

GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM

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2 West 45th Street,  
New York City.

May 8, 1937.

Dear Admiral Leahy:

Thank you for your courteous note of the 7th in reference to Miss Earhart's flight.

This note is to lay before you the exact situation. It is for the moment very confidential. Aside from Miss Earhart and myself only two people know the revised plan.

The delay from the chosen mid-March date has resulted in changed weather conditions on several stretches of the proposed route. In a couple of instances these are drastic. Specifically, the weather probabilities in the stretch from Natal north are increasingly bad as June advances. The same is true of the Dakar-Aden-Karachi route. Obviously it is therefore desirable to get to Natal and across the South Atlantic and Africa as promptly as possible.

So Miss Earhart has decided to reverse the route and to proceed from west to east. Also she will eliminate the Central American stage where increasing rains make the outlook dubious. She will fly from Oakland probably to El Paso, New Orleans and Miami. There will be no announcement. So far as Oakland is concerned, it will be simply the commencement of another "trial flight". As a matter of fact, the journey across the country will give her a chance for final testing of the refitted plane. If anything went sour she could return to the Lockheed plant. But if all goes well when she reaches Miami, we will there make the announcement of the revised plan.

As matters stand, this "sneak" take-off from Oakland will occur probably between May 18th and May 24th. What most concerns you, of course, is the approximate time when she is probably due at Howland. It just isn't possible to state that with any definity now. It is a

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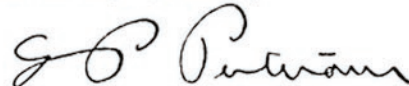
fair guess that it might be somewhere between twenty-five and thirty days from the date of take-off. However, by the time she reaches say Karachi, which is approximately half way around, we should be able to estimate fairly accurately. That should also make possible adequate "warning".

May I, therefore, proceed on the assumption that it is satisfactory to know the Howland probability about a fortnight in advance?

I will appreciate it if you will keep this information quite to yourself until the Miami announcement is made. I will, of course, be at the Miami take-off and thereafter will headquarter at my office here in New York, probably until A.E. reaches Darwin or New Guinea, when I will move out to the airport at Oakland.

Thanking you again for your courtesy, I am,

Sincerely yours,



Admiral W. D. Leahy,  
Chief of Naval Operations,  
Navy Department,  
Washington, D. C.