46 a.m.]

15. A detachment Air Corps landed 10 a.m. today without incident. Dutch and British cooperated fully.

STANDISH

8563.20/68

**Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)**

[WASHINGTON,] January 19, 1942.

Baron van Boetzelaer 14 came in to see me today at his request.

In the absence of the Minister he wished to answer my query of the other day relating to the sending of 2500 men to the Dutch West Indies. The Baron recalled that this Government had "consulted" the Netherlands Government under the arrangement outlined in Mr. Welles’ letter to the Minister, setting out the President’s understanding of the arrangements relating to American forces in the Dutch West Indies.

Baron van Boetzelaer said that they had received word from London. He handed me the attached memorandum 15 which recited "minimum needs" for Curaçao and Aruba as certain equipment for both of these islands, and 750 infantrymen for Aruba. He pointed out that the Netherlands Government felt that the infantry requirements in Curaçao could be taken care of by the Netherlands infantry.

I asked whether we could take it that this was an assent to the sending of the 2500 men. He answered he thought not because, as he gathered, there were not sufficient accommodations on Aruba for more than 750 men and it was hoped we might send this number forward now and other contingents later as things worked out.

It developed that there was no one here who knew more about the military situation than he did so that a proposal that the military

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14 Counselor of the Netherlands Legation.
15 Not printed.
people discuss it with the War Department seemed fruitless. He wanted to know whether they could not move at the earliest possible moment.

I said if we had been able to get an agreement early enough they would have moved last Saturday—that I was not sure whether all arrangements had been kept standing or not. My thought was that if the expedition had already been arranged, the best thing to do would be to send it along down, let 750 infantrymen land, land technical equipment and work out the balance of the landing force as circumstances might arise; but before making a definite statement I should have to consult the War Department. Baron van Boetzelaer seemed agreeable to this line of attack.

He then discussed briefly the question of announcement. He hoped, by discussion with the correspondents ahead of time, to avoid the use of the word "occupation" which had caused such trouble at the time of the Surinam landing.

I said that that announcement and the publicity attendant on it, if I recalled correctly, was prior to the Pearl Harbor attack; that at present I thought there would probably be no such difficulty. My best judgment would be no announcement if it could be avoided. If anything were said, I suggested that a simple announcement that the military forces in the Dutch West Indies had been reinforced with American contingents might be adequate.

Baron van Boetzelaer hoped that either at the White House or elsewhere I could calm down the publicity and particularly anything which might indicate that there was an "occupation". I said I would do the best I could about this.

A. A. B[ERLE], JR.

856B.29/39

The Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs (Van Kleffens) to the American Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) 16

No. 435 G. A.  

LONDON, 20 January, 1942.

YOUR Excellency: On the 15th December you were good enough to leave me an Aide-Mémoire 17 stating that the United States Government requests certain privileges and facilities from the Netherlands Government with respect to Curaçao, in connection with urgent requirements for the defence of the Western Hemisphere.

Your Excellency stated in this Aide-Mémoire that the United States Government requested similar privileges and facilities from the Brit-
ish Government with respect to British possessions in the Western Hemisphere.

The privileges and facilities which the United States Government had in mind were as follows:

(a) Permission to fly over and land at Curaçao without limitation as to the number or type of plane and personnel and armament carried. There would not be the usual notification through diplomatic or military channels but only such notification as is required for technical reasons, probably direct to the airport involved. Emergency cases or military necessity might preclude the possibility of even this notification.

(b) Permission to use local airports together with their facilities such as services, installations, repair shops, radio and telephone.

(c) The privilege of stationing, if necessary, small detachments of Air Corps personnel (ordinarily seven non-commissioned officers and eight privates) at local fields for the purpose of facilitating the servicing and movement of aircraft.

(d) Permission for the unrestricted circulation of military personnel, uniformed and armed or otherwise, as may be necessary in connection with servicing of aircraft sheltering and provisioning personnel and sending and receiving necessary communications. This would include permission for the use of roads adjacent to airports and such arrangements for the sheltering and provisioning of personnel at the United States Government's expense as may be necessary when flights are required to stop at any airport.

(e) Permission to undertake such photography from the air as may be necessary from a technical point of view or as may be desirable for the compilation of air navigation charts.

I understand that the above privileges and facilities are requested only for the duration of the war and will apply solely to military and naval aircraft of the United States.

In reply I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Netherlands Government are willing to grant the desired privileges and facilities with respect to Curaçao.

I have [etc.]

for the Minister,

W. L. F. BYLANDT

856B.20/32: Telegram

The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, January 23, 1942—1 a. m.
[Received 5: 30 a.m.]

Netherlands Series 13. Referring to Minister Loudon's January 21 conference at the Department in presence of certain General

\[\text{Memorandum of conversation not printed. The Army's estimate of the force to be sent to Curaçao and Aruba was about 2,500 officers and men, the great majority being technical troops, etc., only about 300 being purely infantry. (856 B. 20/72)}\]
Staff officers, Netherlands Prime Minister Gerbrandy wishes me to state that the suggestions the latter made on that occasion concerning the composition of forces for Curaçao and Aruba are acceptable to his Government.

[BIDDLE]

850B.20/32: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London

WASHINGTON, January 24, 1942—7 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 7. Your 13, January 23.

1. Please thank the Prime Minister for his Government’s prompt and favorable reply to our suggestions regarding the composition of the force to be sent to Curaçao and Aruba. The War Department desires to send a small advance party to the islands immediately to make the necessary preliminary arrangements for the main body which is expected to arrive in approximately a fortnight. We hope that the Netherlands Government will dispatch the necessary instructions to the local authorities as soon as possible. Please report on this point as soon as possible.

2. No publicity regarding the forces is contemplated. If any announcement has to be made however after the arrival of the troops it would be confined to a brief statement to the effect that the Government of the United States and the Government of the Netherlands had agreed to the dispatch of the United States forces to cooperate with Netherlands forces, under the general supervision of the Governor of Curaçao, in the defense of the islands and that the forces would be withdrawn upon the termination of the emergency.

3. The necessity of meeting a very real danger with the greatest possible speed makes it imperative that we take this defense measure prior to reaching a final agreement with the Netherlands Government regarding Venezuelan participation. We continue however to consider a Netherlands invitation to Venezuela to send a military mission to Curaçao to be of fundamental importance. The Venezuelan oil industry and the refineries of Curaçao and Aruba are indispensable complements of one another. The Venezuelan Government shares therefore with the Netherlands Government and the Government of the United States a legitimate interest in the security of the Curaçao area from enemy attack and occupation.

In this connection the Venezuelan Foreign Minister has informed us that his Government would feel deeply chagrined if it were not put on exactly the same level as that accorded Brazil in the case of Surinam.
Please again discuss this matter with the Prime Minister and in your discretion with Her Majesty the Queen stressing our conviction that the extension of an invitation to Venezuela in the terms above mentioned would not only tend to allay any possible friction between the Netherlands and Venezuela with regard to Curacao but would be an outstanding and statesmanlike contribution by the Netherlands Government to that stability and security of the Caribbean area generally in which the Netherlands has no small interest.

4. For your information the following is the substance of a telegram which is being sent to Ambassador Corrigan at Caracas:

[Here follows substance of telegram No. 55 bis, January 24, 9 p.m., printed infra.]

HULL

856B.30/33a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan).

WASHINGTON, January 24, 1942—9 p.m.

55 bis. You are requested to seek an immediate audience with President Medina to inform him confidentially of the following. You should tell him that Ambassador Escalante, with whom Mr. Welles has previously discussed this matter, is being informed today in the same sense, and that the Under Secretary has furnished the background to Dr. Parra-Pérez at Rio de Janeiro:

In accordance with the frank and friendly relations which exist between our two Governments and their association in the war against Axis aggression, you have been instructed to inform President Medina of the discussions which have been in progress between the United States and Netherlands Governments. The United States has agreed to assist in the protection of the vital oil refineries in Curacao and Aruba which, owing to the unceasing demands on the valiant Netherlands forces in the Far East, the Netherlands Government finds it difficult to garrison in sufficient strength to assure the absolute security of these installations. The United States Government, fully sharing the view of the Venezuelan Government as expressed in a note of July 3, 1940 addressed to me by the Venezuelan Ambassador to the United Nations' war effort of the oil in question, has agreed at the invitation of the Netherlands Government to send a contingent of its armed forces to

19 Caracciolo Parra-Pérez, Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs, attending meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Rio de Janeiro.

those places. The United States forces will be under the general supervision of the Netherlands Civil Governor and will be withdrawn upon the termination of the emergency.

The United States has taken this step as a belligerent to meet a very real danger, a danger which has made it imperative to act with the greatest secrecy and urgency. Both in acceding to the Netherlands request for assistance and throughout the discussions, this Government has kept before the Netherlands Government the legitimate interest of the Venezuelan Government in this matter. This Government has expressed to the Netherlands Government the firm belief that the precedent followed in the case of Brazil in connection with the defense measures which were taken in Surinam is fully applicable to this case. However, the factors of time, secrecy and speed may render it essential to take defense measures prior to the final clarification of Venezuelan participation. It is the Department’s confident belief that President Medina will appreciate these circumstances, as well as the very great necessity for secrecy.

Dispositions required by these circumstances would be, in any event, without prejudice to the position of Venezuela in the discussions.

(Repeated to Amdelgat, Rio for Undersecretary.)

Hull

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8565.20/40a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul at Curacao (Huddleston)

WASHINGTON, January 26, 1942—6 p. m.

11. 1. The United States at the invitation of the Netherlands Government has agreed to send a contingent of its armed forces under the command of Col. Bullard to cooperate with the Netherlands forces in the protection of the vital oil refineries in Curacao and Aruba which islands, owing to the unceasing demands on the Netherlands forces in the Far East, the Netherlands Government finds it difficult to garrison in sufficient strength to assure the absolute security of these installations. The United States forces will be under the general supervision of the Netherlands Governor and will be withdrawn upon the termination of the emergency. No interference with the local civil administration will take place. Appropriate instructions have been or are being sent to the Government of Curacao by the Netherlands Government in London.

2. A small advance party is expected to arrive at Curacao Wednesday, January 28, to make preliminary housing and other arrangements for the main body which will be dispatched later. You are requested to assist the advance party in so far as necessary in its discussions with
the Netherlands civil and military authorities and with the British military authorities.

3. Military arrangements should be left solely to the determination of the commanding officer of the United States forces who is charged with the responsibility for the security of those forces and for the successful accomplishment of their mission and who, in the discharge of these responsibilities, may engage in direct conversations with the local military and civil officers. He has been authorized to show you his instructions and you are directed to assist him in every proper way.

4. Political matters are, of course, solely within your province as the political representative on the spot of the Department of State and the United States Government. In any representations which you may make to the local authorities which affect the security of our forces and their relations with the local officials, troops and population, you should, however, act in close consultation with the United States commanding officer. We anticipate that most, if not all, of the problems which will arise can be worked out on the spot but if there should be any serious divergence in opinion between you and the commanding officer, you should report promptly by telegraph and request instructions.

5. It is desired that no publicity be given to the foregoing unless and until agreed upon between the United States Government and the Netherlands Government in London. Further instructions on this point will be sent to you when occasion arises.

6. Repeat to Vice Consul at Aruba.

HULL

8562.20/34: Telegram

The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State

CARACAS, January 26, 1942—6 p. m.
[Received 9:16 p. m.]

49. Department’s No. 55[bis] January 24, 9 p. m. I talked with the President last night and again this morning. Appreciating the essential motivating factors of time, secrecy and speed, he has no objection to the defense measures already taken but emphatically affirms Venezuela’s primary interest in the matter as expressed in the note of July 3, 1940. He informed me that a definition of Venezuela’s position and participation will be formulated at once and made clear in an official communication.

Repeated to Amdelgat, Rio, for Under Secretary.

Corrigan

The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, January 26, 1942—7 p.m.

[Received 7:30 p.m.]

Netherlands Series 16. Your January 24 and my 15, January 26, noon. In my conversation this morning with Gerbrandy, Michiels and Prince Bernhard, I brought to their attention the considerations embodied in your telegram regarding the despatch of a Venezuelan military mission to Curacao.

Foreign Minister Michiels,22a acting as spokesman for the group, said he was astonished that we should bring up this question again, for the Government felt it had made clear its stand, which it was determined to maintain. Indeed, he added, if we were to press the matter it would only give rise to bad feeling. On renewed efforts to explain the vital need of satisfactory Venezuelan participation, he replied that it was the same old argument and he could only say that his Government would continue to maintain the same old stand. There was no use to bring it up again. It was advisable to drop it.

We had, he said, been given a loophole by the suggestion for a Military Aide for the Consul (reported in my No. 68 December 31, 9 p.m.23). This had been done in an effort to meet us part way and not because of the Government’s own wishes. It was unwilling to look to Venezuela for any assistance.

Prince Bernhard confirmed to me that the Queen shared the views which had been expressed by Dr. Michiels.

I would add that the opposition to Venezuelan participation is so deep seated that the members of the Netherlands Government bristle whenever this subject is touched on and that its mere mention literally deprives them of their composure.

[Biddle]

The Venezuelan Ambassador (Escalante) to the Secretary of State

MEMORANDUM

No. 478

Referring to the interview which the Ambassador of Venezuela had four days ago with the Honorable Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, relative to the action contemplated to preserve the security of the Dutch islands of Curacao and Aruba, the Ambassador

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22 Latter not printed.
22a Michiels van Verduynen, presumably Acting Foreign Minister.
23 Not printed.
of Venezuela has received instructions from his Government to advise His Excellency the Secretary of State as follows:

The Ambassador of the United States of America in Caracas had, on the 26th instant, an interview with the President of the Republic, General Medina, and communicated to him in confidence instructions received from the Department of State with regard to the negotiations between the American and Dutch Governments respecting the dispatch of a contingent of American armed forces to Curaçao and Aruba, in order to protect the oil refineries on the two islands.

According to the Department of State, the dispatch of the said contingent was agreed upon at the request of the Government of Holland; that the forces of occupation will be under the general authority of the Dutch Civil Governor and will be withdrawn at the conclusion of the emergency; and that the United States has taken this measure as a belligerent country in order to meet real dangers which oblige them to proceed with the greatest secrecy and haste.

The Venezuelan Government observes in this connection that Venezuela has vital political and economic interests, deriving especially from its geographical position and the oil industry, in the fate which may befall Curaçao and Aruba. So the Department of State was informed on various occasions, especially in July, 1940, through the medium of the Ambassador, Dr. Escalante. For this reason the Government of Venezuela considers that any measure relative to the defense, protection and administration of those colonies must be discussed and adopted in concurrence with Venezuela, giving the latter the opportunity to intervene, whether in the form provided for in the Act of Habana, or through an understanding between the parties.

The telegram from the Department of State for the American Ambassador, communicated by the latter to the President of the Republic, states that neither in consenting to the request formulated by Holland nor in its discussions with the Dutch Government has the American Government at any time disregarded the legitimate interest of Venezuela in this matter; that the precedent in the case of Brazil with regard to the measures of defense adopted in Surinam is entirely applicable to the present case; but that, nevertheless, factors of time, secrecy, and speed may require measures of defense before Venezuelan participation is finally clarified.

General Medina, President of the Republic, considers incompatible with the interests of the country the unilateral adoption of the measure announced by the American Government, without the participation of Venezuela; and, as a result, has issued instructions to the Am-

25 Telegram No. 55 bis, January 24, 9 p. m., p. 59.
bassador, Dr. Escalante, to advise the Department of State of the suitability of a prior and formal agreement of the two Governments, to the end that Venezuela may have, in the case of Curaçao and Aruba, the same participation as Brazil in the case of Surinam, and for the adoption of the procedure of establishing a coordinating mission to exchange information and to concert upon the other measures of security which must be taken jointly by Venezuela, the United States, and the Netherlands.

This agreement is indispensable, both to protect the position of Venezuela, clearly defined in previous conversations and discussions on the matter, and for the defense of its legitimate interests.

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1942.

856B.20/36: Telegram
The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)

WASHINGTON, January 28, 1942—7 p. m.

58. Your 53, January 27, 2 p. m.²⁶ Please inform the Acting Foreign Minister and the President in confidence that the Netherlands Foreign Minister arrives in Washington on January 29 or 30 and that the whole matter of Venezuelan participation in defense measures imperatively necessary in Curaçao and Aruba will be discussed with him by the highest authorities here. Please urge upon President Medina particularly the extreme importance of Venezuela’s reserving any statement, especially a public statement, of her position in this matter pending the outcome of these conversations.

HULL

856B.20/35: Telegram
The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London

WASHINGTON, January 28, 1942—7 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 8. Your no. 16, January 26. The Venezuelan Government takes the view that it is entitled at least to the participation given Brazil in Surinam and points out, among other considerations, that Curaçao and Aruba live on Venezuelan oil. It has even been indicated that there might be a serious dispute with the United States if our troops are moved to Curaçao without prior agreement with Venezuela and the Government has stated that action by the United States without Venezuelan participation would be “incompatible” with Venezuelan interests.

²⁶ Not printed; the Ambassador reported the receipt of a memorandum similar to the one presented by the Venezuelan Ambassador in Washington, supra.
Accordingly, I have suggested to the War Department that the troop movement be postponed until the matter has been straightened out.

I fully recognize that the intransigence of the Netherlands Government in this matter follows not only from its deep-seated distrust of Venezuelan motives with respect to Curaçao, which we believe are, of course, unwarranted, but from the Government’s irritation over its exclusion from full representation in the Far Eastern Supreme Command arrangements and possibly in the shipping pool and munitions pool arrangements.

I would welcome your suggestions as to any concessions which might be made to the Netherlands Government in matters other than Curaçao which might tend to bring about a change in its point of view and which we might discuss with van Kleffens who is expected tomorrow. I hardly need point out the unfortunate effect upon the successful conduct of the war in which the Netherlands and the United States are jointly embarked, should the Netherlands Government persist in its attitude towards Venezuela which to the best of its ability has joined in resistance to our common enemies.

HULL

858B.20/27: Telegram

The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, January 29, 1942—9 p. m.

[Received January 29—7:10 p. m.]

Netherlands Series 17. Your 8, January 28, 7 p. m. I conveyed substance of your message to Gerbrandy this afternoon.

He reiterated that entire Government was in accord with the firm stand against inviting a Venezuelan Mission to Curaçao and that the Queen shared their views. But in view of position taken by Venezuelan Government, he would see whether he could do anything in the matter. He was, he said, not optimistic.

As regards possible concessions in matters other than Curaçao which might bring about a change in the Netherlands Government’s point of view and which you might discuss with Van Kleffens, I am at this time aware of no concession which would be likely to induce the Government to alter its position.

I feel in fact that, if the strategic position permits, maintenance for a time of the step that you have already suggested to the War Department, namely a postponement of the despatch of troops to Curaçao pending settlement of Venezuela’s participation, coupled with explanations to Van Kleffens of the effect that the refusal to permit a mission
is having on vital defense measures, is more calculated to sway the Dutch mind than an effort to link the problem with concessions in other fields. To leave them with a sense of the necessity for them to devise some scheme to remove the impasse that their refusal has created seems to me the procedure that is more likely to be effective.

I have sought for some time to feel out whether any formula might be worked out here but have been unable to discover a useful clue. On one occasion, Van Kleffens in a moment of heat asked: Why should not the Dutch just as well be invited to send a military mission to Venezuela? This made me believe that some reciprocal arrangement might be worked out but in probing the idea I found that it was a mere passing remark which he was unwilling to follow up.

While I do not altogether discard the view that it may be possible to discover some concession which would have an influence, I feel strongly that in that case the initiative should come from them.

[BRIDLE]

---856B.20/38: Telegram

The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State

CARACAS, January 29, 1942—9 p. m.  
[Received January 30—1:52 a.m.]

63. Department's No. 58, January 28, 7 p.m. President Medina informed me this evening of his deep concern about the political reaction here if it were to become known that such important steps had been taken without Venezuelan participation. The news of the presence of American troops in Atuba and Curaçao may break at any moment. He desires to work in complete harmony with us but considers that Venezuela's interest is primary and that a formula for participation should be found within the next 48 hours.

He told me that immediate Venezuelan participation if invited would consist in a coordinating commission of possibly two or three officers and one or two civilians. In view of possible serious political complications, I recommend that desired participation be initiated without delay.

CORRIGAN

856B.20/77

Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1942.

You are right about the wounded feelings of the Dutch.

I took the position when speaking with Dr. Loudon last week that I am much put-out by the delays of his Government in London.
After all, this is war and delays in defense may be very costly. It took three months of perfectly childish negotiations before we got troops to protect the Bauxite Mines in Surinam. They might have been destroyed by a German aircraft carrier in the meantime.

It has taken us well over a month to get troops to Curaçao and Aruba. They are not protected today and their absolutely essential high octane gas refineries might be destroyed by a German submarine tomorrow.

Frankly, I cannot delay the troops and I think you might tell the Venezuelan Ambassador that I am taking sole responsibility for this move, as it is in the interest of Venezuela just as much as it is in our interest. You might tell him that if the refineries were destroyed the output of Venezuelan oil would automatically nearly stop.

Here is a solution. When we get our troops there, the Commanding Officer can very easily arrange to invite two or three Venezuelans as his personal guests. Venezuela will certainly be kept fully in touch with the entire situation, and this is no time to quibble when a critical phase of the conduct of the war is involved.

F[RANKLIN] D.R[OOSEVELT]

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Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)

[WASHINGTON,] January 30, 1942.

By direction of the Secretary I asked Dr. Escalante to come in and see me this morning. He came in at 11:30.

I referred to the subject of our previous conversation relating to the possibility of American forces assisting in the defense of Curaçao and Aruba.

I said that the situation there had been the subject of careful and day to day study by officers of our Government and we had yesterday received a letter from the Secretary of War. I then read to him those portions of Secretary Stimson's letter of January 29th addressed to Secretary Hull which set out the imminent danger of attack on Curaçao and Aruba, and the immediate need for further defense. I said likewise that the President had had the matter in mind and had come to the same conclusion.

We were still engaged in negotiations with the Dutch. These had not been brought, as yet, to a successful termination and I could not say whether they would be, though I hoped that ultimately an arrangement might be worked out. In the case of the defense of Surinam,
these negotiations had been quite lengthy. We had steadily represented the interest of Venezuela in the matter, the intimate connection between Venezuela and the islands, and the need for a cooperative arrangement like that which had been worked out with respect of Brazil.

But, I said, I considered that the paramount duty of the United States and, indeed of all of us, was to assure the defense of the islands in the interest of Venezuela, of the United States, and of the hemisphere in general. Irrespective of whether the negotiations had terminated, we felt bound both under the Act of Habana \(^2\) and under the general declarations of continental defense, to take such action as was needed to assure defense.

I then referred to the attitude taken by his Government, reflected in the recent note on the subject handed to us by the Venezuelan Government, and said that a similar attitude had been taken by President Medina in his conversation with Ambassador Corrigan. We fully realized the difficulties arising in terms of public opinion if something had to be done in advance of an agreement. But I said that public opinion in both of our countries would forgive us for having acted in advance of an agreement when it would never forgive us for leaving a danger point undefended.

I said that I wanted to submit these considerations frankly to the Ambassador because I considered that movements might be necessary very soon, and I asked whether he had any suggestions.

Dr. Escalante, in his usual courteous and reserved way, heard me out. He then said that he too fully realized the point of imminent danger as set out by the Secretary of War. He too considered that defense was a paramount necessity. He could not, however, escape the fact that public opinion in Venezuela would probably regard the failure of the Netherlands to agree to participation as a direct slap at Venezuela and as a blow to Venezuelan prestige. The Venezuelan opinion would probably be excited against the Dutch and he considered it was bad business for Holland. He would, however, cable his Government. He advised that we instruct Ambassador Corrigan to present the urgency of the matter again directly to the Venezuelan Government, and therefore he would not undertake to cable suggestions for a solution but merely that he had this conversation, that we were keeping in close touch with Venezuela, that the need was urgent, and that Ambassador Corrigan would discuss more specific suggestions.

I said that in connection with a solution, various ideas had occurred to us which could be explored. In any event, we proposed to maintain closest contact with the Venezuelan Government in connection with this operation. This we could do by continuing the discussions we

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\(^2\) Signed July 30, 1940; for text, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 199, or 54 Stat. (pt. 2) 2491.
were now having so that at no point should the Venezuelan Government be uninformed. Again, it might be possible that certain Venezuelan officers could be placed in direct communication with our own officers on the ground—the place might be a matter of determination. Possibly this might best be done not in the islands of Curaçao and Aruba but at the real center of things, namely, the headquarters of the Caribbean command.

Other solutions might suggest themselves as, for example, a group of American officers designed to maintain liaison with Venezuelan officers at some nearby point.

I emphasized that we considered that we were defending the islands and were not in the slightest endeavoring to infringe on the sovereignty of Curaçao and Aruba and that we had, of course, assumed that Venezuela had an exactly similar motive. To that end, it was understood that the troops should be at least nominally under command of the Dutch authorities while in Curaçao and Aruba, though naturally their action would be chiefly determined by the necessity of the European command for defense, and not by purely local considerations.

I concluded by saying that I wished to have no misunderstanding whatever and make it entirely clear, that in view of the situation we considered that we might have to take very prompt action, irrespective of whether the negotiations were finished. I hoped that the Ambassador would understand this, not that we desired to create a fait accompli but that defense came first.

A. A. B[erle], Jr.

856B.20/38 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)

WASHINGTON, January 31, 1942—9 p. m.

76. Your 63, January 29, 9 p. m. Please see President Medina immediately and inform him that as he knows this Government has at all times during the discussions constantly kept before the Netherlands Government the question of Venezuela’s participation and has delayed the sending of troops to Curaçao in deference to President Medina’s views. In the meantime however developments in the strategic situation, including the reported presence of a German submarine in the Gulf of Mexico, make imperative the very early despatch of protective forces to guard against a probable attack in the near future. You may assure President Medina that the President and I will continue to press for a formula of Venezuelan participation along the lines described by President Medina in your telegram under reference.

The President desires you to deliver to President Medina the following personal and confidential message from him:
“I know that you will understand that the measures to be taken to safeguard the refineries at Curaçao and Aruba are dictated by the highest military necessity. Curaçao and Aruba are not protected today, and their absolutely essential oil refineries might be destroyed tomorrow by enemy action. If the refineries were destroyed the shipment of Venezuelan oil would practically cease almost immediately with the most serious consequences to the successful conduct of the war. I have in mind in this connection the position of the Venezuelan Government which regards the refineries as the essential complement of the Venezuelan oil fields. Frankly however in view of the compelling necessity to complete the defense of the Caribbean area I cannot further delay the dispatch of our troops to those islands and therefore I am taking the sole responsibility for their immediate movement. I am confident that you, as a military man, will understand the exigencies of the situation and the necessity for speed and secrecy.”

You may inform President Medina in conclusion that the President’s views along these lines were communicated at the President’s request to Ambassador Escalante on January 30, and that we propose to maintain the closest possible contact with the Venezuelan Government in this matter.

HULL

8563.20/40: Telegram

The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State

CARACAS, February 1, 1942—2 p.m.
[Received 10: 52 p.m.]

69. My 63, January 29, 9 p.m. Just before making a radio address to the nation last evening the President called me to his residence for reasons which he described as “lamentable”. He told me he had received a message from Ambassador Escalante advising him of the stubborn opposition of the Dutch Government to Venezuelan participation in the Dutch island matter. He added that while Venezuela had no commitments with the Dutch Government it had an agreement with us on the subject and that if Dutch opposition persists he will consider reprisal measures. He indicated such measures might take form of determining where outflow of Venezuelan oil should go and spoke of Venezuelan withdrawal from emergency committee established under Habana Conference of 1940.28 He feels that in such a Western Hemisphere question United States should fully support Venezuela against uncooperative attitude of a European power. While manifestly indignant he said he would do nothing publicly for the present.

He stated that he has no desire to impugn Dutch sovereignty but feels strongly that if an European Government accepts American help in this hemisphere it should also accept the terms of previous agreements between American states and should not object to steps taken in conformity with such agreements. The seriousness of the matter is indicated by the fact that he told me he had asked Escalante to seek an audience with President Roosevelt about it. The Department's 76 just decoded. I will see President Medina this evening but am positive that his position will remain as described above.

He is fully informed and not concerned about our troop movements but he is vitally concerned about Venezuela not being asked to participate.

Corrigan

856B.20/41 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State

CARACAS, February 2, 1942—2 p.m.
[Received 5:37 p.m.]

72. Department's 76, January 31, 9 p.m. Following Department's instruction I saw President Medina last night. He was mollified by the President's personal message and the assurance given. He expects therefore that the formula for Venezuelan participation will be obtained before he has to face publicity.

Corrigan

856B.20/41 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)

WASHINGTON, February 3, 1942—5 p.m.

79. Your 69, February 1, 2 p.m., and your 72, February 2, 2 p.m. The Venezuelan Ambassador has informed the Department that President Medina feels that a failure to arrange for Venezuelan participation prior to the landing of our troops would oblige Venezuela to withdraw her delegate from the committee constituted under the Act of Habana. The Ambassador further stated that if Venezuela is confronted with a fait accompli, the matter would be very difficult to arrange from the Venezuelan side.

I have discussed this matter with the Netherlands Foreign Minister and have urged his assent to Venezuelan participation.

I think it most important for you to stress that the present case is not one of those contemplated under the Act or Convention of Ha-
bana. Nevertheless, earnestly desiring to foster the spirit of inter-American cooperation implicit in the Act and Convention of Habana and in the whole framework of inter-American agreements, as well as to assure recognition of Venezuela’s manifest interest in the defense of these islands, I have urged upon the Netherlands Government and will continue to urge the propriety of Venezuelan participation, in the form set forth by President Medina. I need not point out that the Netherlands Government is not a party to any agreement making mandatory such participation or in any way affecting the completeness of Netherlands sovereignty over the islands in question.

You will be kept fully advised of all developments in this matter.

HULL

856B.20/41a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)

[WASHINGTON.] February 6, 1942—4 p.m.

93. From the Under Secretary. Both the Secretary of State and I have discussed with the Netherlands Foreign Minister, Dr. Van Kleffens, the question of Venezuelan participation in the operations to take place in Curacao and Aruba.

As a result of these conversations Dr. Van Kleffens informed me the day before yesterday that he would be willing to recommend to his Government, first, that the Netherlands Government invite the Government of Venezuela to participate in a manner identical with that employed in the case of the Dutch invitation to Brazil regarding Surinam and, second, that there would be unwritten “gentlemen’s agreements” between the Netherlands and Venezuela, providing (a) that the Venezuelan mission to the islands would not remain permanently in the islands but would go back and forth from time to time, and (b) that the Venezuelan Government would agree that an officer of the Dutch forces in the islands would be permitted to proceed occasionally to Caracas or to other points within Venezuela in order to give to, or receive from, Venezuelan officials intelligence information of interest to the two countries.

I immediately reported my conversation to Ambassador Escalante who expressed his entire satisfaction with the solution suggested. At my request he then visited the Dutch Foreign Minister and an agreement was reached between the two of them.

Escalante has now reported this to his Government and Van Kleffens has forwarded his recommendations to his Government which will, of course, be approved.

31 The Convention of Habana was signed July 30, 1940; for text, see Department of State Treaty Series No. 977, or 56 Stat. (pt. 2) 1273.
Escalante has requested that you inform the Foreign Office confidentially of this message. [Welles.]

HULL

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)

[WASHINGTON,] February 7, 1942.

Dr. Van Kleffens and I talked last night, February 6th, of the Venezuelan settlement. He said that he had already advised Dr. Escalante of the terms of the settlement. He had likewise sent an airmail despatch to the Netherlands Minister at Rio directing him to forward to the Dutch Minister at Caracas copies of the relevant documents covering the participation of Brazil in the sending of American troops to Surinam. He had directed the Netherlands Minister at Caracas to be guided so far as possible by the principles and plan embodied in the documents covering Brazilian participation.

He requested that we cable Corrigan advising him that Van Kleffens had done this, and requesting him to maintain close contact with his Netherlands colleague there, and likewise to explain to the Venezuelan Government that if there were any delay in working out details, it was due merely to the time needed for the documents to reach Caracas from Rio.

I said I would arrange to have this done.

Dr. Van Kleffens said that as soon as he had been able thoroughly to explain to his Government that there was no quality of permanence in the Venezuelan participation, the difficulties had disappeared.

A. A. B[ERLE], JR.

The Venezuelan Ambassador (Escalante) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

No. 757

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1942.

Sir: As Your Excellency knows, the undersigned has made a number of oral representations to the Department of State for the purpose of calling attention to the anxiety of the Government of Venezuela with respect to the contemplated unilateral action of the Government of the United States in defense of Curaçao and Aruba, in apparent forgetfulness of the agreement between the two Governments that they would act jointly if any danger threatened there during the present emergency period—an understanding which was initiated in con-
Conversations held during the middle of July 1940 between Under Secretary of State Welles and the Ambassador of Venezuela and which was orally confirmed to the latter by the said Mr. Welles on December 24, 1941.32

The undersigned transmitted to his Government the oral explanations given him by Mr. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, with regard to the imminence of North American action in Curaçao and Aruba and to the reasons which rendered it necessary; and on Mr. Welles' return from Rio de Janeiro, the Ambassador had an interview with him in which he reiterated the Venezuelan Government's point of view. As a consequence of the said interview, Mr. Welles informed Dr. Escalante on the 5th instant that he had held a conversation with His Excellency E. N. van Kleffens, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, at the time in Washington, the result of which could be summed up in the following points:

1. The Government of the Netherlands was disposed to agree that, in the present emergency in Curaçao and Aruba, an agreement should be effected between the United States, the Netherlands and Venezuela, similar to that concluded between the Governments of the two first mentioned countries and Brazil at the time of the occupation of Surinam by North American troops.

2. The Netherlands Government agreed that officials of the Government of Venezuela, either military or civilian and numbering two, three, four or five, should go to Curaçao and Aruba during the emergency period, not to reside there temporarily, but going on periodic visits, for the purpose of exchanging with the Netherlands authorities data which might be considered useful for the defense of that area.

3. The Government of the Netherlands, in turn, required the Government of Venezuela to agree to periodic visits to Caracas of one or more Netherlands officials, for the same purpose.

Mr. Welles further informed Dr. Escalante that the Government of the United States agreed with the foregoing and that, if acceptable to the Government of Venezuela, the corresponding instructions would be duly transmitted to Ambassador Corrigan at Caracas.

On the very day of my interview with Mr. Welles, I had another interview, with His Excellency Mr. van Kleffens, who assured me that he agreed with the terms of the proposed understanding, as set forth above, adding that, he would immediately request of Queen Wilhelmina's Government the necessary authorization to conclude the arrangement and that, if the aforesaid basic points were also accepted by the Venezuelan Government, he, Mr. van Kleffens, would give instructions to the Netherlands Minister in Caracas to treat with the Government of Venezuela.

Under date of the 9th instant, Mr. van Kleffens advised me that he had received authorization from his Government to conclude the agree-

32 No record of these conversations found in Department files.
ment and that, when he had been informed of the acceptance of the Government at Caracas, he would transmit the necessary instructions to the Netherlands Minister in Venezuela and, furthermore, that he had requested his Legation in Rio de Janeiro to forward to Mr. Methöfer, Netherlands Minister in Venezuela, the complete text of any documents exchanged between the Government of Brazil and the Netherlands Government in order that Mr. Methöfer might use them as a model.

I now have the honor to write to Your Excellency to advise you that, my Government having been apprised of all the foregoing, it has authorized me to inform Your Excellency and His Excellency Mr. van Kleffens that it finds the bases of agreement, as set forth above, satisfactory. The Government of Venezuela urges that when publicity is given to the measures contemplated in Curacao and Aruba, it be stated categorically that they are being effected in agreement with Venezuela and with the cooperation of that country, in the same way as was done in mentioning the cooperation of Brazil in the case of Surinam.

While having the pleasure of informing Your Excellency of the foregoing, I venture to hope that Ambassador Corrigan will be given the necessary instructions to carry forward the agreement with my Government and that the Government of the United States will be good enough to inform the Government of Venezuela— as the Netherlands Government will do—of the terms of the arrangement in the case of Surinam.

I avail myself [etc.]

DIÓGENES ESCALANTE

859B.20/47a: Circular telegram.
The Secretary of State to Diplomatic Missions in the Other American Republics, Except Venezuela

WASHINGTON, February 11, 1942—11 p. m.

In accordance with this Government’s established policy to keep the other American Governments informed on United States measures pertaining to hemisphere defense, and the spirit of our general inter-American commitments, you are directed to inform the Government to which you are accredited as follows: The United States Government at the invitation of the Netherlands Government has dispatched armed forces to the Netherlands colony of Curacao to protect the refineries, which are of crucial importance to hemisphere defense and to the war effort of the United Nations, and are an indispensable complement to the Venezuelan oilfields. The Department understands, furthermore, that the Netherlands Government has sought from the Venezuelan Government measures of cooperation similar to those
agreed upon between the Netherlands and Brazilian Governments in the case of Surinam.

You should take pains to express to the Government to which you are accredited that the United States troops on the islands of Curaçao and Aruba have been sent for the security of the installations and to facilitate the defense of that area of the hemisphere; that our forces will be under the general supervision of the Governor of Curaçao, that their presence will in no way affect either the Netherlands civil administration or Netherlands sovereignty; and that they will be withdrawn upon the termination of the emergency. The steps in connection with the arrangement have of course been taken in secrecy for the sake of military security.

Please report any significant comment by responsible officials and the press.

The Department has released for publication in the press of Thursday morning, February 12th, a brief statement regarding this matter.\textsuperscript{33}

HULL

856-B.20/80

The Secretary of State to the Venezuelan Ambassador (Escalante)

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1942.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to acknowledge Your Excellency’s note no. 757 of February 10, 1942 with reference to the urgent war measure taken by my Government for the security of the refineries in the Netherlands colony of Curaçao by invitation of and in agreement with the Royal Netherlands Government. I have taken note with pleasure of your observations on the agreement reached between Your Excellency and the Royal Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs now in the United States with respect to Venezuelan cooperation in the military defense measure. I have been particularly pleased to learn of the approval of the Venezuelan and Netherlands Governments of the formula for cooperation reached between Your Excellency and Mr. Van Kleffens.

With particular reference to Item 1 of your Government’s arrangement with the Netherlands Government (page 2 of your note) and to the last paragraph, I am able to inform Your Excellency that instructions are being issued to the United States Ambassador at Caracas to lend his assistance, if requested by your Government, in any discussions which may be held between your Government and the Royal Netherlands Minister to Venezuela. In this connection I think it opportune to inform you that the measures of military cooperation taken by my Government in Surinam and Curaçao at the invitation of the Nether-

\textsuperscript{33} Department of State Bulletin, February 14, 1942, p. 158.
lands Government have not been the subject of any written convention or agreement. I deem it furthermore expedient to observe that the stationing of United States forces in those areas is an action to meet a specific threat with a minimum disturbance to the troop dispositions of the United Nations. These troops will be withdrawn upon the termination of the emergency, and their stationing in those places in no sense affects the status of the colonies or their sovereignty.

Accept [etc.]  For the Secretary of State:

Sumner Welles