

28

FOREIGN OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.1.

CONFIDENTIAL

WN 1081/3

September 9, 1958.

R.R.P. Mark 12/9
Dear Scarlett

I am sending you with this letter a copy of an Aide Memoire left with us on August 6 by a member of the Netherlands Embassy in London. The Netherlands authorities are proposing an exchange of Notes to determine, according to the principles of the Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf, the boundary between the continental shelf adjacent to Surinam and to British Guiana.

2. A clarification of the boundary on these lines would be very satisfactory to us. I fear, however, that we are likely to be faced again in practice with the problem of the variety of possible "median" lines (according to which of the varying charts is used), which came up when the issue of a licence to the Californian Exploration Company was first discussed.

Substantive
14/5/59

3. At the meeting which was, I think, held in the Admiralty in June or July 1957, it was agreed that it would be best to use for the potential licence, an approximate mean of the various alternatives at each of British Guiana's boundaries: on the Surinam side Chart No. 217 of February, 1939, and on the Venezuelan side an American chart. I believe that the licence issued to the Ruahine oil company was on these lines, but I would be very grateful if you or Mr. Ryan at the Admiralty to whom I am sending a copy of this letter would confirm this. We must in any case remember that the new Dutch chart might produce yet another "median" line, and we shall have to decide whether we approve it. If the boundary of the concession is different from whatever median line we agree with the Dutch, we may have to consider invoking the let-out clause for revision in the event of an inter-Governmental agreement over national boundaries.

4. But the problem of the definition of the boundary between Surinam and British Guiana is, of course, much older than the problem of the Ruahine oil concession. In my letter of June 13, 1957, I said that the Foreign Office would like it to be clarified (according to the median line principle) by the potential Treaty, whose draft we had been discussing. I have not heard anything of the draft Treaty during the past year, but since the Dutch want delimitation of the boundary of the continental shelf, I think we should use this desire to help us towards the conclusion of the whole Treaty.

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5. I am sending copies of this letter to Ryan in the Admiralty (as mentioned above) and to Brigadier Walters in the M.T.C.A. I would be grateful for their comments and for your own.

Yours ever
C.M. Anderson

C.M. Anderson

E.W.A. Scarlett, Esq.,
Colonial Office.

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