

1936

38066

1936

38066

Kenya

KENYA
CO 533/465

Italo - Abyssinian dispute
- Kenya aspects.

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Trs. an appreciation of the situation on the N.E. frontier of Kenya together with recommendations for dealing with the position.

The position on the frontier has changed rapidly. The Inspector General considers that the presence of a large body of Abyssinians in the neighbourhood of Ramu on the Daua River, and the construction of a new road from Mega to Ungalli (see rough sketch map herewith) foreshadows the concentration of large bodies of Abyssinian troops and levies on the frontier for a considerable time. The I.G. points out that the Abyssinians live on the country and that stock raids may eventuate, leading to frontier clashes with Kenya tribesmen. He also finds indications that operations between the belligerents are likely to develop in close proximity to the frontier, endangering, possibly, the safety of British protected tribes. It is, therefore, his considered opinion that the time has come to change over the control of the frontier and intelligence from a political to a military organisation. He recommends that there should be military control of the frontier until the situation reverts to normal.

The report has been prepared at the request of the Governor and ? presumably we should await his observations.

C.A. Gorman, I.G.

13.1.36.

The organisation sketched by the I.G. -
 frontier posts, and reconnaissance, an active
 intelligence service - is virtually that
 which is in being in Somaliland,
 although no war there has been since
 the 1911-12 war, as distinct from civil

I think that we should
 tell W.D. that we expect
 the Greek news and
 the Italian situation
 of the Maginot line
 and the situation
 in the north

not to be mentioned

... contained in the I.G.'s
 Commander's message at the
 ... should have the Mar
 ... to the Govt.

... said he discussed with the
 ... on Monday.

... since the
 ... situation
 ... Govt
 ... U.S.A. Ble
 ...

P.L. Co
 27/1/36

I have to keep this for because
 other work - a very small
 number not have been possible to
 have insurance this of Lombard's
 meeting at the W.D.

The exact position about
 General Graziani's advance is still
 somewhat doubtful - i.e. is it being
 a mechanized unit, & to follow
 by independent units than accompanied?
 Will the main force evidence gets
 to think that the operations on
 Kangra are going to be less serious
 than was at one time feared.

If the Italians have their
 line at Nagali, a beyond, there
 is likely to be little fighting and
 the Kangra position, although it is
 not clear whether there are any
 Abyssinian forces left in the area
 between Nagali and the Kangra position.
 My own feeling is that it is
 eminently desirable to retain control
 of the area N. of Kangra as long
 as possible: we now have
 arrangements have been made to
 coordinate intelligence etc. I certainly
 have not heard of J. Byrnes
 judgment in this matter

* Certainly not
 in any account
 J.

Phree

27/1

The I.G.'s attitude was based on the discovery of the
 Abyssinian force on the frontier. Since then it is
 demystified by the Italians & the situation is normal
 again.

Col. Campbell only made difficulties because of the
 "intelligence" point. Obviously Mr. Bleday is the man for
 that work but he can't be put under Col. Campbell.

So I have no doubt that the Governor is right in
 leaving it as you were. As he says military control can be
 started any time if necessary and until it is necessary and
 control is practicable.

? As proposed but let P.O. have a copy too for
 P.L. Co 27/1

if the situation has practically become normal again, I agree with action proposed by W. Taskin, except that for each I think "second unit" should be substituted.

The Governor has - in para 2 of his report - made arrangements for military control if the situation changes so that civil control is no longer possible.

Howard

Mr. Pooler has writing changed, 27/1 and so long as we are ready to change our I agree that we can expand the Government view.

It may be necessary to read on if W.O. do not agree at present Mr. Pooler, with Mr. Howard's amendments and his own marginal suggestion.

To have copy of document + sent. + of the W.O.

W.O.
29.1.36

(4) Have attached a letter from Mr. Norman which was on my desk when I wrote this above. I do not think it fits present action and it will come up again when we get W.O. reply.
W.O. 29

EA. Notes of proceedings at Conference between Gov, J.C. +

5 War Office (15/1/36) 367

6 To J.O. (15/1/36) B/110

ff

7 War Office (15/1/36) (M.O. 3) - 10 Feb 1936

I agree that further action should be taken and continue as long as possible. I agree measures for close co-operation between civil & military authorities to be taken.

1) I enclose 3 by air mail and say that the Gov. policy is to be the general policy to be followed in the event of a serious situation arising. I enclose copies of 5 and 7 and say that the Gov. will no longer give careful consideration to the suggestions made in the W.O. letter.

2) Thank W.O. for the suggestions etc. in 7 and enclose a copy of 6 for their info.
3) Copies of 7 and (1) also of F.O. for ...

W. Howard
7/2

P.S. Gov
7/2

Yes: the W.O. letter is some help - it is I understand based on India N.W. Frontier practice. 2.11.36 7.2

Yes
W.O. 29

Indian 8 ... (Banda) 12 Feb 1936
of ... 12 Feb 1936

10 ... 12 Feb 1936

11 Col ... 24 Jan 1936
copy of ... of Italian ...

This is now out of date. The
total number of Italian
native ... 415.

The fr. telegraphed on the
24th ... stating that
the ... should
not be ...

Copy to ... of 61, 66 & 67
12 Feb 1936

Copy to ...
Ref. 68-70 on ...

Ch ...
24 Feb 1936

99 ...

12 ... to ... 11 Jan 36
DESTROYED
These ... to ...
These ...

13 ... (...) — 24 Feb 1936
DESTROYED UNDER ...

14 His Ministry — 6 March 1936
S37376/574

Enclosed warrant for conveyance to N. Brigade
R.A.F. ... to ...
request notification of issue of warrant be
intimated to OCN Brigade by telegraph

Major Cole.

I assume that this arrangement is only a
natural consequence of the decision taken in regard
to the command of the R.A.F. detachment in Kenya -
vide our telegram of the 24th December (No. 132 on
38066/35 below). In other words, it is designed
to give the officer commanding Troops power to
conduct court-martials for the trial of personnel
belonging to the R.A.F. detachment, and within certain
limits to confirm the findings and sentences of such
courts.

? We should send the warrant and the copy
of the joint order in original to the Governor for

transmission to the O.C. Northern Brigade
(together with a copy of No. 14) by air mail,
ref. the correspondence on 30066/35 below -
at the same time sending an advance telegram
to say that the warrant is on its way and that
he may, if necessary, take action in advance of
its receipt.

Whee

10.3.36.

P. J. Gu
2.3.36

Spec. as it is a joint committee we can discuss
O.C. command
Copies disp. 6.4.36 G.O. S. A. M.
J.S.G. 6.4.36

- 15 Tel to Gov Kenya 1060 Secret - 11th March
- 16 To Kenya Secret (with forwarding) - 13 March 1936
- 17 To Air Ministry etc 1546 B1A 13 March 1936
- 18 To W.O. etc 1546 B1A 13 March 1936

Ok

19 Gov Kenya 43 3 April 1936

Request covering authority for special
warrant for £2265 for cost of calling up 2 officers
100 KAR reservists to guard Malindi aerodrome

The despatch sent on the
24th March showed advice here about
the 11th April.

Wait
C. J. Brown with
6/4/36

J. J. Brown
6/4

From the military aspect, the sooner the K.A.R. can
be freed from the guard duty the better. If no
police are available for this work (and we know they
are fully employed elsewhere) the recommendation to
call up 2 officers & 100 reservists seems to be
the only solution at the moment. I suggest that this
is a matter in which the Governor's recommendation
could be dealt with now, on his telegram, without
waiting for the full record of the conference.

If we have to get Treasury approval for this,
perhaps we could save time by approaching them now.

X

It is an unsafe position to have a part of the
available military force tied up on prisoners guard
work and I do not think we ought to put the decision
off too long.

P. J. Gu
6.4.36

Magdalen Norman
X above is of course obvious. I don't
think Treasury approval is required though the money
will be part of the special war expenditure and
be included in the bill to be presented later.
I would advise.

Police would be preferable for
guard duties in an internment
camp; but since they are
not available I suggest the
proposal to call up recruits.

Norman
7.4.36

Sir [unclear]

This will be further 'emergency' expenditure
but I don't think we need such 'trend' authority.
It will come in [unclear] but the total is of course
uncertain.

The [unclear] the [unclear] will cost £4,530/4

? appear.

(Is how long will it
go on I wonder?) 74

Went 7.4.36
an

See [unclear]
9.4.36

To Sir Kenya - B.L. 89 Serial 7.4.1936

DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE

For Kenya Head (2) 24 March 1936

A copy of record of conference to discuss [unclear] together
with memo showing disposition of troops in Northern
Somalia districts. States here an special reasons for
maintaining HQ of O.C.N. Somali divisions at Moyale.

The Governor is prepared
to establish a joint civil and
military HQ should the transference
of control of to the military prove
necessary. Trained troops are being
relieved of guard duties at the
Italian districts, camp others
duties will be undertaken by
recruits.

Submit a draft letter
to the W.O. Major Cole to see (21)

C. J. [unclear]
21.4.36

It will I think be sufficient to send
a copy to W.O. of ref 9.

J. J. [unclear]
21/4

Brigadier Norman.

You should see this.

The change in the military situation in
Abyssinia during the last two months or so certainly
seems to warrant the assumption that no further
operations between the Ethiopians and Italians,
likely to affect British interests in Kenya, will
take ...

take place near the frontier without considerable warning.

This being so, and with the advent of the rains, the new dispositions of troops in the N.F.D. appear to be sound and it is perhaps not necessary now for Mr. Glenday and O.G. Rn. K.A.R., to establish a joint headquarters, though I still feel that this should have been done in the first instance.

It is a matter in the right direction that Mr. Glenday's withdrawal of the N.F.D., should conform to the work of the R.A.F. patrols.

I am glad to see that the company (less one man) of 5th Bn. is being relieved at the internment camp at Isiole by reservists so that the Reserve Bn. strength may be concentrated at Vatrobi. I fancy, though, that this arrangement will just about absorb all the reservists in the N. side and that there will be none over to meet other demands should any further unexpected situation arise.

The arrangements made for the internment camp at Isiole appear to be satisfactory, but I can't help wishing that the Government would erect buildings as readily for the 5th K.A.R. at Vatrobi as they do for internees.

W.P. Clifford

22.4.36.

S.I. Coe

22.4.36

It must be assumed that the Govt. of Kenya are satisfied that Ras Desta's forces are already too demoralised to undertake major

operations, and that Ras Desta will adhere to his alleged instructions not to assume the offensive in any case, that Italian troops have fully consolidated their gains in this area and that Abyssinian subject tribes (Boran and Gme) are being successfully placated by the Italians.

In these circumstances there is little likelihood of serious trouble on the border, but I hope that every effort will be made to ensure that any changes in this situation can be detected in sufficient time to enable steps to be taken to safeguard British interests.

W.P. Clifford

23.4.36

They had a fairly lively discussion but seem to have reached general agreement. Anyhow if ever there was a question to be settled on the spot it is this.

? Copy W.O. and A/M L.F.F. and ask.

rest. drawing as the I.F. suggests at Q

J.S.W. Field

23.4

X This is the passure subject, combined with passing the supplies as proposed

W.P. Clifford

24.4.36

The staff will be moved to the new camp at Isiole. The 5th Bn. is being relieved at Isiole by the Reserve Bn. The 5th Bn. is being relieved at Isiole by the Reserve Bn.

Letter can be written with

draft despatch submitted

for review

S.P. Evans

24 4 76

27 Apr

DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE

23 to WO

40 20 + 22

28 April 1976

24 to AM

Handwritten initials

Gen Lanya Secret 9 May 76

The record of Conference of 5 April. State
in plan for KAH police to Maska Mura
beige reinforced by 2 platoons

Copies to WO + AM. H.
Ref 28 + 20

C. J. Corwill
21/5/76

Off Officers
Gen to see

9/Jan
21/5

Handwritten signature and date: 23.5.76

Handwritten signature: Norman 236

This account for the Press reports about Troops needed by me
they want that they because the road was impassable
1.10.76
15.5.

25 to AM

26 to WO (40 25 + 22) B/1a — 6 May 76

C.D
M 2 MAY
D

27 to AM 40 25 + 22 B/1b — 27 May 76

AIR MAIL

KENYA

No.

SECRET



20
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
NAIROBI
KENYA

8th May, 1936.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Secret despatch of the 27th April on the subject of the control of the Northern Frontier area, and to transmit the accompanying copy of the record of a Conference held at Government House on the 5th April when frontier affairs were discussed.

2. You will observe from the record of the Conference that it has been deemed desirable to establish a post of one platoon at Malka Murri and that, in view of recent events in Ethiopia and with the full concurrence of my military advisers, I have decided to reinforce Wajir by two platoons of the King's African Rifles so that additional troops may be available to strengthen the frontier posts should it appear desirable.

3. The Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District, has intimated that he does not consider that the further reinforcement of the frontier posts is at present necessary, but he is watching the situation closely and immediate action will be taken locally to move additional troops up to the frontier should he consider it desirable.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Brigadier-General,
GOVERNOR.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE J. H. THOMAS, P.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET,
LONDON, S.W. 1

copy of memo to W.O.C. 4/11/36

~~SECRET~~

17

RECORD OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT GOVERNMENT
HOUSE, NAIROBI, on the 5th APRIL, 1936.

Present: His Excellency the Governor.
The Commander, Northern Brigade,
King's African Rifles.
The Deputy Commissioner of Police.
The Squadron Leader, Commanding Royal Air
Force, Kenya.

Mr. C.M. Deverell, Secretariat.

HIS EXCELLENCY said that he was somewhat anxious regarding the situation on the Northern Frontier. The Italians had armed sections of the Gurre, Gabbra and Boran part of which tribes lived in Kenya and the flight of the Emperor would probably be the signal for a period of anarchy which the Italians would at first find great difficulty in controlling. He considered that it was desirable to reinforce the troops in the Northern Frontier.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE, said that he entirely agreed. By arrangement between Mr. Clenday and the Officer Commanding Troops, Wajir,^a a platoon was on its way to Malka Murri, and another was to follow; he considered that two platoons should be moved up to Wajir from Isiolo as soon as possible. He said, however, that the roads were impassable and likely to remain so, and that the troops would probably have to be moved by air.

THE SQUADRON LEADER said that if necessary the troops could be flown up from Isiolo to Wajir - this would take two days.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE, said that there was not accommodation without crowding for more than two additional platoons at Wajir.

^a One platoon has since arrived
at MALKA MURRI.

/After

After some discussion it was decided that two platoons should proceed as soon as possible to Wajir and that, if reports indicated that the roads were impassable, they should be taken up by air.

HIS EXCELLENCY instructed that this decision should be telegraphed to Mr. Glendon whose recommendations should also be sought regarding the desirability of reinforcing the frontier posts from Wajir.

2.

After some discussion it was decided that two platoons should proceed as soon as possible to Wajir and that, if reports indicated that the roads were impassable, they should be taken up by air.

HIS EXCELLENCY instructed that this decision should be telegraphed to Mr. Glenday whose recommendations should also be sought regarding the desirability of reinforcing the frontier posts from Wajir.

KENYA.

NO

SECRET (2)



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
NAIROBI
KENYA

22.5.1956

Sir,

8
1571
7
With reference to your Secret despatch of the 12th February containing copies of correspondence with the War Office regarding the status of the Northern Frontier area, I have the honour to transmit, for your information, the accompanying copies of the record of a Conference held at Government House on the 15th March, 1956, when the suggestions contained in the War Office letter of the 6th February, 1956, which formed the second enclosure to your despatch under reference, were considered.

2. You will observe from the record of the Conference that while I agree with the Army Council that it is generally desirable to establish joint civil and military headquarters when there is the possibility of the transference of control becoming necessary, I consider that there are special and cogent reasons in this case which make it desirable for the Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District, to remain at Moyale.

The general situation on the frontier following Ras Desta's defeat is so much easier that there is now less reason to establish joint headquarters at Wajir or elsewhere and the Commander, Northern

Frigade,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
J.H. THOMAS, P.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET,
LONDON, S.W. 1

*Area No 21.
Copy to WO & Am. 24*

Brigade, after consultation with the Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District, has ordered the re-establishment of battalion headquarters at Meru and the withdrawal of some troops from the Northern Frontier District to Meru for the duration of the rains. A memorandum showing the old and new dispositions is attached for your information.

3. I agree with the Army Council and the Commander, Northern Brigade, that it is undesirable to employ first line troops of the King's African Rifles for the purpose of guarding the Italian deserters. Since there are no police available to undertake the duty, the only alternative is to call up King's African Rifles reservists for the purpose.

19
+26

I have accordingly authorised the Brigade Commander to call up 2 Officers and 100 Rank and File of the King's African Rifles Reserve for six months at an estimated cost of £2,265.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

H. J. Young

Brigadier-General,
GOVERNOR.

RECORD OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NAIROBI, on the 13th MARCH, 1936.

PRESENT:

His Excellency the Governor.
The Hon'ble the Colonial Secretary.
The Commander, Northern Brigade, King's African Rifles.
The Commissioner of Police.
The Squadron Leader Commanding Royal Air Force, Kenya.
The Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District (Mr. V.G. Glenday, O.B.E.).
Major T.C. Wells, O.B.E., I.C.
Mr. C.M. Deverell, Secretary.

MR. GLENDAY stated that the situation was generally quieter than when the last Conference took place but that there were some grounds for believing that the Italians might take advantage of the increased water facilities, due to the recent heavy rains, to advance along the frontier from Malka Murri to Moyale via Gaddaduma.

He regarded a counter-attack by the Ethiopians on Nuggeli or Malka Murri as unlikely as he had definite information that Ras Desta had received explicit instructions not to assume the offensive. If, on the other hand, the Italians advanced with the object of cutting the Moyale-Mega road, he considered that the Ethiopians were unlikely to put up any strong resistance and might retire to the Sidamo highlands where the climate and terrain were more to their liking.

The Italians would probably welcome an attack on Nuggeli but the Ethiopians in this area had lost heart.

The Italians were doing their best to placate the Boran and Gurre, and had enlisted the support of Hassan Gabbaba and other Gurre and Boran chiefs

for this purpose. They had already renewed their policy of attracting our tribesmen across the frontier and for this reason he considered that there was less likelihood of a big incursion of refugees into Kenya than hitherto.

Though the renewal of hostilities on the frontier might be momentarily disturbing, he considered that the establishment of Italian control up to Moyale would simplify the administration of the boundary in many ways.

HIS EXCELLENCY enquired whether there were any indications of a peace move.

MR. GLENDAY said that on the contrary there had been increased air activity in the Nuggeli area and the Italians were daily filling up their posts on the Dana with supplies and possibly troops.

HIS EXCELLENCY informed the Conference that he had received the Comments of the Army Council on the Record of the last Conference through the Secretary of State. The Army Council had made certain suggestions which he now wished considered. The first of these was that the Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District and the Officer-in-Charge, 3rd Battalion, K.A.R. should establish joint Headquarters at Wajir.

This proposal had been fully discussed at the previous Conference and he could see no reason to alter his decision then given that Mr. Glenday should remain at Moyale where he was in close touch with the Consul and in the best position to judge of frontier developments. He presumed that the Commander, Northern Brigade still considered that for military reasons it was undesirable for the Officer-in-Charge, 3rd K.A.R. to

move from Wajir to Moyale.

MR. GLENDAY said that now that the Italians were masters of the Dawa area and were consolidating their position with a view to administering the tribes in that area, he regarded it as even more important than before that he should be in the closest possible touch with the frontier where he was most favourably placed to make contact with the Italian Administration as soon as it was established.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE said that he still maintained the opinions that he had expressed at the last Conference. He still felt strongly, for the reasons given by the Army Council, that the Civil and Military Headquarters should be situated together.

HIS EXCELLENCY enquired whether in fact there had been any instances of lack of co-operation.

MR. GLENDAY stated that he had experienced none and instanced the way in which the Civil and Military authorities had combined to deal with the situation created by the unexpected entry of the Italian deserters as an example of the satisfactory working of the present arrangements.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE, said that his chief objection to the present arrangements was that unless combined Headquarters existed the smooth transference of control from the Civil to the Military authorities in the event of a sudden emergency could not be carried out. Experience in India had shown this to be true and there the Civil and Military authorities were invariably situated together in such an emergency.

HIS EXCELLENCY said that he agreed with this in principle but that particular reasons existed in this case which made it highly undesirable for Mr. Glenday to leave...

leave Moyale. Had the Commander, Northern Brigade, any solution of this impasse?

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE said he would suggest that a responsible District Commissioner should be stationed at Moyale and that Mr. Glenday should move to Wajir.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that he had definitely decided that Mr. Glenday should remain at Moyale. He considered that it was very unlikely now that an emergency should arise without considerable warning.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that the Army Council had also recommended that the Commander, Northern Brigade should make Nairobi his Headquarters with all forces military and air and act as a military adviser to him. This was the present position.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE agreed but said that he would like to suggest that since Mr. Glenday was in charge of the frontier he should be the person to decide when an R.A.F. flight should go up from Nairobi to the frontier, where it patrolled there and when it returned. It was impossible for him to decide in Nairobi when a flight should go up or where it should go and a case had arisen when the Officer-in-Charge of the air patrol wished to return from the frontier to refuel and the Commander, Northern Brigade had been unable to get in touch with Mr. Glenday to know whether he agreed to its return.

THE SQUADRON LEADER said that he thought this arrangement would be preferable to the existing one.

HIS EXCELLENCY agreed and said that Mr. Glenday should inform the Commander, Northern Brigade when he desired a patrol to go up to the Northern Frontier

District...

District and should inform the Officer-in-Charge of the flight where he wished him to patrol and when he was no longer required him.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE said that while on this subject he would like to raise the question of the control of troop movements generally in the Northern Frontier District. As he understood the position at present, no troops could be moved without the express approval of His Excellency. He considered that this arrangement was dangerous and left the Officer-in-Charge 3rd Battalion, K.A.R. in a difficult position.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that he had certainly never intended that his approval should be required to minor movements of troops. He considered that such movements should be controlled by the Officer-in-Charge, 3rd Battalion, K.A.R. subject to the prior approval of Mr. Glenday.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE stated that he regarded this as a satisfactory arrangement and said he would take the opportunity of Mr. Glenday's visit to consult with him regarding the general disposition of troops in the Northern Frontier District during the coming rains.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that before considering the Army Council's suggestions that the police rather than the military should undertake the guarding of the Italian deserters, there was the question of the situation of the camp itself.

(The Director of Medical Services, Director of Public Works, Deputy Director of Medical Services, Government Entomologist and Mr. Mortimer of the Lands Department attended during the discussion of the site of the Camp).

THE DIRECTOR MEDICAL SERVICES stated that if the Camp has to remain at Isiolo it would be necessary to construct weather-proof huts and to undertake certain

measures of an anti-malarial nature. It would also be necessary to engage temporarily a Sub.Assistant Surgeon and to put up a temporary hospital.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said that there were two types of suitable huts which might be inexpensively erected:-

- (1) Corrugated iron "tents".
- (2) Sun-dried brick with corrugated roofs.

MR. GLENDAY suggested that pisé huts with corrugated iron roofs would be the most suitable.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that Nairobi and Meru had been suggested as alternative sites for the Camp. The former was open to certain objections and the latter appeared to have little, if any, advantage over Isiolo. In either case a camp would have to be constructed.

These alternatives were then discussed from every angle and it was finally agreed that:-

- (a) Camp to remain at Isiolo.
- (b) Pisé huts with corrugated iron roofs to be erected for internees and guard.
- (c) Sub.Assistant Surgeon to be engaged and temporary hut and hospital erected.
- (d) Anti-malarial works to be undertaken by the internees forthwith.

Reference was then made to the Army Council's suggestion that the K.A.R. should be relieved of the task of guarding the internees.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that he sympathised with this suggestion but that he could see no alternative to the present arrangement.

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE said that apart from the question of disciplinary powers (there was nothing in the Police Ordinance to give disciplinary powers over the internees) he had no men available for this duty. It would mean an addition to the

establishment of 100 men.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE said that his objections to utilising his men for this purpose was that this work impaired their efficiency and morale. It was more important still in the event of a sudden emergency, he would be left without any reserve as it would take about 6 days before the T.T. battalion was available.

MR. GLENDAY said that he had given considerable thought to the possibility of a sudden emergency, and could only envisage an attack by the Abyssinians at Murri. He regarded such an attack as extremely unlikely.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE asked His Excellency whether he might investigate the possibility of calling up and officering 100 reservists for this purpose.

HIS EXCELLENCY said that he would welcome such an enquiry.

MR. GLENDAY asked whether he might establish contact with the Italian Residente Trans-Danube in order to settle minor affairs when the river became fordable. He would also like His Excellency's permission to settle local details of the boundary approved by the Secretary of State with the Italians should they advance to Bayale.

HIS EXCELLENCY agreed and stated that the Secretary of State had suggested that minor military incidents might best be settled by direct communication between him (His Excellency) and General Brazziani.

DISPOSITION OF TROOPS IN THE NORTHERN FRONTIER
DISTRICT.

OLD:

- Mandera - Company Headquarters.
2 Platoons (one mechanized).
2 Machine Guns.
- Ramu - Company Headquarters.
2 Platoons (one mechanized).
Mobile Wireless.
- Moyale - 1 Platoon (mechanized).
2 Machine Guns.
- Wajir - Battalion Headquarters.
4 Platoons (2 mechanized).
1 Machine Gun Platoon.
- Isiolo - Company Headquarters.
3 Platoons (guarding detainees).

NEW:

- Mandera - 1 Platoon (mechanized).
2 Machine Guns.
- Moyale - 1 Platoon (mechanized).
2 Machine Guns.
- Wajir - 1 Company (2 Platoons mechanized).
- Meru - Battalion Headquarters.
1 Company (less 2 Platoons).
Machine Gun Platoon (less detachments
Mandera and Moyale).

19
23

COPY FOR REGISTRATION

Cypher telegram from the Governor of Kenya to the Secretary
of State for the Colonies

Dated 3rd April, 1936. Received at 9.47 AM on 17th April 1936

8 No. 93 Secret. Conference referred to in post telegraph
secret of the 12th February considered suggestion of Army
Council on the 13th March and recommended that Commander of
Northern Brigade should explore cost of calling up two officers
and 100 King's African Rifles reservists to guard Italian
deserters as no police available for this purpose. Estimated
cost of this proposal for 6 months is pounds 2,265.

Grateful for your covering authority for special warrant for
this amount. Full record of Conference posted ordinary mail
26th March.

38066/36
16

2
MAR
1946

C. O.

Mr. Mac 11/2
Mr.
Mr.
Sir C. Parkison
Sir G. Tomkinson
Sir C. Bottomley
Sir J. Shackburgh
Parat. U.S. of S.
Parly. U.S. of S.
Secretary of State.

A copy has
been prepared

Copies to
15746

DRAFT.

Keeney
Jenn
Sw.

Handwritten initials and notes

From ATTC 6/3/50

Enclosures
2 required

FURTHER ACTION.

Sir,
With reference to my
recent telegram no
7 the [↑] point I have
enclose
to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Commission~~
your Commission of the
New Command the
Northern Brigade K.A.R
a joint order made by
the Army and the Comint
measures for the mutual
exercise of powers of
Command and discipline
(but not of punishment)
by members of the ~~two~~
and air force units within

TR. No. HOURS 3434.

All communications on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:-

THE SECRETARY,
AIR MINISTRY,
ADMIRAL HOUSE,
KINGSWAY,
LONDON, W.C.2.



AIR MINISTRY,
LONDON, W.C.2.

6th March, 1930.

and the following number quoted :-

S.37370/S.7.f.

SECRET

Sir,

I am commanded by the Air Council to inform you that, on the recommendation of the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Royal Air Force, Middle East, a joint order has been made by the Army and Air Councils providing for the mutual exercise of powers of command and discipline (but not of punishment) by members of the army and air force units acting together in Kenya, and that a warrant has been issued authorising the competent military authority to convene general courts martial for the trial of persons who are subject to the Air Force Act and, with certain limitations, to confirm the findings and sentences of such courts. The warrant and a copy of the joint order are enclosed herewith, and I am to request that they may be conveyed to the Commander of the Northern Brigade, The King's African Rifles, Nairobi. I am also to request that this officer may be notified by telegraph that a warrant on Form I as shown on page 586 of the Manual of Air Force Law is in course of transmission to him and that he may, if necessary, take action in advance of its receipt.

2. Should the Air Council exercise the right reserved to them of placing under the command of the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief the Royal Air Force detachment in Kenya (and any other air forces which may be despatched /to

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
S.W.1.

to that country) the court martial warrant now forwarded would be withdrawn.

3. Copies of this letter have been sent to the War Office and to the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Middle East.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

J. S. Ross

SECRET.

RECEIVED
14 MAR 48 11 48



THE SECRETARY OF STATE

NA. P. O. B.

KENYA

REGD

The Colonial Secretary of the Protectorate of Kenya presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies and with reference to Kenya Air and Sea Report of the 11th January, has the honor to acknowledge the information of the Secretary of State, the accompanying copy of the report of a further deserter reported Government House on the 11th January of the subject of the above deservants.

SECRET

RECORD OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI, at 10.30 a.m. on 21st JANUARY, 1936.

Present: His Excellency the Governor.
The Hon'ble the Colonial Secretary.
The Commander, Northern Brigade, K.A.R.
The Commissioner of Police.
The Staff Officer "Q", Northern Brigade.
(Major Bagley)
Major T.C. Wells, O.B.E., Private Secretary.
Mr. C.M. Devereil, Secretariat.

HIS EXCELLENCY explained that the position was that nearly 200 Italian native deserters were at WAIIR and that 100 others had given themselves up at RAMBI. There was a possibility of four battalions deserting. We were therefore faced with the detention, transport, clothing and feeding of a large number of men. His Excellency felt that the organization best adapted to deal with this complication was the K.A.R.

THE COMMANDER, NORTHERN BRIGADE, stated that he was prepared to undertake this, but felt that in this case he might require reinforcements should the situation on the frontier become more acute. He would prefer such reinforcements to consist of the Tabora, rather than the Uganda, battalion.

HIS EXCELLENCY agreed and said that he would request the Secretary of State by cable to agree to the Tabora battalion being made instantly available should the occasion arise.

(Note: At a subsequent conversation with the Inspector General it was agreed that the request to the Secretary of State should be that the Tabora battalion should be moved to Nairobi at once.)

After some

After some discussion it was agreed that -

- (1) a detention camp capable of holding 1,000 men should be constructed at ISIOLO;
- (2) that all deserters should be moved there as soon as it was ready (assuming that the expected instructions from the Secretary of State do not run counter to this);
- (5) that the Commander, Northern Brigade, should be responsible for the transport, clothing, feeding and custody of the deserters and for the construction of the camp;
- (4) that, should more than 1,000 deserters materialise, other plans would have to be made and that it might then be necessary to construct another camp in NAIROBI or elsewhere;
- (5) that a strict account of all expenses in connection with the move should be kept and debited against the Suspense Account.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY raised the question of whether the Royal Italian Consul should be informed.

HIS EXCELLENCY said that he proposed to do nothing until he received instructions from home.

HIS EXCELLENCY instructed that copies of all intelligence telegrams from the Northern Frontier District should be sent to the Commissioner of Police.

THE SECRETARIAT,
22nd January, 1956.

C. O.

Mr. Groosmith. 19/2

Mr. Easton 10/2 f

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson

Sir G. Tomlinson

Sir C. Bottomley

Sir J. Shackburgh

Perms U.S. of S

Party U.S. of S

Secretary of State

Handwritten signature

8

Handwritten initials

Downing Street,

12 February, 1936.

DRAFT.

KENYA.

SECRET.

GOVERNOR

To W.O. 30/1/36 (N.2)
Am. (N.2)

(13)
... to acknowledge
the receipt of your secret (2) despatch
of the 11th January in which you
enclosed for my information, a copy of
a memorandum by the Inspector-General
of the King's African Rifles and the
Royal West African Frontier Force on
the situation on the north eastern
frontiers of Kenya in December, 1935,
and the record of a conference held at
Government House on the 9th January.
I fully concur in the policy
set out in the sixth paragraph of your
despatch, and you will observe from
accompanying copy of correspondence
with the War Office that the Army
Council agree that the frontier area
should remain under the control of the

FURTHER ACTION.

*Copy of copy 2
to 2nd and
to F.O. of
inf.*

Civil Administration for as long as possible.

You will no doubt give careful consideration to the suggestions contained in the letter from the War Office.

~~I assume that the retreat of the~~

Abyssinian forces from the Deba River area has considerably eased the position on the frontier.

have, etc.

THOMAS J. BROWN

0168/2239 (M. O. S.)



SECRET

7
THE WAR OFFICE

LONDON S.W.1.

6th February, 1936.

Sir,

I am commanded by the Army Council to acknowledge the receipt of Colonial Office letter No. 38066/36 dated 30th January, 1936, regarding the military situation on the north-eastern frontiers of Kenya, and to say that the Council fully agree with Mr. Secretary Thomas that the frontier area should remain under the control of the civil administration for as long as possible. They do not feel competent, on the information at their disposal, to express an opinion on whether the time to replace civil control by military has yet arrived, and indeed they feel that only the Governor on the spot is competent to make a recommendation to that effect.

2. I am to state, however, that, since Mr. Thomas has asked for their observations, the Council view with some disquiet the existing system of control on the north-eastern frontier of Kenya, as it appears to them to be incompatible with a rapid and smooth transfer of control from civil to military should the situation at any time require it.

3. I am further to state that it appears to the Council that the first essential in such cases is to establish a combined headquarters where the local civil and military authorities can work closely together, pool all information from whatever source, and co-ordinate and control the activities of the various forces placed at their disposal, whether military, air or police. Once this close and constant contact is established the transfer of control, if required, from civil to military, and the resumption after the emergency of civil control can be effected almost automatically.

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
Downing Street,
S.W.1.

/4.

4. I am to add that the Council realize that the information at their disposal is not complete, but they would venture to suggest the following measures for the consideration of Mr. Thomas, with a view to putting the present situation on a sounder basis:-

- (a) That the Commissioner, N.E. Frontier District, and the O.C., 3rd Battalion, King's African Rifles, should establish a joint headquarters at some central position. For this purpose Wajir would appear to be better placed than Moyale as it is less exposed, more central, and possesses good communication with all frontier posts.
- (b) That all intelligence, from whatever source, should be collected, and collated at this joint headquarters, and all orders issued from it by the civil and military local authorities, acting in collaboration, to the various forces under their control. The military commander should issue the orders, under the general direction of the Provincial Commissioner, to all military and air forces specifically allotted to the defence of the frontier.
- (c) That the Brigade Commander, Northern Brigade, King's African Rifles, should maintain his headquarters at Nairobi, with all forces, military and air, not specifically allotted to frontier defence, under his command as a general reserve, and in a position to act as the military adviser to the Governor.

Ab
59/366/16
have

5. I am further to add that the Council note from the Governor's telegram No. 15, dated 21st January, 1936, a copy of which was sent to them, that the King's African Rifles are at present being used for the construction and guarding of the internment camp now being prepared at Isiolo. This would appear to be a duty which police and organised native labour could more properly perform, leaving the trained soldiers available for

/their

their correct role of defence. This conservation of the military on their proper tasks seems the more necessary in that the Governor has recently asked for an extra battalion to be sent from Tanganyika to Kenya.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Attilio Vidotto

C. O.

34

Mr. Grossmith. 29/1

Mr. Parnell 29/1 f.

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shackleton

Pres. U.S. of S.

Pres. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

Amid
8/7

Downing Street,
30 January, 1936.

~~SECRET~~

Sir,

I am etc. to refer to the

(2)

Secret letter from this Department of the 20th of January regarding Brigadier C.C.Norman's Report on the military situation on the North-Eastern frontier of Kenya in December last, and to transmit to you, to be laid before the Army Council, a copy of a despatch from the Governor of Kenya containing his observations on the Report and a record of a conference held at Government House, Nairobi, on the 9th of January.

2. Mr. Thomas ^{consents in} supports the Governor

in the view that the frontier area should remain under the control of the Civil Administration for as long as possible, and that no material change

DRAFT.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,
WAR OFFICE.

From Gov. Kenya
W/ld send subv. notes
Copy to 70 notes

FURTHER ACTION.

Copy to 70
W/ld send subv. notes
Copy to 70

should be made ^{unless it} until there is very definite

evidence that the situation threatens to

become one which the Civil Authorities can

no longer control. ~~In this connection it is apparent that~~ In view of the retirement

of the Abyssinian forces from the neighbourhood

of the Kenya frontier within the past few

days, ~~it would appear that~~ the general position

has been eased.

3. In the circumstances Mr. Thomas

proposes, subject to any observations which

the Army Council may have to offer, to inform

the Governor that he concurs in the views

expressed in the despatch and to the record of

the conference at Govt. House.

I am, etc.

Gen. Sir J. H. D. Brown

CONFIDENTIAL

K.A.A.R./E/R.

NOTES OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NAIROBI,
ON 21st. JANUARY, 1956.

PRESENT:

His Excellency the Governor.
The Colonial Secretary.
The Inspector General, R.W.A.F.F. and K.A.R.
The Officer Commanding, Northern Brigade, K.A.R.
The Staff Officer, R.W.A.F.F. and K.A.R.

1. INTERMENT OF ITALIAN DESERTERS IN THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT.

The Governor stated that the deserters who had crossed over the border in the N.F.D. were from the TIGRE Province. He was satisfied that they were deserters and not refugees who had been driven over the frontier in the course of fighting. He had held a conference earlier in the morning, at which the Brigade Commander was present, and had decided to establish an interment camp to hold a thousand deserters at ISIOLO. If further accommodation was required, it would have to be provided at NAIROBI. He said that the only people available to run this camp, and to escort deserters from the frontier back to ISIOLO, would be the King's African Rifles, as he required the Police for frontier control. These duties would cause a heavy drain on the K.A.R., and he had drafted a telegram to the Secretary of State requesting that the 1st. Battalion, Southern Brigade, K.A.R., might be ordered to stand to with a view to proceeding to NAIROBI if required. After discussion with the Inspector General, and on the recommendation of the latter, he altered the draft to a request that the 1st. Battalion might be sent to Kenya as soon as possible.

2. INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON HIS TOUR IN KENYA.

The Inspector General referred to the main points which he will mention in his written report to the Secretary of State, which will go through the Governor. He said that he is glad to be able to inform His Excellency that on the whole the Brigade was in a high state of efficiency. He drew attention to the following special points:-

(a) K.A.A. RESERVE OF OFFICERS.

He said that the strength of this Reserve was satisfactory, but that he was disappointed to note that only fifteen officers had attended training last year.

The Brigade Commander stated that this was due to lack of funds.

(b) K.A.A. RESERVE - AFRICAN BANTS.

The situation as regards this Reserve was satisfactory in Uganda, but in Kenya it was unsatisfactory. However, the Brigade Commander had got the matter in hand and he was quite satisfied that he would put the Reserve on a sound footing.

(c) BARACKS BARRACKS.

The Governor agreed that the condition of these barracks was disgraceful, but he could not commit himself to saying when money could be made available to re-build them.

The Inspector General said that he was glad to note that latrine and wash-house accommodation had been improved since his last inspection.

(d) EXERCISE ALLOWANCES.

The Inspector General asked His Excellency if he would give his reasons for refusing these allowances to officers of the K.A.A. when they were granted to officers of the Administration.

His Excellency said that this was still a subject of correspondence with the Secretary of State and he anticipated the Inspector General would see this correspondence on his return to Kenya.

(c) Move of 4th Uganda Battalion from B.U.R.

The Inspector General told His Excellency that he had discussed this matter at some length with the Governor of Uganda.

His Excellency said that so far as he was concerned, he was prepared to leave the matter in the hands of the Governor of Uganda and the Officer Commanding, Northern Brigade.

4. ATTENTION IN THE FRONTIER DISTRICT.

The Inspector General pointed out that the presence of reinforcements on the frontier had undoubtedly averted what might have been a difficult situation during last week, when more than 8,000 deserters had crossed over from Abyssinia. He pointed out that these reinforcements had only been sent to the frontier by the insistence of the Brigade Commander in the face of protests made by Mr. Glenday. He went on to say that from a military point of view, the control of the frontier was in a serious snarl: Mr. Glenday is controlling the Police, the Governor is controlling the main movements of troops, the Officer Commanding, Srd. K.A.R., commands the troops on the spot, whilst the Officer Commanding, Northern Brigade, commands the Royal Air Force Flight. There was thus no co-ordination of command or organization of the Intelligence system. He pointed out that Mr. Glenday had told the military patrols that they were not to try and get information, but simply to "show the flag" on the boundary.

The Brigade Commander added that this put the Officer Commanding, Srd. K.A.R., in a very difficult position, as he had been given definite orders from Brigade Headquarters that these patrols were to get information from all possible sources.

The Governor said that he was determined that

Mr. Glenday should control the frontier with the Police, and that the troops should be held in reserve. He realized that the individuals - both military and political officers on the frontier - were collaborating and that, in his opinion, the present situation was satisfactory. He would not consider handing over frontier control to the military until the situation definitely changed, and further he did not consider that this change had yet taken place. He added that he would accept full responsibility if anything went wrong on the frontier.

The Inspector General said that from a military point of view the present situation was most unsatisfactory and he reiterated that one central control of all forces, military, R.A.F. and civilian, was necessary. He went so far as to say that if the Governor would not hand over control to the Officer Commanding, Northern Brigade, the military and R.A.F. forces should be placed under the orders of Mr. Glenday, together with the Police which he already controls.

The Governor disagreed with this view and said that if concrete cases could be proved where Mr. Glenday had obstructed the duties of the troops, he would be prepared to take the matter up.

K.A.R. 8/2/19.

For return 4.
L.H. 10
3/4

Headquarters,

Northern Brigade, K.A.R.

Nairobi.

19th January 1936.

My dear *Bottomley,*

You will probably have read a memorandum I wrote towards the end of December on the military situation on the northern frontiers of Kenya, and you may recall that my recommendations to replace civil control of the frontier in the neighbourhood of Mandera by military control were based on information which led me to apprehend the danger of fighting in close proximity to the border, with possible repercussions which might have to be handled by troops.

Since writing the memorandum I have been in Northern Kenya and Uganda and have been out of touch with events on the frontier. On my return to Nairobi on the 17th inst. I learnt that certain difficulties have arisen in connection with frontier control of such a nature that I do not think that it would be advisable to make them the subject of an official report, but which I think should be brought to your notice. Moreover, certain papers which have been forwarded by the Governor to the Colonial Office may be difficult to understand without some explanation of the circumstances in which they were written.

I can perhaps best explain how the present situation has developed since I wrote my memorandum, by giving a brief narrative of events on the frontier and in Nairobi, but before doing so I may remind you that the Air Ministry agreed, with certain reservations, to place the R.A.F. detachment in Kenya under the command of the Officer Commanding, the Northern Brigade....

Sir Cecil Bottomley, K.C.M.G.,
Colonial Office,
London.

Brigade, K.A.R.

After considering my memorandum Sir Joseph Byrne decided that control of the frontier should remain in the hands of the Provincial Commissioner, Mr. Glenday, and that he should be responsible for the collection and collation of intelligence. As a precautionary measure he permitted the Brigade Commander, Colonel Campbell, to move two additional platoons to Mandera, against which Mr. Glenday protested vigourously, and to transfer the headquarters and remainder of the 3rd Battalion from Meru to Wajir.

On the 30th December Abyssinian forces were reported to have moved eastwards to Dimitu, five miles East of Ramu, and it became evident that they were marching on Wajir, an Italian post two or three miles East of Mandera. The Governor, on the advice of the Brigade Commander, ordered mechanised K.A.R. patrols to be sent out from Mandera "to show the flag". This action was taken independently of Mr. Glenday.

On the 1st January the headquarters of an Italian force was seen having breakfast on the North bank of the River Daua opposite Mandera, and on the 4th January Italian troops had reached Geduiye, 20 miles West of Mandera.

On the 6th January the Governor, after a conference with the Brigade Commander, decided that two platoons and a mobile wireless set should be sent from Wajir to Ramu with orders to patrol the frontier. Mr. Glenday was not consulted and protested that this move was unnecessary, but after his return to the N.F.D. reported to the Governor that the detachment was most useful, although not more than one platoon was required. One company of the 5th Battalion was despatched from Nairobi to Meru, two platoons of this being sent on to Wajir. This move was also carried out without consulting Mr. Glenday.

On the 9th January, as the result of representations by

Colonel ...

Colonel Campbell, the Governor held a conference at Nairobi which was attended by the Colonial Secretary, Colonel Campbell, Mr. Glenday and the Commissioner of Police. I understand that the minutes of this meeting have been sent to the Secretary of State, but the net result was that Mr. Glenday remains in control of the frontier.

The foregoing explains the principal events which have occurred in the last three weeks. I must now emphasise the complete lack of coordination which exists between the civil, military and air-force departments and which might in certain eventualities result in serious consequences.

to issue

I do not anticipate violation of the Kenya frontier by either the Italians or Abyssinians, but the basis of dealing with the problem of frontier security is the collection of intelligence from all available sources, and its rapid collation and dissemination. As things stand the R.A.F. Flight is under the orders of the O.C., Northern Brigade, K.A.R., who finds it extremely difficult to decide what detailed instructions to the air patrols as the collation of intelligence falls to Mr. Glenday who has established himself at Moyale which is 185 miles from Ramu and 225 from Mandera by road, and about 380 by air from Nairobi, besides being many miles to the west of any point where trouble is likely to occur at present. The R.A.F. patrols send their reports direct to Glenday with copies to Campbell; the troops send theirs to Campbell; those of the political officers go to Glenday who passes on such information as he may consider affects the situation to Campbell. The result of this lack of system is that there is duplication of work and congestion on the wireless, whilst there is no guarantee that the Brigade Commander gets important information in time to act on it. Police patrols are sent out under Glenday's orders and those found by the troops under Campbell's. From a military point of view things could hardly

be ...

be in a worse muddle.

Yesterday a message was received at Brigade Headquarters from the Secretariat to say that 220 Italian native deserters had crossed our border near Ramu and were being sent to Wandera pending further instructions, and that further desertions might be expected. This message originated from a political officer at Moyale who was presumably repatriating for Glenday. Since then, twenty four hours later, the Brigade Commander has received no further information as to whether these deserters have been interrogated or how they have been disposed of. It is, however, obvious that information of considerable importance to the Government, Colonial Office and the War Office might be obtained from them and should be transmitted to those concerned with the least possible delay. Under military control the machinery to deal with such a situation would have been in existence. Another point is that no soldier would have sent such a large party of deserters to Wandera which is the tri-junction point and one of the places most likely to be affected in the event of serious fighting near the Kenya border.

If large numbers of deserters do cross the frontier a redistribution of troops and provision of reinforcements may become necessary, but as things stand it is quite possible that the Brigade Commander may not get the necessary information in time to take action.

The Governor protests that if a serious situation should arise everything is ready to hand over to the military, but this is not so as the military commander must be given the time and facilities for organising such things as his intelligence service, internment camps, transport and feeding arrangements for deserters or prisoners, not to speak of forecasting what food movements may be necessary.

The Governor is satisfied with the present arrangements, but ...

SECRET

SECRET (2)



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
NAIROBI
KENYA

11th January, 1936.

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose for your information the accompanying copies of -

- (i) A memorandum by the Inspector General on the situation on the North Eastern Frontiers of this Colony in December, 1935:
- (ii) The record of a Conference held at Government House on the 9th January.

2. The recommendations made by the Inspector General have received my careful consideration in the light of the information available regarding the present situation on the frontier, and my decisions on the main points raised are reflected in the second enclosure in this despatch.

3. I have approved the despatch of two platoons with a mobile wireless set to Ramu, and the reinforcement of the Northern Frontier District by one Company of the 5th battalion. The Headquarters of the 3rd battalion have already moved to Wajir as recommended on page 7 of the Inspector General's memorandum.

4. In regard to the Inspector General's reference on page 8 of his memorandum to the earmarking of the Tabora battalion as a general reserve for this Colony, it would appear from your Secret telegram No. 2 of the 1st January that under existing arrangements for the reinforcement of British Somaliland it is unlikely that battalion would, in any event, be available for this Colony.

5. In

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
J. H. THOMAS, P. C., M. P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET,
LONDON, S.W. 1

Handwritten notes:
5
copy
of
2

5. In regard to the Inspector General's main recommendation, which has subsequently been pressed by the Brigade Commander, namely that the situation is now such that the establishment of military control of the frontier is essential, I have, as will be seen from the record of the Conference of the 9th January, fully discussed the situation with Mr. Glenday whose knowledge and experience of the area and local conditions is, as you are aware, unrivalled; and I am unable to agree with the Inspector General that any situation has yet arisen which is not capable of adequate control by the dispositions of which you were informed in my despatch, Secret (2), of the 28th February, 1935.

In case of emergency, the military are in position, and instructions for military control could, if necessary, issue at short notice. Similarly, in the event of a sudden emergency which, in present circumstances, I regard as unlikely, military control could be assumed at the discretion of the officers concerned.

6. Generally, I consider it of the utmost importance, and indeed most conducive to the maintenance of a normal tribal situation on the frontier, that the area should remain under the control of the civil administration for as long as possible, and that no material change in the present policy should be made until very definite evidence is becoming that the situation threatens to become one which the civil authorities can no longer control.

I have the honour to be,
 Sir,
 Your most obedient, humble servant,

W. G. G.
 Brigadier-General,

believed, subsequently withdrew to their base.

The only other activity on the part of the Abyssinians of which I obtained information was the construction of a branch road from Mega running almost due East towards Ursull on the Dawa River. According to Captain Wickham the last fifty miles of this road would be parallel to and within easy reach of our Northern Frontier.

Since the early part of December Italian aircraft have been bombing stock in the vicinity and to the north and north west of Malka Re. This stock is owned by the Begodia, a tribe which has always been at enmity with its neighbours the Gurreh and Boran, and with the Abyssinians. The bombing has not been intensive, there has been no indication of large numbers of tribesmen seeking refuge in British territory and the situation on the border, from the point of view of British interests, may be described as almost normal.

I was informed by Captain Wickham that Ras Desta's attitude towards the British is entirely friendly and, as evidence of this, his deputy accompanies the British Consul whenever he leaves his headquarters at Mega. Ras Desta is reputed to be unenterprising and to possess an uncertain hold over his armed tribesmen.

In all the circumstances it appears to me that the British protected border tribes would be exposed to little or no danger from incursions by refugees with which the civil authorities and police would be unable to cope, whilst the small military garrisons at Mander and Moyale provided safe bases from which police patrols could operate.

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Thus, although I was disappointed to find no properly co-ordinated system for the gaining and collation of intelligence concerning the belligerent forces in such close proximity to the frontier, I felt satisfied that adequate control was being maintained on the border.

On the 23rd of December the Officer Commanding the Royal Air Force flight which I had accompanied to Marsabit received instructions to carry out a reconnaissance of the frontier between Moyale and Mandera and to watch for any signs of Abyssinian movement across the border in a south easterly direction.

In view of the information I had received on the previous day the likelihood of such movement occurring seemed to be incomprehensible, but on the 24th of December I learnt that the Governor had received a message from General Graziani to the effect that he had reason to believe that his flank at Malka Re was threatened, and requesting that steps might be taken to prevent the Abyssinians from moving through British territory to cut off the Italian position at that place.

At Meru, on the evening of the 24th of December I was shown a message from the Police Officer at Ramu which stated that a force of 2,000 Abyssinians had been located on December the 20th on the frontier - the River Daua - twenty miles west of Ramu. This information confirmed beyond doubt General Graziani's fears of the threat to his left flank and accounted for the construction of the Mega-Ursulli road referred to above. Moreover the banks of the River Daua are so thickly covered with trees for a distance of three or four hundred yards on each side as to provide excellent cover from air reconnaissance on the one hand,
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and to prevent the effective employment of mechanised forces or artillery on the other. Elsewhere than on the river banks the country is almost entirely bare of trees and offers no impediment to the movement of mechanised troops or to air and artillery action. The belt of trees follows the river line to Maika Re and Dolo and, although it might be too narrow and too easily defended to prohibit an operation on a large scale, it not only enables an Abyssinian force to meet Italian troops on more equal terms than would be the case in the open country, but provides the former with the means of effecting a considerable concentration in comparative safety within striking distance of the Italian posts.

There is every indication, therefore, that actually on our frontier there may be large concentrations of Abyssinian troops and levies which may be expected to remain in this neighbourhood for a considerable time owing to the difficulty which the Italians may have in dislodging them.

The Abyssinian armies possess no supply organisation and must needs live on the country. They would have no hesitation in plundering the stock of their hereditary enemies, the Degodia and Gurreh, and the resulting disturbance, restlessness and uncertainty may be expected to react on the British protected tribes in the affected areas. Moreover, water will soon become scarce in the grazing areas, thus necessitating the movement of thousands of head of stock up to the river for watering. If British tribes should be denied access to their customary water holes in the dried up river bed they must migrate to the watering places of other tribesmen, with the result that the usual clashes are likely to occur.

Thus the presence of Abyssinian troops on the River Dema has created an entirely different and more serious situation than that

than that which appeared to obtain when I discussed it with Mr. Glenday and other political officers on the 22nd of December. Since, in my opinion, the change which had occurred would involve the transference of frontier control and intelligence from a political to a military administration and since the matter appeared to be urgent, I considered it my duty to place the situation as I saw it before the Governor without delay. I proceeded accordingly by car to Nairobi on the 25th of December and had an interview with His Excellency on the 26th.

It should here be explained that the Government has not hitherto considered it necessary to co-ordinate the services of the King's African Rifles, the Royal Air Force and the Kenya Police either for frontier control or for intelligence work. The almost normal situation which has prevailed until lately has been met by normal methods. The frontier has been administered by District Officers under the supervision of the Provincial Commissioner. Certain additional police posts have been established and police patrols have been organised to keep touch with the local tribes. Two platoons of "F" Company, 5th Battalion, K.A.R. have provided garrisons for Mandera and Moyale, but have had no other duties or responsibilities. Up to the 23rd of December the Headquarters and the remaining two platoons of this Company, together with the Machine Gun Platoon, were at Wajir, whilst the remainder of the battalion, less one platoon at Marsabit, had recently been withdrawn from that place to Meru. The Royal Air Force Flight of six machines is at Nairobi and until the 24th of December had not been called upon to perform any special reconnaissances of the frontier. Military intelligence concerning the activities of the belligerents has been the responsibility of administrative and police officers who do not appear to have kept in the closest touch with the day-to-day situation across the frontiers

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEET THE SITUATION.

Since there are now indications that operations between the belligerents are likely to develop in the near future in close proximity to the frontier, and ~~and~~ since such operations may affect the safety of British protected tribes, I consider that the latter should be afforded a greater measure of security than is possible with police forces acting alone. I therefore recommend that there should be military control of the frontier until the situation reverts to normal.

If military control is to be established there must be unity of command and I accordingly consider that the Officer Commanding the Northern Brigade, K.A.R., should be placed in command of the Royal Air Force Flight, such Police as have been, or may be, allotted to frontier duties and such officers of the Administrative Service as may be required to assist in dealing with local native affairs.

The military policy to be pursued and the methods to give effect to it would be the responsibility of the military commander, but as His Excellency desired me to record my views on these matters I offer the following suggestions.

Resistance by force to any movement in strength on the part of either of the belligerents into British territory is
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undesirable in view of the international complications which might ensue; furthermore, it is impracticable in view of the weakness of the available forces in Kenya. In the case of large incursions therefore, no more can be done than to maintain contact and to report them without delay to the Government of Kenya in order that formal protest may be made to the Government concerned.

Incursions by small parties of troops or levies are likely to occur unless some deterrent is presented to them. The Anglo-Abyssinian frontier might be unknown to Abyssinian tribesmen who have been brought from a distance; refugees or deserters might seek shelter in British territory; the natural propensity of nomadic people to plunder might lead to the formation of shift robber bands, which might take the opportunity of looting the unprotected stock of British tribes. In my opinion the presence of troops on the constant watch for such incursions would unmistakably define the borders of British territory on the one hand, and on the other, would serve as a deterrent to those who might otherwise have no hesitation in crossing the frontier.

I consider, therefore, that a systematic air patrol of the frontier between Mandera and Moyale should be instituted at once. This should be supplemented by mobile patrols of the King's African Rifles whose duty would be to gain information in any area in which aggression by either of the belligerents might be anticipated. These patrols should be based on posts of a strength of not less than a platoon situated on or near the frontier. The Royal Air Force patrol, in addition to carrying out reconnaissance, would thus act as a link for communication between the posts, patrols and unit headquarters. The 3rd battalion, K.A.R., less the sub-units allocated to the foregoing duties, should be stationed at Wajir with sufficient transport to enable it to carry out promptly its role as a mobile reserve to the frontier posts. Should it be necessary to move this reserve from Wajir, its place should be taken by the 5th battalion.

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It is essential that an intelligence system should be organised without delay in such a manner that information gained from every source can be collated and transmitted rapidly to the Government, Brigade and Battalion Headquarters.

It is possible that the employment of the 3rd and 5th Battalions K.A.R. may prove to be necessary in order to maintain effective control of the frontier. In this event the battalion at Tabora, which although earmarked for service in Somaliland is not immediately required in that country, should be held in readiness to proceed to Kenya as a general reserve.

Finally, if military control is to be imposed it is essential that there should be an officer in command of every platoon employed on patrolling, both for the purpose of gaining accurate information by cross-examining natives crossing the border and because the presence of European officers in command of troops has a marked effect on the native mind. I would, therefore, suggest that a sufficient number of officers of the K.A.R. Reserve should be called up for service with the 3rd Battalion.

In conclusion, I would once more emphasise that in my opinion, based on the information available, the situation has undergone a radical change in the last ten days. Up to the 20th of December the problem was one of dealing with small parties or individuals who might seek shelter in British territory. This situation could be dealt with by normal administrative methods supported by troops if occasion demanded. Since the 20th December the major problem has developed into one of being prepared to deal with a large force of partially organised troops who may make a deliberate attempt to operate through British country. The solution to this problem is a military one, demanding an efficient intelligence organisation and the loyal co-operation of all the fighting and administrative services in the Colony.

(Signed) C.C. NORMAN,
Brigadier,
INSPECTOR GENERAL, R.W.A.F.F. & K.A.R.

RECORD OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT GOVERNMENT
HOUSE, NAIROBI, ON THE 9th JANUARY, 1936.

Present: His Excellency the Governor.
The Hon'ble the Colonial Secretary.
The Commander, Northern Brigade, King's African Rifles.
The Commissioner of Police.
The Squadron Leader Commandant, Royal Air Force, Kenya.
The Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District
(Mr. V. G. Glendon, O. S. D.)
Major T. C. Jells, O. B. E., M. C.
Mr. L. A. Jeaving, Secretariat.

MR. GLENDON stated that the present position on the Northern Frontier was that there was definite information that Ras Desta with his army had for the last three weeks been at Malka Dida, some twenty miles North of Mandera. There was also a force under the Greek, Karavasilis, and Fitaurari Tadame, the Deputy Governor of the Bora province occupying the bush on the Ethiopian side of the Dana River, the Kenya Ethiopian frontier. Contact had been made with the latter force, and both Commanders had said that it was there solely to guard the main army's flank. Their only difficulty was the provision of supplies.

In regard to the Italians, now near Mandera, native irregulars were occupying the bush, and there were regular motor patrols along the northern edge. Aeroplanes had patrolled the area daily up to two or three days ago, and Degedia stock on the river had been constantly bombed as had other stock areas behind Ras Desta's Force, presumably with the object of preventing the Ethiopians from obtaining meat supplies if they advanced.

In regard to Kenya tribes, there had fortunately been rain, and there were consequently very few tribesmen on the river in the area of operations.

The road on the Kenya side of the frontier was patrolled as far as KAHIBA by a mobile platoon of the King's African Rifles with which the standing police patrols were in touch.

The strength of the Ethiopian forces were estimated at 500 on the river and probably not more than 5000 with Ras Desta.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER stated the Ethiopian strength had previously been estimated at 2000 on the river and more than 10000 with the main army.

MR. GLENDAY replied that his figures were in respect of riflemen only, and had been arrived at from the best reliable sources of information available and in consultation with the Consul at Mega. There were, of course, considerable numbers of followers, not riflemen, with both the armies.

HIS EXCELLENCY wished to know what was the position in regard to the smoke candles which had been provided for the purpose of signalling to belligerent aircraft in the event of their flying over British territory. He understood the necessary distribution had not been made.

MR. GLENDAY reported that the candles had reached Mandera two or three days ago, and that the position was now satisfactory. All patrols would now be equipped with candles.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that the Brigade Commander had complained to him that the military wireless system was unable to cope with the number of messages now being transmitted and had asked that there should be some control over the sending of messages.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER stated that the trouble was that there was no co-ordinated system of intelligence, with the result that similar intelligence messages were wirelessed to Nairobi by both the civil and the military.

MR. GLENDAY stated that intelligence furnished by his officers was sifted and, as far as possible, verified by himself personally before it was passed to Nairobi. It was, however, communicated before it reached him to the Military Officer at Mandera

Mandera who communicated it to his Commanding Officer. This was the cause of the duplication. In so far as he was concerned, except in an emergency, he received only one intelligence message a day from Mandera and sent one or two to Nairobi. Sometimes, of course, long instructions were transmitted by Government, but this could not be avoided. He was confident that it was not intelligence, but that the messages which were over-loading the system, and these should be cut out while the present situation lasted. He had already done this where civil messages were concerned.

He intended, subject to His Excellency's approval, to make Moyale his headquarters in order to keep in touch with the situation.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER considered that the co-ordination of intelligence should be under military control. Were he placed in charge of the Frontier he would make one officer responsible for the sifting of all intelligence and for its distribution.

HIS EXCELLENCY asked if a military officer with sufficient experience of intelligence work and of the frontier was available.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER replied that he would have to do the best he could.

In reply to an enquiry by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, MR. GLENDAY said that native scouts were used. Generally he did not favour buying intelligence as intelligence so obtained would not be reliable, but it might be useful if he could have a small fund at his disposal.

HIS EXCELLENCY agreed that one officer should be responsible for the co-ordination of intelligence. That officer should, however, he considered, be the one with the most experience of the area, obviously Mr. Glenday, who would have

his headquarters at Moyale for the purpose.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER adhered to his opinion that the intelligence system should be a military one. The situation was already very nearly a military situation.

As, however, the responsibility was apparently to remain with Mr. Glenday he considered that Mr. Glenday and the Battalion Commander should be together

HIS EXCELLENCY asked whether the proposal was to move the Battalion Commander to Moyale. He was not prepared to move Mr. Glenday from the frontier where he was in touch with the situation and with his sources of information.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER was unable to recommend that his Battalion Commander should move to Moyale.

HIS EXCELLENCY directed that Mr. Glenday should be responsible at Moyale for the co-ordination and sending of intelligence before its communication to Nairobi. The situation might of course change at any time, in which event fresh instructions would be necessary.

THE SQUADRON LEADER COMMANDING ROYAL AIR FORCE DETACHMENT stated this arrangement to be perfectly satisfactory from the point of view of air intelligence. His pilots would report by R.A.F. wireless direct to R.A.F. Headquarters, Nairobi, at the same time handing a copy to the local Administrative Officer who would be responsible for its transmission to Mr. Glenday at Moyale.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER asked how this arrangement would operate if Mr. Glenday was away. He considered, too, that it was essential that military officers should report direct to their Commanding Officer.

HIS EXCELLENCY pointed out that in Mr. Glenday's absence either the District or the Military Officer could be made responsible. Direct reports by military officers to their Commanding Officer, as well as to Mr. Glenday, would

re-introduce the duplication of which the Brigade Commander had complained. His Excellency had, however, no objection to such an arrangement provided there were no complaints regarding the over-loading of the wireless system.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER asked who, at the present time, was responsible for the frontier. Military forward dispositions were two platoons at Mendera, two with a portable wireless at Ramu, one at Moyale and one at Marsabit.

MR. GLENDAY in reply to a question from His Excellency, stated that there were at present no indications of either belligerent being offensive in so far as this Colony is concerned. He entertained no apprehensions that a military situation was likely to arise, at any rate for the present. In the event of an Ethiopian reverse the line of retreat would be into Ethiopia in the direction of Mega, where Ras Desta's forces had been raised, and not into this Colony. It was true that small parties might and probably would take refuge in the bush on the Kenya side of the river, but they would not come out and would recross the river as soon as they thought it safe to do so. The present aim was to prevent this sort of thing from happening, and this must be undertaken by people with a knowledge of the local tribes.

Generally he considered great caution must be exercised to avoid any "incident", especially in view of Government's instructions that, in the exercise of neutrality, anything in the nature of a conflict with any considerable force of either belligerent which might penetrate our territory and refuse to submit to disarming must be avoided.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY considered the situation was a peace one at present, and that the Officer-in-Charge of the Northern Frontier District should be responsible as long as it remained so.

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HIS EXCELLENCY on the information at his disposal was unable to agree that there was evidence that a military situation was developing. It was essential that control should remain for as long as possible in the hands of the civil Officer-in-Charge whose experience would be invaluable in dealing with any situation which the civil authorities could control. The present arrangement was that the police, who were responsible to the Officer-in-Charge, were responsible for the control of the frontier, the military being available to deal with the situation becoming out of control; and HIS EXCELLENCY was not prepared to vary the present instructions unless a very definite necessity arose.

In certain circumstances it would be necessary to instruct the military to assume responsibility, and it was perhaps possible that an occasion might arise when it would be necessary for the military to assume immediate control. In the latter event the officers concerned would have to use their discretion: it was impossible to issue in advance precise instructions to cover such an emergency. In any situation HIS EXCELLENCY emphasised that he must rely upon the closest co-operation between the civil and military authorities.

HIS EXCELLENCY stated that he understood the retention of the platoon at Marsabit was an embarrassment to the military, and asked Mr. Glenday if he considered it could safely be withdrawn.

MR. GLENDAY considered that it could, at any rate while the main situation remained on the Daua River.

HIS EXCELLENCY instructed accordingly.

MR. GLENDAY, in reply to a further question by His Excellency, considered the platoon at Moyale to be necessary for the present, unless the police could be increased.

HIS EXCELLENCY referred to the bombing by Italian aeroplanes in British territory reported in the Officer-in-

Charge's telegram No. S.113 of the 6th January.

THE SQUADRON LEADER COMMANDING ROYAL AIR FORCE DETACHMENT thought that probably the Italians did not see the Union Jack. He understood no smoke signal was given.

HIS EXCELLENCY thought it was not necessary to report this incident to the Secretary of State. He understood, however, that Mr. Glenday was having a full report with sketch map prepared. He would consider the matter further when that report was received.

HIS EXCELLENCY referred to the friendly protest by the Ethiopian local authorities, reported in the Officer-in-Charge's telegram No. S.112 of the 6th January, against three alleged violations of Ethiopian territory by the Royal Air Force machines.

THE SQUADRON LEADER thought that the protest was probably justified, and that he himself was one of the offenders. He had been instructed to patrol the frontier and had followed the Gwyn line as marked on the military map; whereas he now understood that the Maud line was the frontier for administrative purposes. His maps would be adjusted accordingly.

MR. GLENDAY mentioned that the Ethiopian Command was anxious to purchase foodstuffs, and possible lorries, from Kenya. He was informed there was no objection to the supply of these commodities provided there was no entry into British territory of armed Ethiopian soldiery.

THE SECRETARIAT,
NAIROBI.
10th January, 1936.

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10 January, 1933.

SECRET.

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Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Thomas to refer to the letter from this Department of the 17th of January (Reference 1000/1/33) and connected correspondence regarding the possibility of military operations between Italian and Abyssinian forces near the Kenya boundary, and to transmit to you, to be laid before the Army Council, a copy of memoranda by the Inspector General of the Royal West African Frontier Force and the King's African Rifles on the military situation on the North-Western Frontiers of Kenya in December, 1932.

2. The memoranda was prepared by the Inspector General at the request of the Governor of Kenya and it is understood that the latter is reporting fully on the situation

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,

situation by Air Mail. On receipt of the Governor's
report a copy will be sent to the War Office.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

P. W. Hood

SECRET

MEMORANDUM BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL R. W. A. F. O. AND K. A. R.
ON THE MILITARY SITUATION ON THE NORTH EASTERN FRONTIERS
OF KENYA IN DECEMBER 1935.

Since the 22nd of December 1935 the situation in the neighbourhood of Mandera and Rama, on the Abyssinian border of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, has undergone a change which, in my view, may render the task of frontier control much more difficult than had previously been anticipated.

In the course of a tour of inspection of the frontier by air on the 22nd of December I took the opportunity of discussing the dispositions and movements of Italian and Abyssinian forces near the border, and the reactions of the British protected tribes, with Mr. V. G. Glenday, C.B.E., the Provincial Commissioner, Captain Wickham, the British Consul at Mega, and Mr. P. J. de Broghda, the District Commissioner at Mandera. From these three officers I learnt that Italian forces, whose strength and composition are not known, are at Jugh and Dolo, with a detached post, said to consist of white troops and variously estimated to be 50 to 250 strong, at Malka Re two or three miles North East of Mandera.

An Abyssinian force under Ras Desta, believed to be 4,000 to 5,000 strong and composed mainly of ill-armed tribesmen stiffened by some 500 Abyssinian troops, was at Nagalli, 140 miles North of Moyale, with an advanced detachment at Filtu, 90 miles North West of Dolo, at the end of November. It has since been learnt that this force moved Eastwards and that an action took place at Labashilindi about a month ago, followed by a fight at Ammo on the 17th of December; these localities are approximately 50 and 40 miles, respectively, North of Dolo. There is no information as to the result of

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these actions which may have only been reconnaissances in force by Italian troops who, it is believed, subsequently withdrew to their base.

The only other activity on the part of the Abyssinians of which I obtained information was the construction of a branch road from Meqa running almost due East towards Urnulli on the Gana River. According to Captain Wickham the last fifty miles of this road would be parallel to and within easy reach of the British frontier.

Since the early part of December Italian aircraft have been bombing stock in the vicinity and to the North and North west of Malka Re. This stock is owned by the Degodia, a tribe which has always been at enmity with its neighbours the Gurreh and Boran, and with the Abyssinians. The bombing has not been intensive, there has been no indication of large numbers of tribesmen seeking refuge in British territory and the situation on the border, from the point of view of British interests, may be described as almost normal.

I was informed by Captain Wickham that Ras Desta's attitude towards the British is entirely friendly and, as evidence of this, his deputy accompanies the British Consul whenever he leaves his headquarters at Meqa. Ras Desta is reputed to be unenterprising and to possess an uncertain hold over his armed tribesmen.

In all the circumstances it appeared to me that the British protected border tribes would be exposed to little or no danger from incursions by refugees with which

the civil authorities and police would be unable to cope, whilst the small military garrisons at Mandera and Moyale provided safe bases from which police patrols could operate.

It appeared to be unlikely that Ras Desta would move his forces southwards to attack the Italian prepared positions at Dolo and Malka Re, his desire to maintain friendly relations with the British would deter him from moving through our territory, whilst any operations which might be undertaken against him by the Italians would be in a northerly direction and thus away from the Anglo-Abyssinian frontier.

Thus, although I was disappointed to find no properly coordinated system for the gaining and collation of intelligence concerning the belligerent forces in such close proximity to the frontier, I felt satisfied that adequate control was being maintained on the border.

On the 23rd of December the officer commanding the Royal Air Force flight which I had accompanied to Marsabit received instructions to carry out a reconnaissance of the frontier between Moyale and Mandera and to watch for any signs of Abyssinian movement across the border in a south easterly direction.

In view of the information I had received on the previous day the likelihood of such movement occurring seemed to be incomprehensible, but on the 24th of December I learnt that the Governor had received a message from General Graziani to the effect that he had reason to believe that his flank at Malka Re was threatened, and requesting that steps might be taken to prevent the Abyssinians from moving through British territory to cut off the Italian position at that place.

At Méru, on the evening of the 24th of December I was shown a message from the police officer at Rama which stated that a force of 2,000 Abyssinians had been located on December the 20th on the frontier - the River Dava - twenty miles West of Rama. This information confirmed beyond doubt General Graziani's fears of the threat to his left flank and accounted for the construction of the Megugnelli road referred to above. Moreover, the banks of the River Dava are thickly covered with trees for a distance of three or four hundred yards on each side as to provide excellent cover for an air reconnaissance on the one hand and to prevent the effective employment of mechanized forces or artillery on the other. Elsewhere than on the river banks the country is almost entirely bare of trees and offers no impediment to the movement of mechanized troops or to air and artillery action. The belt of trees follows the river line to Malka Re and Dolo end, although it might be too narrow and too easily defended to prohibit an operation on a large scale, it not only enables an Abyssinian force to meet Italian troops on more equal terms than would be the case in the open country, but provides the former with the means of effecting a considerable concentration in comparative safety within striking distance of the Italian posts.

There is every indication, therefore, that actually on our frontier there may be large concentrations of Abyssinian troops and levies which may be expected to remain in this neighbourhood for a considerable time owing to the difficulty which the Italians may have in dislodging them.

The Abyssinian armies possess no supply organisation and must needs live on the country. They would have no hesitation in plundering the stock of their

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Thus the presence of Abyssinian troops on the River Dawa has created an entirely different and more serious situation than that which appeared to obtain when I discussed it with Mr. Glenday and the other political officers on the 22nd of December. Since, in my opinion, the change which had occurred would involve the transference of frontier control and intelligence from a political to a military administration and since the matter appeared to be urgent, I considered it my duty to place the situation as I saw it before the Governor without delay. I proceeded accordingly by car to Nairobi on the 25th of December and had an interview with His Excellency on the 26th.

It should here be explained that the Government has not hitherto considered it necessary to coordinate the services of the King's African Rifles, the Royal Air Force and the Kenya Police either for frontier control or for intelligence work. The almost normal situation which has prevailed until lately has been met by normal methods. The frontier has been administered by District Officers under the supervision of the Provincial Commissioner. Certain additional police posts have been established and police patrols have been organised to keep touch with the local tribes.

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If military control is to be established there must be unity of command and I accordingly consider that the Officer Commanding the Northern Brigade, K.A.R., should be placed in command of the Royal Air Force flight, such Police as have been, or may be, allotted to frontier duties and such officers of the Administrative Service as may be required to assist in dealing with local native affairs.

The military policy to be pursued and the methods to give effect to it would be the responsibility of the military commander, but as His Excellency desired me to record my views on these matters I offer the following suggestions.

Resistance by force to any movement in strength on the part of either of the belligerents into British territory is undesirable in view of the international complications which might ensue; furthermore, it is impracticable in view of the weakness of the available forces in Kenya. In the case of large incursions, therefore, no more can be done than to maintain contact and to report them without delay to the Government of Kenya in order that a formal protest may be made to the Government concerned.

Incursions by small parties of troops or levies are likely to occur unless some deterrent is presented to them. The Anglo-Abyssinian frontier might be unknown to Abyssinian

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Abyssinian tribesmen who have been brought from a distance; refugees or deserters might seek shelter in British territory; the natural propensity of nomadic people to plunder might lead to the formation of shifita - robber bands - which might take the opportunity of looting the unprotected stock of British tribes. In my opinion the presence of troops on the constant watch for such insurrections would unmistakably define the borders of British territory on the one hand, and, on the other, would serve as a deterrent to those who might otherwise have no hesitation in unbesieging the frontier.

I consider, therefore, that systematic air patrol of the frontier between Mandera and Moyale should be instituted at once. This should be supplemented by mobile patrols of the King's African Rifles whose duty would be to gain information in any area in which aggression by either of the belligerents might be anticipated. These patrols should be based on posts of a strength of not less than a platoon situated on or near the frontier. The Royal Air Force patrol, in addition to carrying out reconnaissances, would thus act as a link for communication between the posts, patrols and unit headquarters. The 3rd Battalion, K.A.R., less the sub-units allocated to the foregoing duties, should be stationed at Wajir with sufficient transport to enable it to carry out promptly its role as a mobile reserve to the frontier posts. Should it be necessary to move this reserve from Wajir, its place should be taken by the 5th Battalion.

It

It is essential that an intelligence system should be organised without delay in such a manner that information gained from every source can be collated and transmitted regularly to the Government, Brigade and Battalion Headquarters.

It is possible that the employment of the 3rd and 5th Battalions K.A.R. may prove to be necessary in order to maintain effective control of the frontier. In this event the battalion at Tabera, which although earmarked for service in Somaliland is not immediately required in that country, should be held in readiness to proceed to Kenya as a general reserve.

Finally, if military control is to be imposed it is essential that there should be an officer in command of every platoon employed on patrolling, both for the purpose of gaining accurate information by cross-examining natives crossing the border and because the presence of European officers in command of troops has a marked effect on the native mind. I would, therefore, suggest that a sufficient number of officers of the K.A.R. Reserve should be called up for service with the 3rd Battalion.

In conclusion, I would once more emphasise that in my opinion, based on the information available, the situation has undergone a radical change in the last ten days. Up to the 20th of December the problem was one of dealing with small parties or individuals who might seek shelter in British territory. This situation could be dealt with by normal administrative methods supported by troops if occasion demanded. Since the 20th of December the major problem has developed into one of being prepared

to

to deal with a large force of partially organised troops who may make a deliberate attempt to operate through British country. The solution to this problem is a military one, demanding an efficient intelligence organisation and the loyal cooperation of all the fighting and administrative services in the colony.

(Sgd.) C.C. NORMAN.

Brigadier,

Inspector General R.W.A.F.F.

and K.A.R.

Meru.

20th December 1935.

C. O.

50066/26.

Mr. *Evans* 7/1/36

Mr. *Parsons* 7/1/36

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh

Permt. U.S. of S

Partly U.S. of S

Secretary of State

Secret

January 1936

DRAFT.

The U.S. of S.
War Office

35
50066/26

Memorandum

Sir
I am etc to refer to the letter from the Department of the 17th of January (Reference 35066/26) and connected correspondence regarding the possibility of military operations between Italian and Abyssinian forces near the Kenya boundary, and to transmit to you, to be laid before the Army Council, a copy of a memorandum by the Inspector General of the Royal West African Frontier Force and the King's African Rifles on the military situation on the North Eastern Frontiers of Kenya in December, 1935.

FURTHER ACTION.

C. O.

3066/26.

2

Mr. Curzon. 7/4/36

Mr. Pankin. 17/1/36

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson

Sir F. Tomlinson

Sir C. Bottomley

Sir J. Shackleton

Permit U.S. of S

Paris U.S. of S

Secretary of State

Secret

January 1936

DRAFT.

The Lt. Col.
War Office

3066

Memorandum

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FURTHER ACTION.

(2)

2. The memorandum was prepared
by the Inspector General at the
request of the Governor of Kenya
and it is understood that
the latter is reporting fully
on the situation by Air Mail.
On receipt of the Governor's
report a copy will be sent
to the War Office.

Lancet

1942

Meru,

Kenya Colony.

29th December 1935

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for your information a copy of a Memorandum giving my views on the military situation on the North Eastern frontiers of Kenya Colony, which I have prepared at the request of the Governor.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant



Brigadier.

Inspector General R.W.A.F.F. and K.A.R.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
COLONIAL OFFICE,
LONDON.

INSERT AT "A" ON PAGE 1.

The only other activity on the part of the Abyssinians of which I obtained information was the construction of a branch road from Vega running almost due East towards Ursulli on the Dava River. According to Captain Wickham the last fifty miles of this road would be parallel to and within easy reach of our Northern frontier.

SECRET

MEMORANDUM BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL C. G. F. F. A. I. R.
ON THE MILITARY SITUATION ON THE NORTH EASTERN FRONTIERS
OF KENYA IN DECEMBER 1935.

Since the 22nd of December 1935 the situation in the neighbourhood of Mandera and Ramu, on the Abyssinian border of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, has undergone a change which, in my view, may render the task of frontier control much more difficult than had previously been anticipated.

In the course of a tour of inspection of the frontier by air on the 22nd of December I took the opportunity of discussing the dispositions and movements of Italian and Abyssinian forces near the border, and the reactions of the British protected tribes, with Mr. V.G. Munday, O.B.E., the Provincial Commissioner, Captain Wickham, the British Consul at Mogadishu, and Mr. P.J. de Bromhead, the District Commissioner at Mandera. From these three officers I learnt that Italian forces, whose strength and composition are not known, are at Lugh and Dolo, with a detached post, said to consist of white troops and variously estimated to be 50 to 250 strong, at Malke Re two or three miles North East of Mandera.

An Abyssinian force under Ras Desta, believed to be 4,000 to 5,000 strong and composed mainly of ill-armed tribesmen stiffened by some 500 Abyssinian troops, was at Mugelli, 140 miles North of Moyale, with an advanced detachment at Filtu, 90 miles North West of Dolo, at the end of November. It has since been learnt that this force moved Eastwards and that an action took place at Labashilindi about a month ago, followed by a fight at Ameno on the 17th of December; these localities are approximately 50 and 40 miles, respectively, North of Dolo. There is no information as to the result of these actions which may have only been reconnaissances in force by Italian troops who, it is believed, subsequently withdrew to their base.

Since the early part of December Italian aircraft have been

hombing stock in the vicinity and to the North and North east of Waka Re. This stock is owned by the Gordinia tribe which has always been at enmity with its neighbours the Arab and Moran and all the Abyssinians. The hombing has not been intensive there has been no indication of large numbers of tribesmen seeking refuge in British territory and the situation on the border, from the point of view of British interests, may be described as almost normal.

I was informed by Captain Fickham that Ras Beata's attitude towards the British is entirely friendly and as evidence of this, his deputy accompanies the British Consul whenever he leaves his headquarters at Waga. Ras Beata is reputed to be unenterprising and to possess an uncertain, all over his armed tribesmen.

In all the circumstances it appeared to me that the British protected border tribes would be exposed to little or no danger from incursions by refugees with which the civil authorities and police would be unable to cope, whilst the small military garrisons at Mandera and Moyale provided safe bases from which police patrols could operate.

It appeared to be unlikely that Ras Beata would have the forces Southwards to attack the Italian occupied positions at Dolo and Waka Re, his desire to maintain friendly relations with the British would deter him from moving through our territory, whilst any operations which might be undertaken against him by the Italians would be in a westerly direction and thus away from the Anglo-Abyssinian frontier.

Thus, although I was disappointed to find no specially coordinated system for the gaining and collection of intelligence concerning the belligerent forces in such close proximity to the frontier, I felt satisfied that adequate control was being maintained on the border.

On the 22nd of December an officer commanding the Royal Air Force flight which I had accompanied to Marsabit received information to survey and a reconnaissance of the frontier

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between Moyale and Mandera and to watch for any signs of Abyssinian movement across the border in a South Easterly direction.

In view of the information I had received on the previous day the likelihood of such movement occurring seemed to be incomprehensible, but on the 21st of December I learnt that the Governor had received a message from General Graziani to the effect that he had reason to believe that his flank at Wala Re was threatened and requesting that steps might be taken to prevent the Abyssinians from moving through British territory to cut off the Italian position at that place.

At Wera, on the evening of the 24th of December I was shown a message from the police officer at Ramu which stated that a force of 2,000 Abyssinians had been located on December the 20th on the frontier - the River Daus - twenty miles West of Ramu. This information confirmed beyond doubt General Graziani's fears of the threat to his left flank and accounted for the construction of the Wega-Ursulli road referred to above. Moreover, the banks of the River Daus are so thickly covered with trees for a distance of three or four hundred yards on each side as to provide excellent cover from air reconnaissance on the one hand, and to prevent the effective employment of mechanised forces or artillery on the other. Elsewhere than on the river banks the country is almost entirely bare of trees and offers no impediment to the movement of mechanised troops or to air and artillery action. The belt of trees follows the river line to Wala Re and Dolo and, although it might be too narrow and too easily defended to prohibit an operation on a large scale, it not only enables an Abyssinian force to meet Italian troops on more equal terms than would be the case in the open country, but provides the former with the means of effecting a considerable concentration in comparative safety

within

within striking distance of the Italian posts.

There is every indication, therefore, that actually on our frontier there may be large concentrations of Abyssinian troops and levies which may be expected to ~~remain~~ remain in this neighbourhood for a considerable time owing to the difficulty which the Italians may have in dislodging them.

The Abyssinian armies possess no supply organisation and must needs live on the country. They would have no hesitation in plundering the stock of their hereditary enemies, the Degodia and Gurreh, and the resulting disturbance, restlessness and uncertainty may be expected to react on the British protected tribes in the affected areas. Moreover, water will soon become scarce in the grazing areas, thus necessitating the movement of thousands of head of stock up to the river for watering. If British tribes should be denied access to their customary water holes in the dried up river bed they must migrate to the watering places of other tribesmen, with the result that the usual clashes are likely to occur.

Thus the presence of Abyssinian troops on the River Daus has created an entirely different and more serious situation than that which appeared to obtain when I discussed it with Mr Glenday and the other political officers on the 22nd of December. Since, in my opinion, the change which had occurred would involve the transference of frontier control and intelligence from a political to a military administration and since the matter appeared to be urgent, I considered it my duty to place the situation as I saw it before the Governor without delay. I proceeded accordingly by car to Nairobi on the 25th of December and had an interview with His Excellency on the 26th.

It should here be explained that the Government has not hitherto considered it necessary to coordinate the services of the King's African Rifles, the Royal Air Force and the

Kenya Police either for frontier control or for intelligence work. The almost normal situation which has prevailed until lately has been met by normal methods. The frontier has been administered by District Officers under the supervision of the Provincial Commissioner. Certain additional police posts have been established and police patrols have been organised to keep touch with the local tribes. Two platoons of "R" Company, 3rd Battalion K.A.R., have provided garrisons for Mandera and Moyale, but have had no other duties or responsibilities. Up to the 23rd of December the Headquarters and the remaining two platoons of this company, together with the Machine Gun Platoon, were at Wajir, whilst the remainder of the battalion, less one platoon at Marsabit, had recently been withdrawn from that place to Meru. The Royal Air Force Flight of six machines is at Nairobi and until the 24th of December had not been called upon to perform any special reconnaissances of the frontier. Military intelligence concerning the activities of the belligerents has been the responsibility of administrative and police officers who do not appear to have kept in the closest touch with the day-to-day situation across the frontier since they have only been required to submit monthly intelligence summaries. Provision for the rapid transmission of information elsewhere than from Mandera and Moyale, where there are wireless stations, seems to have been considered unnecessary since the important news of the presence of 2,000 Abyssinians on the River Bana on the 20th of December did not reach the Headquarters of the 3rd Battalion at Meru until four days later.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEET THE SITUATION.

Since there are now indications that operations between the belligerents are likely to develop in the near future in close proximity to the frontier, and since such operations may affect the safety of British protected tribes, I consider that

the latter should be afforded a greater measure of autonomy than is possible with police forces in the zone. I therefore recommend that there should be military control of the Frontier until the situation reverts to normal.

If military control is to be established there must be unity of command and I accordingly consider that the Officer commanding the Northern Brigade, K.A.R., should be placed in command of the Royal Air Force Flight, such an officer has been, or may be, allotted to frontier duties and a staff officer of the Administrative Service as well be required to assist in dealing with local native affairs.

The military policy to be pursued and the methods to give effect to it would be the responsibility of the military commander but as His Excellency desired to be guided by views on these matters I offer the following suggestions.

Assistance by force to any Government against on the part of either of the belligerents into British territory is undesirable in view of the international complications which might ensue; furthermore, it is impracticable in view of the weakness of the available forces in the zone. In the case of large incursions, therefore, no more could be done than to maintain contact and to report the situation to the Government of Kenya in order that it may formulate a suitable Government response.

Incursions by small parties of troops and axes are likely to occur unless some definite steps are taken. The Anglo-Somali frontier might be known to Abyssinian tribesmen who have been reported from a distance to capture deserters who seek shelter in British territories; the general propensity of nomadic people to plunder might lead to the formation of chifta - robber bands - which might take the opportunity of looting the unprotected stock of British officers. In my opinion the presence of troops on the constant watch for

such incursions would unmistakably define the borders of British territory on the one hand, and, on the other, would serve as a deterrent to those who might otherwise have no hesitation in crossing the frontier.

I consider, therefore, that a systematic air patrol of the frontier between Anderson and Koyale should be instituted at once. This should be supplemented by mobile patrols of the King's African Rifles whose duty would be to gain information in any area in which aggression by either of the belligerents might be anticipated. These patrols should be based on posts of a strength of not less than a platoon situated on or near the frontier. The Royal Air Force patrol, in addition to carrying out reconnaissances, would thus act as a link for communication between the posts, patrols and unit headquarters. The 3rd Battalion, F.A.R., less the sub-units allocated to the foregoing duties, should be stationed at Fair with sufficient transport to enable it to carry out promptly its role as a mobile reserve to the frontier posts. Should it be necessary to move this reserve from Fair, its place should be taken by the 5th Battalion.

It is essential that an intelligence system should be organized without delay in such a manner that information gained from every source can be collated and transmitted rapidly to the Government, Brigadier's, Division Headquarters.

It is possible that the employment of the 1st and 2nd Battalions F.A.R. may prove to be necessary in order to maintain effective control of the frontier. In this event the 1st and 2nd Battalions, which although earmarked for service in the Sudan is not immediately required in that country, should be held in readiness to proceed to Kenya as a general reserve.

Finally, if military control is to be imposed it is essential that there should be an officer in command of every platoon etc.

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In conclusion, I would once more emphasise that in my opinion, based on the information available, the situation has undergone a radical change in the last ten days. Up to the 20th of December the problem was one of dealing with small parties or individuals who might seek shelter in British territory. This situation could be dealt with by normal administrative methods supported by troops if occasion demanded. Since the 20th of December the nature of the problem has developed into one of being prepared to deal with a large force of partially organised troops who may make a deliberate attempt to operate through British country. The solution to this problem is a military one, demanding an efficient intelligence organisation and the loyal cooperation of all the fighting and administrative services in the colony.

Chomson

Officer,

29th December 1939.

Inspector General K.A.S.

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END
1800
MILINDI

Rua Jawa

NYABALI

FITU

WALANA

Rua Jawa

MEGA

has road and an open line to

Uballi

Fondia

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MALU RE

MOYALE

RANU

MADURA

Marsabit

