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Conf
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1917

UNREST IN TURKHANA

10 Aug

Transm. by Comdt, K.A.R. on present situation. Expresses opinion unrest is of Abyssinian rather than Turkish organization and that force to be reckoned with is that of Abyssinian leader Asara. In circles explained it is possible to postpone consideration of a punitive expedi. Reports as to assistance from Sudan & proposed occupation Boma Plateau

Last previous Paper.

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See on 49944

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13-10-17

S. J. R.

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Next subsequent Paper.

49942

AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

No. 131.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

NAIROBI.

BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

CONFIDENTIAL.

August 10th, 1917.

Sir,

In continuation of my Confidential despatch No.106 dated the 26th of June on the subject of the unrest in Turkana, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a confidential memorandum by the Commandant, King's African Rifles, regarding the present situation.

2. In my Confidential despatch No.72 dated the 25th of April 1917, I expressed the opinion that peace and order would not be restored until the Turkana living north of Laburr had been subjected to severe punitive measures and until their country had been taken under administration by officers supported by such a force as is necessary to patrol that area constantly.

3. This

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WALTER LONG, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET,

LONDON, S. W.

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10298MemorandumMajor DarleyS.O. K.A.R.4
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2.

3. This opinion was expressed before Captain Rayne's encounter with a body of the raiders on May 17th, and information which has been collected as a result of and subsequent to that encounter has led me to believe that the spirit underlying the unrest is of Abyssinian rather than of Turkana organisation.

4. Captain Rayne is of the opinion that the Turkana situation has been misunderstood. He considers that the Turkana themselves do not count and that they would collapse if left to their own resources. The force to be reckoned with is that of the Abyssinian leader Apará, who, with his following of unadministered natives from the Marille, Donyiro and other tribes, presents a much more serious proposition than has previously been recognized. Over these tribes, Apará has secretly acquired enormous influence, and his followers provide finer fighting material than the Turkana. He is a courageous, capable man, and his word is law from Laburr to the Kagwalas River.

5. The disasters suffered by Apará on his raid into Dodoso in May have no doubt

doubt had their effect on the morale of his followers, and Captain Rayne does not consider it probable that he will come south again this year. At the same time, he is a force still to be reckoned with and peace cannot be restored in the area near Lake Rudolf until he has been finally beaten.

6. No active operations against him are considered necessary in the immediate future, and it is therefore possible to postpone consideration of the necessity of a punitive expedition.

7. On receipt of news of the unrest in Turkana in May, I communicated with the Governor-General, Khartoum, asking whether, in the event of punitive operations being necessary, the Soudan Government would be prepared to cooperate with our forces by patrolling the area north of the boundary. On July 11th I received a reply from His Excellency intimating that he would be glad to cooperate with a force of 200 rifles with two machine guns and half a company of Mounted Infantry, the object of sending so large a force being the possibility of subsequently undertaking a visit to the Dodinga country. This willing promise of assistance from the Soudan Government

assures

assures the success of operations which may eventually have to be conducted but I consider that the matter can be left over at any rate until the situation in Jubaland, caused by the decision to reoccupy Serenli, has settled down and troops can be withdrawn from that area without danger.

8. A communication on the subject has been received from Major Darley who is intimately acquainted with the neighbourhood of Laburr and the natives there. He is of the opinion that the crux of the situation is the occupation of the Boma Plateau, which is under the administration of the Soudan. I transmit a copy of Major Darley's letter on the subject together with a covering letter from the Staff Officer, King's African Rifles.

I propose to address the Soudan Government suggesting the occupation of the Boma Plateau as recommended by Major Darley. Were this done, a net work of British posts would be established round the area and administration of the whole area could be effected when we were able to deal with the matter.

9. For the present, therefore, I do not consider it necessary to formulate plans for

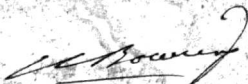
for offensive operations, but I will submit my further recommendations when troops are available to send into this area.

10. A copy of this despatch is being sent to the Governor-General, Khartoum, the Governor of Uganda and His Britannic Majesty's Minister, Adis Ababa.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,



ACTING GOVERNOR.

INCLOSURES

16/10/1917 No. 10192/S.O. 11309

Commandant's Office, King's African Rifles
Nairobi. July 29th. 1917.

CONFIDENTIAL.

FROM:- The Commandant.
King's African Rifles.

TO:- The Hon'ble The Chief Secretary
to the Government. Nairobi.

MEMORANDUM:-

Reference Turkana Unrest.

Ref. your No.S. 16555/118 of 16. 7. 1917, 16555/127 of
24. 7. 1917. and 16555/129 of 26. 7. 17.

PROPOSED PUNITIVE EXPEDITION TO LABUR.

The proposal that such an expedition should be undertaken
was made prior to Captain Rayne's fight with Abyssinians near
AKOT PASS

This action disclosed the presence of large numbers of
armed and organised Abyssinians in British Territory.

As a result, it was decided after a Conference at Govern-
ment House, at which General Hoskins was present, that the policy
in Turkana would have to be mainly defensive until such time as
re-inforcements were available, and that as it was impossible to
say when any further troops could be spared for Turkana, the pro-
posed expedition to LABUR would have to be indefinitely postponed.

Since this Conference, sanction has been given for the
re-occupation of SERENLI, and as it is also possible that further
active measures may be necessary in that area at any time in the
near future, it is unlikely that sufficient troops could be with-
drawn from Jubaland and the N. F. D. for the proposed expedition
and could be assembled at Nairobi before ^{January} 1918 at the earliest, and
then only provided no fresh complications had arisen in Jubaland
in the meanwhile, I consider therefore that it is impracticable at
the present time to make any further suggestions regarding this
expedition, and suggest that the matter be left over until such
time as I am in a position to make some definite statement as to
when

when the necessary troops will be available.

Meanwhile, all possible information likely to be of value is being collected, and plans for the Expedition are being drawn up, which will be available when required.

PRESENT SITUATION IN TURKANA.

According to the latest information (Capt. Hayne, Natir, 22. 6. 1917), the bulk of the large body of Abyssinians who recently raided DODOSO have gone north, while APARAS party, which is said now to be reduced in numbers, has moved from LOMOGOL north to the KATOMI River, fearing the approach of Government troops.

A party of Swahilis, sixty strong, is reported to have fled in panic on the reported approach of our troops.

Captain Rayne is of the opinion that the Abyssinians will not come south again this year, and considers that Mr. Bruce was mistaken in believing that Abyssinians were collecting near the KALABATA River.

Nothing more has been heard of the anticipated raid by a force from that locality.

Captain Rayne has decided to establish his Base on or in the vicinity of PELEGECH, and apparently to close down LOKIRIAMA - this in preference to establishing it at NEPASS, as was suggested to him by Mr. Crampton. He proposes shortly to make a drive through semi-hostile Southern Turkana from north to south.

To sum up, it appears:-

- (1) that no hostile raids on a large scale are anticipated from Northern Turkana, and that immediate active operations against LABUR are not necessary, were they feasible, to prevent such raids.
- (2) That Captain Rayne will be well situated and has sufficient force to deal with any more raids from that direction.
- (3) That he proposes shortly to conduct operations against the Southern Turkana, which should have the effect of preventing further

further raids by them on the SUK, etc.

(4) That the situation generally in Turkana is easier, and need cause no apprehension.

CO-OPERATION BY THE SUDAN GOVERNMENT.

With the indefinite postponement of the proposed expedition, it is now no longer necessary to proceed with arrangements for the immediate co-operation of troops from the Sudan, nor is it practicable to make suggestions or draw up plans for co-operation until such time as the date and all details in connection with the Expedition have been definitely decided upon.

I would suggest therefore that the Governor General of the Sudan be informed accordingly, and that the reasons for the delay be clearly explained to him.

At the same time, from Major Darby's letter enclosed with the Staff Office 101/95/S.O. of the 15th. instant, it would appear that the occupation of the Boma Plateau by troops from the Sudan would both assist in preventing further raids into British Territory, and in the event of an expedition being sent to LABUR, would cut off one of the enemy's main lines of retreat.

The occupation of the Plateau would entail no co-operation on our part, and, although primarily to our benefit, would, in the long run, probably be found advantageous to the Sudan, since I understand that the Plateau itself is a healthy and rich country.

At the same time, its occupation might well be taken as the first phase in the operations against LABUR.

I would repeat therefore the suggestion contained in para. 1 of memo 101/95/S.O. that the Governor General be asked whether he is prepared to take the necessary action in this connection.

Should H. H. The Acting Governor have decided to act in accordance with the suggestion contained in para. 2 of the memorandum

memorandum afore mentioned, I presume that the Governor General will be informed both of the request and of the British Minister's reply when received.

E. H. Llewellyn

Brigadier General.

Commandant - King's African Rifles.

No. 101/93/S.O.

Staff Office, King's African Rifles.
Nairobi. July, 17th. 1917.

FROM:- The Staff Officer.
King's African Rifles.

TO:- The Hon'ble The Chief Secretary
to the Government. Nairobi.

MEMORANDUM:-

Reference Turkana Unrest.

I attach a copy of a private letter received from Major Darley, who as you are aware, is intimately acquainted with the Country and people in question.

The Commandant, King's African Rifles, suggests:-

1. That the Sudan Government be asked whether they can put a Post on the Boma Plateau, with a view to preventing raiders entering Turkana.
2. That the British Minister at Addis Abbaba be asked to approach the Abyssinian Government, with a view to having those raiders whose names we know, and any other noxious persons at Maji, deported.

R. E. Critchley Salmonson

Major.

King's African Rifles Staff.

Lady Colvilles' Home.

Nairobi.

July 8th. 1917.

Dear Critchley-Salmonson,

re our conversation the other day. These are my ideas

I should not make a forward Post in front of your present position west of the Turkwell. The present one protects the South Turkana fairly well or at least as well as possible, and you will always have plenty of intelligence prior to any raids coming along the main road or the Rudolf trail.

The main road leaves the Boma Plateau and goes to the end of the LIORO (map LAURA) River to EL.BUGOI, follows along the LIORO River to LOLIMI where it forks either to MOGILA to the East, to ZULIA to the South, or else to TOPOSA (LOKADIAN) to the West.

The trail down the KEEBISH River can only be used during certain times of the year. This place LOLIMI on the LIORO River is the best place for a Post, as the Toposans grew plenty of metaimah and have only of recent years been driven away from there. It is easy to defend. This place however belongs to the Soudan, and will be ages before they get there. As things are at present

I was in your shoes I should write to Thesiger stating the names of the raiders. He will have them arrested. It would also be as well to have all that gang of Beluchis, Arabs, Persians and Swahilis, which inhabits Maji collared and fired out of Abyssinia at the same time. From what he writes to me, I gather

the present Government of Abyssinia wishes to be friendly with the English, and so they may fall in with his wishes. It is the one time for many years that it may be possible for him to get rid of this gang of ruffians. Even now, while I write, his opportunity may have passed. I explain myself badly, but Abyssinian

Politics are hard to follow, and always remind me of Kipling's Jungle Song of the Monkeys. Brother your tail hangs down behind as they are always twisting off from one question to another.

I need not impress on you my opinion that until the Boma Plateau is occupied, you will constantly be bothered by these raids. You can only hope that no Chief of any importance takes a hand

Yours sincerely

(Signed) Henry A. C. Dalry.