

THE URGENCY FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE DANISH WEST INDIES

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ABSTRACT. Unlike 1867, 1890 and 1902, in 1916, already two years into World War I, the US Navy was not looking for an added coaling station or naval base in the Caribbean. However, since 1902, it had been clear to Admiral George DEWEY that Kaiser WILHELM II coveted the Danish West Indies to be used as a naval base, through which he could exert military and political power in the Caribbean. After the improvements made to the St. Thomas Harbor facilities just prior to World War I, and Admiral von Tirpitz' U-boat campaign to sink all commercial and naval ships aiding the Allies, it became obvious that the Hamburg-American Line facilities in St. Thomas Harbor might be used as a U-boat supply base for the control of maritime traffic in the Caribbean and the Mid-Atlantic. Aware of this serious German threat, Admiral DEWEY convinced President Woodrow WILSON and the US Congress that the acquisition of the Danish West Indies was a matter of great urgency. He should be credited for speeding the sale negotiations, which successfully ended on 4 August 1916, for persuading the US Senate to ratify the treaty only a month later, and for saving the Caribbean from the scourge of German U-boats during World War I.

EARLY INTERESTS IN THE DANISH WEST INDIES

The US Purchase Attempt of 1867

On January 7, 1865, US Secretary of State William H. SEWARD, an assiduous expansionist, approached the Danish Ambassador in Washington, General Waldemar R. RAASLOFF, with a proposition to purchase the islands of St. Thomas and St. John, part of the Danish West Indies. The Secretary of State wished to enforce the Monroe Doctrine throughout the Caribbean and, for that purpose, he needed a coaling station centrally located in the Caribbean. After some delays and protracted negotiations, the sale

treaty was finally signed by the negotiators at Copenhagen on October 24, 1867, ratified by the Rigsdag (Danish parliament) and signed by the King by January 31, 1868. However, the U.S. Senate never ratified the treaty and voted to table the issue at the risk of insulting the Danes. The majority of the US Senators felt that Secretary of State SEWARD had frivolously pushed them earlier into ratifying the purchase of Alaska, a worthless large expanse of snow and ice, from Russia. This time, they would not be coerced into ratifying the purchase of a second 'SEWARD folly' for the inflated price of \$7.5 million. Additionally, the disastrous hurricane and earthquake in the fall of 1867, showed that these Danish Islands were not safe for the US Navy.

Renewed Attempt in the 1890s

Hesitantly, the US made several attempts in the early 1890s to reopen the purchase negotiations for the Danish West Indies (D.W.I.), as the need for a Caribbean naval base became more apparent with the progress in the construction of the Panama Canal. However, real negotiations did not start until January 1897 and were ended in April 1898 by the Danes as a courtesy to Spain as it became engrossed in the Spanish-American War.

Third Attempt in 1902

During 1900, the US renewed attempts to purchase the D.W.I. With the completion of the Panama Canal within sight, the US Navy became more anxious to be able to defend the access to the Canal with a naval base strategically located with respect to maritime traffic from Europe. At the end of 1901, negotiations between Secretary of State John HAY and Danish Chargé d'Affaires Constantin BRUN were nearly concluded, when the flamboyant Danish Captain Walter CHRISTMAS, hoping to be paid a 10% commission, helped speed the negotiations to a successful conclusion on January 24, 1902, with date limit for ratification on July 24, 1902. Unfortunately, while the Treaty was signed by President ROOSEVELT and ratified by the US Senate, the Danish upper house, the Landsting, had a tie vote, which meant that the Treaty was rejected.

Competing German Interests

The international North Sea port of Hamburg had had important commercial ties with the D.W.I. since the 17th century when the Brandenburgers had a concession in St. Thomas. In 1847, a number of German businessmen created the Hamburg-American Line as a packet line to service the Americas, including the Caribbean. In 1873, the Hamburg-

American Line (H.-A.L.) obtained a concession and established its Caribbean headquarters in St. Thomas Harbor following the relocation of the Royal Mail Steam Packet headquarters to Bridgetown, Barbados. With the advent of Albert BALLIN as general director of the H.-A.L. in 1899, the company expanded greatly throughout the world with having the greatest number of ships and passengers. The ruler of Germany since 1888, Kaiser WILHELM II, who was known as an ambitious expansionist, was the largest stockholder of the H.-A.L., which he viewed as the perfect means to expand German commercial and political influence in the Caribbean and throughout the world. Needless to say, General Director Albert BALLIN and Kaiser WILHELM were intimate friends as they shared the same interest in expanding the H.-A.L. In the absence of a naval base, the German Navy naturally used the facilities of the H.-A.L. for coaling and supplying its ships, in particular those in St. Thomas Harbor, when in the Caribbean. This collaboration between the H.-A.L. and the German Navy was so great that the US Navy considered that the H.-A.L. was nothing more than a front for the German Navy and a covert way of getting around the Monroe Doctrine.

THE PURCHASE TREATY OF AUGUST 1916

Changes after 1898

In 1912, when the US Navy showed renewed interest in the purchase of the D.W.I., many changes had occurred since the successful conclusion of the Spanish-American War. The construction of the Panama Canal was near completion, and the US Navy had leased in perpetuity Guantánamo Bay in eastern Cuba, where it established a large naval base. Additionally, since it had become a US territory, the Navy was able to establish more bases on Puerto Rico and the adjacent eastern islands of Vieques and Culebra.

Other changes had occurred on St. Thomas. According to a naval intelligence report dated July 6, 1912, a Danish syndicate was about to be granted a major lease in the St. Thomas Harbor to improve the port facilities and to conduct tax-free trans-shipping business after the opening of the Panama Canal. The syndicate was composed of five leading Danish businessmen, but it was said to be financed by German banks. Furthermore, it was said that the lease concession had a clause that would allow selling the lease or parts thereof to any friendly foreign government or shipping interest. Three months after the naval intelligence report, the rumors were confirmed with the official establishment of the Danish West India Company (D.W.I. Co.). Back in 1902, Niels GRÖN, a Dane, who had

adopted US citizenship, and who was a negotiator for the US, warned that the then planned D.W.I. Co. was “a German scheme” to take over the D.W.I. In conclusion, the author of the report stated:

“It seems only natural that German shipping interests should want a port in the West Indies, in view of their enormous interests, and there is no question but that in time they will be compelled to challenge a policy [the Monroe Doctrine] which thwarts this, even as they now challenge the British interests, which seem to them to block the legitimate expansion of German interests”.

St. Thomas Harbor Improvements

After the naval intelligence report of July 1912, the US Navy agitated again in favor of the acquisition of the D.W.I., but nothing much was initiated by the US State Department until 1915, after several important developments. First, starting in 1910 and for the next four years, the D.W.I. Co. invested \$2 million worth of improvements in the harbor, in the hopes that the opening of the Panama Canal might bring increased maritime traffic in need of coaling, fueling, trans-shipping, warehousing, provisioning and repairs. According to a report, dated September 1915, and prepared by the American Consul, C. H. Payne, these improvements included extensive dredging of the harbor, building docks, warehouses and placing buoys:

“A large part of the main harbor has a depth of 31 ft. or more; this depth of water is found leading to and along side of the principal coal docks, viz. the Hamburg-American [Co.], the St. Thomas Dock, Engineering & Coaling Co., the Creque’s Coaling Warf, the West India Co. and the East Asiatic Co.... The West India Company’s wharf, which is just being completed is a large modern structure being 2100 ft. in length with a bridge extension from its West end of 300 ft., making a total length of 2400 ft. with a water depth of 31 ft. along the whole length. There are two coal elevators, having a capacity of 100 tons each per hour; these elevators are operated by electric power and cover a space of 1100 x 200 ft. that being the space covered by these elevators in moving over the tracks. There is about four acres of land outside of this coal yard extending East and South-East; a warehouse 440 x 50 ft. and more than 20 ft. high and two oil tanks of 8,000 tons capacity each have been completed recently and others are to be built in the near future. A pumping plant of two forced pumps for receiving and discharging oil through the pipe lines that connect the tanks with the wharf front where connections are made with ships. The wharf is provided with modern methods of securing vessels while alongside. A series of wells and a large filtering plant is in process of construction; this additional provision is intended to segment the water supply in order that there cannot in the future be any question of, lack or, cheapness of water for the shipping...”.

To the list of improvements made by the D.W.I. Co. should be added those of the H.-A.L., which built on an eight acre plot on Hassel Island three large warehouses, cisterns holding 1,500 tons of rain water, and a motorized dolly on rails to facilitate the loading of coal, in addition to enlarged docking facilities with a frontage of 300 ft. and a depth of 30 feet. Also, on St. Thomas proper, next to the Emancipation Garden, the German Line built for its offices a large concrete building (the first on St. Thomas) with a novel plumbing system fed by a cistern on the roof. At the start of the War, the H.-A.L. was the largest employer with several hundred local employees and a monthly average payroll of \$24,000. In addition to paying good wages, before the War, the German line had been sending local supervisors to Germany on training and education scholarships. Clearly, the H.-A.L. was endeavoring to buy the good will and loyalty of the local St. Thomas population in the hope that the majority of the St. Thomas residents would favor German over American ownership of the D.W.I.

Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz' U-boat Strategy

As it had been long anticipated, the Panama Canal was officially opened under US protection on August 3, 1914. Unfortunately, a week earlier on July 28, World War I had been declared by Kaiser WILHELM II against France and Great Britain. As a consequence, commercial maritime traffic in the Atlantic was drastically reduced, the St. Thomas economy plummeted, and the investments made by the D.W.I. Co., the H.-A.L., as well as by other harbor companies were seemingly wasted.

During World War I, the German Navy unable to compete with the British and their large fleet of surface warships, decided to put their naval strength in submarines, U-boats. At the start of the war there were 29 U-boats and, four years later by the end of the war, 360 U-boats had been commissioned, 168 U-boats were lost, but the German U-boats sank about 5,000 ships in all. Thus, U-boats proved to be extremely effective in interdicting maritime traffic in and out of the British Isles and the French coasts. Within ten weeks of the start of the war, German U-boats sank ten British cruisers. Shortly thereafter, in February 1915, Admiral Hugo von POHL declared that the waters around Great Britain and Ireland, including the Channel, were in the war zone for supply vessels of any nation, including neutral nations such as the US. This declaration was followed in April 1915 by the sinking of the British relief ship, the 'Harpalyce', on its way to the US East Coast. Then, on May 7, sailing out of New York, the British luxury liner, 'Lusitania', with 1959 persons on board, was sunk off Ireland by a U-boat; 1,198 passengers were lost, among whom were 128 US citizens. The

German Embassy, informed that the ‘Lusitania’ would carry war supplies to the Allies, had warned the American public via the press that the ship might be attacked and was fair game for its U-boats. Nevertheless the ‘Lusitania’ sailed out of New York with a full complement of passengers, who were not told that the ship carried war supplies in its cargo hold. Still, the American press and the public were shocked and outraged by this act of German provocation. President Woodrow WILSON communicated his displeasure to Kaiser WILHELM and demanded reparations. In the meantime, the US Navy took note of the serious threat posed by the German U-boats and requested that same month that negotiations for the acquisition of the D.W.I. be revived for fear that the Germans might use St. Thomas as a U-boat base.

Serious Start of Purchase Negotiations

In June 1915, Secretary of State Robert LANSING instructed Dr. Maurice Francis EGAN to reopen the purchase negotiations in secrecy so as not to provoke the Germans. In August, Dr. EGAN met in Copenhagen the Danish Foreign Minister Erik de SCAVENIUS, who proposed a sale price of \$30 million, and, in October, Secretary LANSING discussed the matter of the price with Constantin BRUN, the Danish Chargé d’Affaires in Washington. Afterwards, negotiations were concerned mostly with the price for the D.W.I. The Danes initially were reluctant to sell the Islands to the US for sentimental reasons and also because they felt financially committed to D.W.I. Co. for an economic rebirth of St. Thomas Harbor. However, they had to recognize that the D.W.I. had a total indebtedness of over \$2 million, with annual combined deficits of about \$200,000, for both St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix; that the War was ruining the economies of both Denmark and the Islands; that they could no longer afford to support the Islands, that they could well use the gold from the sale of the Islands, that either the US or Germany might seize the Islands by force if Denmark refused to sell; and that, given a choice between the US and Germany, Denmark would much rather sell to the US.

On the American side, it was Admiral George DEWEY, chairman of the General Board of the US Navy, who was the leading proponent for the purchase of the D.W.I.. In a memorandum dated December 1915, addressed to the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus DANIELS, and ultimately to the Secretary of State LANSING, he enumerates solid reasons for the necessity to urgently purchase the D.W.I.:

1. “The acquisition of the Danish Islands would advance our flag 35 miles due East and that much closer to the Anegada Passage.

2. The General Board does not consider that there is any military reason for acquiring the D.W.I.... The harbors and waters of Porto Rico and the adjacent islands now under our flag offer as good facilities as the Danish Islands and they are so near that the acquisition of the Danish Islands for the mere purpose of establishing a [US naval] base...would not be worthwhile.
3. The Danish Islands, however, do afford several harbors and anchorages more or less protected from prevailing winds and seas, and more or less capable of artificial defense, that would be very useful to a foreign nation [Germany ?] conducting a campaign in the Caribbean. If that nation [Germany ?] were an enemy of the US, the resulting situation would be exceedingly embarrassing in the conduct of a campaign by the US. Denmark is a small nation, with limited sea power, and it would not be able to prevent the seizure of the Danish Islands by a strong military power [Germany ?] desirous of using them as a base. It might not even be able to withstand an attempt by such a power to purchase the Islands.
4. It is advisable that the Danish Islands should come under our flag by peaceful measures before war. The Caribbean is within the peculiar sphere of influence of the US, and if any of the islands now under foreign jurisdiction should change their nationality, the General Board believes that for military reasons the US should not tolerate any change other than to the US itself.
5. The General Board believes that the political aspect [the Monroe Doctrine] reinforces the military argument, which has just been advanced...
6. For this political reason, therefore, if the acquisition of all the D.W.I. can now be peacefully brought about, the General Board believes it is highly desirable that it should be done.
7. ...the harbor of St. Thomas on the island of that name, and Coral Bay on St. John are the two best harbors for naval purposes in the D.W.I. Great North Side Bay [Magen's Bay], on the North coast of St. Thomas has considerable anchorage ground, but it is open to the North-West. The Board believes that, unless an extensive breakwater is built, it would be an uncomfortable place for harborage... Moreover, there is only a small settlement on the Bay and hence there are no artificial facilities there. The island of St. Croix has no adequate harbor.
8. Comparing Coral Bay and St. Thomas Harbor, the latter has at its head the town of Charlotte Amalia already established with limited commercial and industrial facilities. The population of Charlotte Amalia is about 13,000. The harbor is susceptible of excellent defense by shore batteries. There is no settlement of any size on Coral Bay and that site for a naval station would be practically virgin territory. The anchorage area available for large ships at Coral Bay appears from an inspection of the chart to be somewhat

greater than that of St. Thomas Harbor. The Bay also appears to be susceptible of good gun defense. Islands under British sovereignty lie so near that the approach to the Bay must be through British territorial waters from North-West around by North to East.

9. Of the two, the General Board considers that St. Thomas Harbor is the more advantageous for use as a naval base. In this connection recent consular reports show that considerable improvements of the harbor have been undertaken during the last three or four years by the Danish government, and that the depth of 30 ft of water may now be found over a greater portion of it. An officer now on duty in the Office of Naval Intelligence [Director James H. OLIVER?] informs the General Board that he learned when he was in St. Thomas about two years ago that the Hamburg-American Steamship Company had a concession, and was making great improvements in the harbor for the accommodation of its vessels, probably with a view to the opening of the Panama Canal. The nationality of this Company creates a presumption that the German government is in sympathy with, if not actually behind the establishment of a considerable station of maritime supply and outfit. This is significant when taken in connection with the proximity of Denmark and Germany, and the relative size and power of the two nations. It has been widely reported, although the General Board is not in a position to substantiate the report, that the sale of the D.W.I. to the US, under negotiation a few years ago, was stopped by German influence in the Danish Parliament.
10. In conclusion, the General Board is of the opinion that the acquisition of any one harbor in the D.W.I. would not materially benefit the military position of the US in the Caribbean, but that the acquisition of the entire group would be of some military and great political advantage for reasons stated in this letter.”

The next eight months of negotiations dealt with terms acceptable to both sides, in particular a sale price of \$25 million in US gold coins payable within 90 days of the signing of the Treaty, the citizenship status of the D.W.I. residents, free access to the US market for D.W.I. products, and the recognition of the concession contract granted to the D.W.I. Co.. Finally, on August 4, 1916, the sale Treaty was signed at the Biltmore Hotel in New York by Secretary Robert LANSING and Chargé d’Affaires Constantin BRUN on behalf of their respective government. President WILSON transmitted the Treaty to the US Senate on August 8, which ratified it on September 7 with little debate. This time, the devastating hurricane of October 9 had no negative effect on the Senate ratification since it occurred a month after the vote.

If anything, the destruction caused by the hurricane to the St. Thomas harbor facilities helped convince the Danes that they should sell their islands while they could still receive \$25 million for them. Because of political Germanophilic pressures on the Rigsdag, the matter was submitted first to the Danish voters as a referendum in early December; and it showed that 64.3% of the voters were in favor of the sale to the US. After that public endorsement, the Rigsdag had no alternative but to follow suit and, immediately thereafter, on December 22, the Treaty was signed by King CHRISTIAN X. Finally, on January 16, 1917, President WILSON affixed his signature on the Treaty.

Admiral DEWEY's leadership role in the purchase negotiations was recognized by Secretary of the Navy Josephus DANIELS by proposing that the D.W.I. be renamed in his honor: the "Dewey Islands". Fortunately, on March 2nd, 1917, at a large mass meeting held by US Vice-Consul Luther K. Zabriskie in Charlotte Amalia, there were loud protests against such a proposal and Dr. Viggo CHRISTENSEN counter proposed that the Islands be named the "American Virgin Islands". This was approved unanimously by all those St. Thomas residents present at the meeting and the US Navy was forced to abandon the idea of naming the Danish Islands after Admiral DEWEY; however, all was not lost, perhaps as a consolation, his name was given instead to the unnamed hamlet on Culebra. As concerns Rear-Admiral James H. OLIVER, since he was head of Naval Intelligence during the purchase negotiations, he must have been the one informing Admiral DEWEY of the evidence and the truth about the covert plans of Kaiser WILHELM II for St. Thomas. Therefore, in recognition of such a service, it must be assumed that it was Admiral DEWEY who recommended that James H. OLIVER become the first governor of the "American Virgin Islands".

German Ploy to Save the Hamburg-American Line

It is significant that according to the sale Treaty, all private properties, including specifically the D.W.I. Co. with all of its concession clauses, were to be respected. In other words, although the D.W.I. Co. had the best port facilities, the US Navy could not lease, purchase, or seize the Company to establish a naval base. But what about the Hamburg-American Line and its port facilities? Barely a month after President WILSON's signing of the Treaty, on February 11, 1917, US Vice-Consul Zabriskie sent a dispatch to the Department of State, which was promptly forwarded to the Department of the Navy:

“FEBRUARY 5th, 11 a.m., CONFIDENTIAL [INFORMER] ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY TODAY HAMBURG-AMERICAN LINE HAS SOLD ENTIRE PROPERTIES HERE, EXCEPTING THE TWO DETAINED SHIPS TO LAWYER JÖRGENSEN FOR ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY FIVE THOUSAND AMERICAN DOLLARS.”

The Bill of Sale of the H.-A.L., dated January 22, 1917, was not recorded until the afternoon of Saturday, February 3rd, 1917, immediately after the news of the breaking of diplomatic relations between the US and Germany. The Germans realized that America was about to declare war and, as the new owner of the D.W.I., she would want to quickly seize all the properties of the H.-A.L. as enemy property. In the hopes of forestalling such a US move, the H.-A.L. properties on St. Thomas were sold to a Danish lawyer, the Crown Counsel Jens Peter JÖRGENSEN, who renamed the assets: the “Harbour Accomodating Establishment”. Attorney JÖRGENSEN was a well-known German sympathizer, whose daughter was married to a German, and the sale of the Line’s St. Thomas assets for \$175,000, about one tenth of its true worth, is sufficient proof that the sale was a sham.

Subsequently, it would seem that there was a rush on the part of the St. Thomas director and staff of the H.-A.L. to flee to Curaçao, a neutral Dutch island during World War I, where they relocated the Caribbean headquarters of the H.-A.L.. Also, there was a concomitant rush on the part of the US to take possession of the D.W.I. and to declare war against Germany. About two months after the ratification and signing of the Treaty, on March 31, in Washington, the Secretary of the treasury William G. McADOO, in the presence of Secretary of State Robert LANSING, Secretary of the Navy Josephus DANIELS (in charge of the Islands), and Rear-Admiral James H. OLIVER, newly appointed Governor of the Islands, presented a Treasury warrant for \$25 million in gold coins (48 tons) to Danish Minister Constantin BRUN. Simultaneously, without waiting for the arrival of Governor James H. OLIVER in St. Thomas, Commander Edwin T. POLLOCK of the ‘U.S.S. Hancock’, whose ship was nearest to St. Thomas, was appointed acting-governor for the Transfer ceremonies in the Islands, which started on the same day, immediately upon receipt of the cabled news that Minister BRUN had been paid in full.

Only a week later, on the 6th of April, the US declared war against Germany, and, a few days later, the US Alien Property Department confiscated \$100 million worth of H.-A.L. properties throughout the US, including 17 liners, and all the St. Thomas properties camouflaged under the bogus “Harbour Accomodating Establishment” and two liners. At the same

time, as a priority upon his arrival on St. Thomas, Governor OLIVER ordered a Marine battalion under the command of Major Jay M. SALLADAY to immediately secure St. Thomas Harbor from a possible German naval attack. By August 1917, Major SALLADAY was already reporting the completion of the construction of two batteries of four five-inch guns each: one at Red Point to defend the entrance to the West Gregerie Channel and a second one at Muhlenfels Point to defend the entrances of the East Gregerie Channel and the St. Thomas Harbor. These batteries were never fired at German ships and St. Thomas was never under attack thanks to the warnings of the German threat given by Admiral DEWEY and Rear-Admiral OLIVER. Their initiatives and efforts successfully kept the German Navy and its U-boats out of St. Thomas and the Caribbean for the duration of World War I. After the Armistice, in late November 1918, demonstrating that this was not a priority, the Alien Property Department turned over to Governor OLIVER the H.-A.L. properties on St. Thomas and Hassel Island, which the US Navy used as a small auxiliary naval base.

On the German side, two days before the Armistice, on November 9, distraught over the losses inflicted by the Allies to the H.-A.L., General Director BALLIN committed suicide by ingesting sleeping pills at his Hamburg residence. Finally, a few days later, his good friend Kaiser WILHELM II, unable to face the consequences of his ill-conceived aggressive policies, abdicated his throne and went into exile in the Netherlands, where he lived until his death in 1941.

SUMMARY

1. Although the extant naval archives only show suspicion, the US Navy felt that Kaiser WILHELM II, as the largest stockholder, and an intimate friend of General Director Albert BALLIN, intended to use the Hamburg-American Line as a front for his aggressive political plans to establish a colonial presence in the Caribbean in violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Whereas the Royal Mail Packet and the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique relocated their Caribbean headquarters to other islands because the St. Thomas maritime traffic had significantly decreased, the H.-A.L. seemed to be thriving. As the largest employer, it had a monthly payroll of about \$24,000 and employed several hundred St. Thomas residents. In addition to paying good wages, the German line was sending local supervisors to Germany on training and education scholarships. Clearly, the H.-A.L.

- endeavored to built a majority of St. Thomas residents in sympathy with Kaiser WILHELM II and Germany.
2. After the sinking of the British liner 'Lusitania' in May 1915, the US Navy realized that German U-boats presented a serious threat to American commercial and naval ships. Therefore, the US Navy felt strongly that Admiral TIRPITZ should not be allowed to establish U-boat bases in the New World, the Caribbean and St. Thomas in particular.
 3. It was Admiral George DEWEY, as chairman of the Navy's General Board, who convinced President Woodrow WILSON and Secretary of State Robert LANSING that the D.W.I. should be acquired urgently, peacefully and secretly, before a German takeover and before declaring war on Germany. Admiral DEWEY was concerned that WILHELM II and the H.-A.L. had plans to establish a naval base for its U-boats in St. Thomas Harbor.
 4. Although the US was made to pay the exorbitant price of \$25 million in gold for the D.W.I., the US agreed to respect the concession contract of the D.W.I. Co. Obviously, the US Navy did not consider that establishing a new naval base was a priority.
 5. The US had planned all along to declare war on Germany shortly after the acquisition of the D.W.I. and, immediately thereafter, the Alien Property Department confiscated the properties of the H.-A.L. at St. Thomas and in the US. At the same time, the US Navy secured St. Thomas against a possible German naval attack. Twenty months later, at the end of the War, the St. Thomas properties of the H.-A.L. were turned over to the US Navy and used to establish a small naval station.
 6. After the acquisition of the Islands, Admiral DEWEY's leadership role was recognized by Secretary of the Navy Josephus DANIELS by proposing that the D.W.I. be renamed in his honor: the "Dewey Islands". Fortunately, on March 2nd, 1917, at a large mass meeting in Charlotte Amalia, there were loud protests against such a proposal and Dr. Viggo CHRISTENSEN, representing the public sentiment, proposed instead that the Islands be named the "American Virgin Islands". As a consolation prize, Pueblo Culebra was renamed "Dewey".
 7. Rear-Admiral James H. OLIVER, when chosen as governor of the American Virgin Islands, was the head of Naval Intelligence. It is logical to assume that this appointment was a reward for informing Admiral DEWEY of Germany's alarming covert plans.

8. Thanks to Admiral George DEWEY and Rear-Admiral James H. OLIVER, the German Navy was never able to operate its U-boats or any other warships in the Caribbean during World War I.
9. Two days before the 1918 Armistice, distraught over the losses incurred by the H.-A.L., Albert BALLIN committed suicide. A few days later, his good friend Kaiser WILHELM II, unable to face the consequences of his ill-conceived aggressive policies, abdicated his throne to live in exile in the Netherlands until his death in 1941.

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