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REC'D
29 JUL 13

Foreign Office

1913

26 July

Last previous Paper

25643

Situation on S. Abyssinian borders

Sends dep. from Ad. abba reporting representation made to Abyssin for red. number of Compensation to be required for murder of Capt. Bylme. Encloses for concurrence dft. of hel. reply to Mr. Theaiger.

W. Theaiger

We can only concur, I suppose, but my sympathies are all with W. Theaiger.

all
27/7/13

Li. J. Anderson
Theaiger

concur & copy of message
safely to the Genl for inf. D. J.

H. J. R.

30-7-13

30/7/13

30-7-13

20/7/13 Encl 1 Aug 1913

Next subsequent Paper

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No. 3143/13.
The Under Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
London



FOREIGN OFFICE

26th. July, 1913.

Sing.

Sir:-

With reference to your letter No. 22306 of the 8th. instant, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith for the information of Mr. Secretary Harcourt copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Adis Ababa respecting the question of the compensation to be required for the murder of Captain Aylmer.

The draft of a telegram which it is proposed to address to Mr. Thesiger in reply is also enclosed, and Sir E. Grey would be glad to learn as soon as possible whether Mr. Harcourt concurs in the terms of this draft.

I am, etc

Sir,

Your most obedient,
humble servant,

W Langley

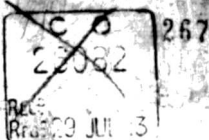
Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office.

* No

C P

ADIS ABABA.

June 27th, 1913.



Sir,

I have the honour to report that I met the Council of Ministers yesterday and asked what answer they had to give me with regard to the rectification of the frontier. They again appealed for time, pointing out that there were now only three Ministers in Adis Ababa and that they could not take the responsibility of giving me an answer in either sense, as whatever decision was ultimately come to must have the consent and approval of (Lij) Yasu and the chiefs, and that more time was needed to correspond with them. I finally consented to wait for another month subject to the approval of His Majesty's Government.

With regard to your telegram No.9 of the 21st instant, I would point out that these hunters while refusing to recognise the authority of any local chief nevertheless live in their towns and camps, where these raids are openly planned, and that there is no doubt that the soldiers of these chiefs join in them whenever the

Right Honourable

Sir E. Grey, Bart., M.P.,

&c., &c., &c.

the humour seizes them. If any complaint is made the chief or local officer professes ignorance and if ordered to arrest the offenders merely gives them a hint to move on into the next district and reports to Adis Ababa that they have fled out of his country and that he is powerless. The Government here are fully aware of this but either out of apathy or inability to control their officers they merely express their regret to me and say that fresh orders will be sent down to the officer of the district in which the men in question are supposed to have taken refuge, and express the hope that if these men are found in our territory they will be made prisoners or if they refuse to surrender shot without mercy.

Affairs in this country are fast coming to a crisis. Lij Yasu is in the North and apparently declines to keep in communication with the Ministers here, of whom there are now only three in Adis Ababa and they openly acknowledge they have no power to settle anything.

Orders from Adis Ababa are simply ignored by provincial

provincial chiefs and by every mail I receive fresh complaints from Harrar and Gondar of the infringement of Treaty Rights, of abuses concerning the freedom of trade and of the way in which British subjects are treated and even in Adis Ababa it is only by constant representations and after months of delay that I can ever obtain justice for our subjects, while with regard to the provinces I can do nothing, as even when the written orders are shown to me and forwarded perhaps through my hands they are treated as so much waste paper or met with futile excuses; and all remonstrances here merely result in fresh promises which are never fulfilled.

I have for a long time warned the Ministers both individually and collectively of the dangers of the road they are treading and in private conversation they honestly confess that, while seeing the truth of what I say, they dare not repeat it or support me before the other Ministers for fear of the accusation, which hangs over every official's head, of having sold his country to the foreigner.

It is for these reasons that I would urge to the

utmost

utmost the necessity of seizing the occasion of the death of Captain Aylmer to prove clearly to the Ethiopian Government that there are limits to our patience. The matter is recognized as a very grave one and if we take strong action upon it it will be nothing more than they expect and it will not be misconstrued by Abyssinian public opinion and in their hearts will give us credit. If we fail to do so we shall deal a very severe lesson to Europe and Africa here, which given the present chaotic state of the country will have fatal results in the end.

Mr. Walker, in a dispatch which I have just received, reports the rising prevalence of frontier chiefs like Derach Jemel, who are the authors of frontier raids still unpunished although repeated orders have been sent down from Addis Ababa to arrest them, and I am convinced that, if heavy reparation is not exacted for Captain Aylmer's death, our position here, and especially that of foreigners in the provinces, will be intolerable and there will be a great outburst of disorder on the frontiers.

I would therefore most earnestly recommend when the month's delay which I have further granted them, has elapsed that I may be authorized to put forward a definite demand for the punishment of the murderers, the rectification of the frontier on the lines desired by us and the payment of an indemnity which shall not exceed 300,000 or fall below 200,000 dollars; allowing them a stated period for their reply, long enough to enable them to call back, if they so wish, Liq Yasu or any of the Ministers who may be present, and giving them clearly to understand that a refusal to meet our wishes will mean the breaking off of relations between the two countries with all the consequences which may ensue.

Nothing short of this will I am convinced bring them to a sense of the impossibility of any continuation of the present state of affairs.

That they will face the results of such a refusal I cannot believe, while I do think it may force them to pull themselves together and institute some form of government which will be more than an empty name.

I understand fully that the off chance of a refusal

cannot be overlooked but in my opinion the risks which
could be incurred by leniency in the present case out-
weigh the dangers of severity.

Abyssinia will listen to no advice, follow no
counsel, and the present Government cannot enforce even
their own laws; if left to herself, I believe that the
disintegration of the country from inside can only be
a question of a few more years and that the only
chance of checking the process is a sharp reminder
that Great Britain will not tolerate the consequences
of their misgovernment.

The delay which I have given them of one month
has enabled me to put forward these views in writing
and I would ask that I may receive telegraphic in-
structions as to the course I am to follow.

I am addressing copies of this despatch to Lord
Kitchener and the Governor of the East African Pro-
tectorate.

I am &c.,

(Signed)

Wilfred G. Thesiger.

Draft

Telegram to Mr. Theisiger (Adis Ababa).

No. July

Your despatch No. 42 of June 27.

If by breaking off relations you mean merely to remain at Adis Ababa but to hold no official communication with the Abyssinian Government until they agree to your terms you may use this threat but there can be no question of your leaving Adis Ababa or of committing H.M.G. to any use of force such as a military expedition.

Compensation which still appears excessive might be reduced to maximum of 150,000 dollars and minimum of 100,000 dollars and demand should be for execution of those chiefly responsible for murder instead as originally suggested not less than ten. You should also bear in mind considerations respecting threats contained in my telegram No. 14 (of July 18).

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1st Aug
1913
Mr Sec Harcourt

Sr
I am to add the rest of

DRAFT.

The U.S. of S
Foreign Office

- MINUTE 30/7/13
- Mr. Jewell 31/7/13
- Mr. Read
- Sir G. Fisher
- Sir H. Just.
- Sir J. Anderson.
- Lord Emmott.
- Mr. Harcourt.

Your letter of the 26th of July*

(No 33473/13) ~~related~~ with enclosure

relative to the question of the

compensation to be required for the

murder of Capt. Agnew, and to
request you to inform Sec Sir I

Gray that the S. of S. concurs in
the terms of the tel which I enc

Copy to be forwarded to

* No 26082
+ LF

8: P.