

AIRBASE ON ASCENSION ISLAND

Exchange of telegram and letter at London January 27 and February 7, 1942

Entered into force February 7, 1942

Obsolete

1942 For. Rel. (I) 557

The Secretary of State to the American Ambassador¹

WASHINGTON, January 26, 1942—10 p. m.

As you know, the United States Army Air Corps Ferrying Command is operating delivery service across the South Atlantic, both with its own personnel and through the medium of a contract with Pan American Airways. These activities are carried out under a directive from the President, dated November 19, last.

In view of the impending delivery to the Middle East of large quantities of short-range bombers, which cannot safely cross the South Atlantic in one hop, and the need for an alternative or secondary route across the South Atlantic from Brazil to West Africa, the Government of the United States feels that it is necessary to construct an intermediate airport on Ascension Island. It feels that the delivery service of all aircraft will be expedited and that of shorter range aircraft made possible over this alternative route, and it is therefore desired that the necessary permission from the British Government be obtained to build an airport and establish all the necessary operating facilities on what is known as the southwest plain of Ascension Island.

The United States proposes to construct a complete airdrome having a surfaced runway of approximately 6,000 feet by 1000 feet on Ascension Island. The United States will require, therefore, the necessary consent and cooperation of the British Government in the matter of importing machinery, personnel and equipment, the establishment of a water supply with the necessary tankage, gas storage and handling facilities, and the construction of the necessary buildings, power plants and other equipment. The United States will desire to load and unload this equipment at whatever point is most advantageous and to use the most convenient means of transport over any avail-

¹ The American Ambassador delivered a copy of the Secretary's telegram to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at London Jan. 27, 1942.