

STATEMENT BY CAPTAIN R.C. NEAVE CONCERNING EASTERN TIMOR FROM WHICH HE HAS RECENTLY RETURNED

Captain Neave who was interested in a mission concerning commodities states that Sr. Pires, Administrator of Sao Domingos Province, enjoys the highest standing with natives and Portuguese alike and it was largely due to his efforts that the officials of Sao Domingos have remained in the colony instead of accepting evacuation like so many other of their nationals. He has been a tower of strength to the LIZARD Party and is continuing to work with them in closest cooperation.

In Captain Neave's opinion Sr. Pires, in spite of his age, is more likely to "stick it out" against the common enemy than any other of his countrymen in the colony. He is staunchly pro-Ally and enjoying as he does the complete faith and confidence of thousands of natives he, more than anybody else in the island, can be counted on as the mainstay of native cooperation. Nothing too much can be done to assist him.

Next to Sr. Pires, the person of most influence with the natives in the districts covered by the LIZARD Party, is Don Paulo, chief of Ossu Rua, whose family and relatives like those of Sr. Pires are now in Australia.

These two men have a tremendous following, particularly in the central part of Sao Domingos, and are certain to do their utmost to comply with Allied plans for the reconquest of their territory, **although in mid-December when Captain Neave left**, they were greatly concerned that more active support had not been forthcoming from Australia, particularly in the matter of arms.

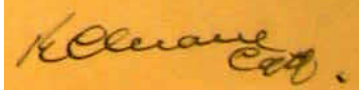
Provided the withdrawal of Lancer has not evoked a native reaction beyond repair, Captain Neave is of the opinion that the provision of arms in some quantity to Sao Domingos, through LIZARD, for allocation by Pires and Paulo to their followers is immediately necessary as token of Allied interest in their continued cooperation and for the general purpose of stimulating native morale and retaining favourable impressions already established in the area by LIZARD.

Captain Neave does not think there is any special danger of the natives using the arms to start a large scale war of their own against the Japanese, although there are one or two "hot-head" patriots who are howling for enemy blood by reason of enemy treatment, murder of relatives, etc., etc.

While there are numbers of "free" Portuguese who have refused to be concentrated at Maubara and Liquica and are thereby "outlawed" by the Japanese, these may not be able to stand the strain of a semi-guerrilla existence and crack up. In which event a complete collapse of the territory may be expected unless a substantial cell of resistance is laid at this stage among the more responsible native leaders such as Don Paulo. Portuguese who are standing their ground look to Australia for support by every reasonable means. To them the most logical means, undoubtedly, spells arms, if a full-scale invasion is not possible within the near future.

Captain Neave says that everything considered and weighing all the pros and cons of the situation in the light of his Timor experience extending from Timor to the island of Kisar – eight months during which period he probably travelled farther afield in the island as a

reconnaissance officer than any other member of the Australian Force – he is definitely of the opinion that the Sao Domingos Province at least can be held for the Allies through the supplying of arms to the natives – not for combat but as a practical demonstration of Allied intention to recover their territory and where their services, at the right time, would be invaluable.

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a yellowish-orange background. The signature appears to be "K. O'Leary" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Transcribed by Edward Willis

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