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Office
1914
5 Dec
Last previous Paper.
No. 48818
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German East Africa

Forward copies of correspondence as
to the "Kaiserberg" and Dar es Salaam

Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]
Mr. G. Fiddens

Putty?

Wed 8/11/14

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H. J. D.

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No. 49218
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War Office,

Whitehall,

S. W.

5th December, 1914.

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H. D. M. O.

The Director of Military Operations, presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, and begs to forward for his information, copies of telegrams dealing with the operations in East Africa.

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From Senior Naval Officer, "Fox," Mombasa, to Admiralty.

5th December, 1914, 6.10 p.m.

(No. 91.)

Reference to Admiralty telegram, 4th December. Following steps taken to date to ascertain result of bombardment of Government offices, railway terminus, &c., Dar-es-Salaam.

Unsuccessful endeavour to land female prisoners, evening 30th November. Landed females, Dar-es-Salaam, from dhows flying flag of truce, 2nd December, but information obtainable of little value: dhows not allowed to approach within sight of inner harbour and town. About 50 khaki European troops seen near entrance to harbour, 3 men hauling apparently small field gun; 25 tents pitched near Upanga village.

My letter of protest delivered to Acting Governor, and reply received to-day, 4th December. Full of demonstrable inaccuracies, finishing with extraordinary statement that Germans, owing to intense fire, have been unable to haul down white flag. No sort of apology; mere statement that we have broken agreement. Only artillery used by enemy light and extremely mobile; small guns, possibly 2-pr. and a 7-pr. or 9-pr., probably old saluting guns, whose shooting is very inaccurate. Position located approximately, but can be changed with rapidity. Impracticable for "Fox" to approach unbroken dock with safety. Narrow channel, strong currents, and no view of town or Government offices obtainable until well past, i.e. to the south of dock-blocking channel. Channel easily mined, and is probably shallowly mined now. Sweeping difficult and risky and, in view of blocked channel, of little use.

Regarding dependence on flag of truce, all commanding officers warned verbally and in writing to be ready for any possible contingency. Personally from information received, especially that of Mr. King, late Consul at Dar-es-Salaam, and now interpreted to 24th November, who knew intimately Dar-es-Salaam Government and authorities, I did not expect, although prepared for, opposition. When Evenden, to General's surprise, refused to guarantee no opposition, although knowing bombardment involved, decision had to be made either—

- (a.) I commence operations, taking risk of quality of possible opposition, or
- (b.) Postpone operations for several days pending augmentation of my force, completion of "Duplex" engine defects, &c., in which case Dar-es-Salaam would have been put thoroughly on the alert and future opposition made proportionately stronger.

With regard to further bombardment it is, owing to remarkable topography of town, impracticable to observe fire upon Government buildings, railway terminus, &c., from any vessel in communication with fire ships. Only seizure of land or use of hydroplanes can ensure accurate observation of fall of shot. Hydroplane and most of the small armed craft are now in use against "Königsberg" and until "Chiant" has finished these "Königsberg" operations and can release above it is difficult for us to frame plans, either naval or combined, for further operations against Dar-es-Salaam.

Admiralty telegram, 5th December, re armed steamers on Lake Victoria Nyanza, &c., has been received. Discussing this and matters above mentioned with General Officer Commanding and military authorities, meeting to be held at Mombasa, 5th December.

Repeated to Commander-in-Chief, East Indies.

From Naval Attaché to Marine, Bordeaux.

5th December, 1914, 10.30 p.m.

(No. 1141.)

Reply to your No. 202. It seems quite safe for the "Vancluse" to cross from Durban to Madagascar. We do not believe any enemy ship to be free in the Indian Ocean, west of the meridian of Maldives.

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From Marine, Bordeaux, to F.N.A., Admiralty.

(No. 202)

5th December, 1914, 10.30 p.m.

We intend to recall to Madagascar the transport "Vaneluse" waiting at Durban. The "Konigsberg" being bottled up, we think this can be done without inconvenience. Please let me know what the Admiralty think, and if possible the regions of the Indian Ocean where the German Auxiliary Cruisers are.

From F.N.A. to Marine, Bordeaux.

(No. 1142)

5th December, 1914, 11.30 p.m.

Exploration by aeroplane has shown that "Konigsberg" has been able to go up the river higher than was thought. The banks are fortified by trenches. It appears impossible to destroy her with the means at hand, and it would not be safe to consider her as bottled in if a cruiser were not told off to watch the entrance.

It seems that the only practical way to deal with her would be to use an armoured gunboat with a rather big gun and a draught not exceeding about 12 feet. Admiralty would be very obliged if you would let them know whether the "Styx" is available and could undertake this operation.

From H.M.S. "Chatham," Zanzibar, to Admiralty.

(No. 21)

5th December, 1914, 2.30 a.m.

Result of two reconnaissances with hydroplane on 3rd and 4th December, carrying observer for first time, as follows—

"Konigsberg" shifted a little higher up, approximately latitude south 7° 53', longitude east 35° 16' N.N.W. of Watasa Head, N.N.W. see German chart. Topmast struck, awning spread so unable to see guns, ship upright. Somali appeared burnt out. Conspicuous camp noted at Kiomboni, Suminga Island, and Nelsie. This, the first view obtained at low water spring, showed German chart, which is largest available, apparently inaccurate as regards channels and breadth and shape of creeks which appeared broader at low water than was considered possible from chart. Kiomboni and Masala branch appeared impossible. Although there are numerous banks in upper reaches of Simba Wanga and Kikunga branches there appears sufficient breadth remaining covered by water, very shallow in parts, to make it possible for passage of a ship at high water springs, although navigation will be extremely slow and difficult, and buoyage will be necessary for a considerable distance. Effectual blocking of both these entrances will require a large number of ships and considerable difficulty in placing them correctly. As regards Suminga branch, although "Newbridge" lies directly across centre channel, another block ship now appears necessary between "Newbridge" and north bank and possibly one between "Newbridge" and south bank. Navigation of Suminga branch south of south latitude 7° 30' possibly impossible for "Konigsberg" except at high water springs, owing to banks in channel, and each occasion that "Konigsberg" has moved up river from original position of Sarari has been at high water springs. Consequently, "Konigsberg" could descend Suminga branch from present position except at high water springs at which time it now appears probable Simba Wanga and Kikunga branch would also be possible of exit. Therefore, further blocking of Suminga branch would appear unnecessary, waste as it would be still necessary to watch other two entrances at high water springs; further movements of "Konigsberg" can be watched by means of seaplane making occasional reconnaissances at high water springs.

Necessary to retain "Kinfauns Castle" for this purpose to be relieved at other times by another ship as reported in my telegram No. 14.

As regards object 3, destruction of "Konigsberg" latest reconnaissance confirms previous opinion destruction by light draught vessels at long range is impossible for reasons stated in my telegram No. 14. To engage "Konigsberg" would be necessary

for light draught vessels to approach very close range and under such conditions and with such river banks held by enemy an armoured light draught vessel with one or two 6-inch B.L. guns is necessary, similar to new Monitors. This appears the only possible way of getting at "Konigsberg". Owing to small size of bombs permanent injury to "Konigsberg" by bomb attack is very doubtful. For reasons given already I do not now propose using "Assuan" for blocking purposes but to retain her at Zanzibar under guns of "Bergas" in case subsequently required. "Goliath" has orders to proceed to Simons town forthwith. "Chatham" proceeds to Zanzibar, 6th December, for 900 tons of coal, and then to Mombasa to embark 500 rounds of ammunition for 6-inch B.L. guns and stores; also very desirable to have 4 days at Mombasa, with all fires out, to repair capstan and fan engines and auxiliary machinery.

If possible, very desirable to dock "Chatham" at early date, as bottom in very foul condition and for examination of propeller shaft and ship's bottom; ship was last docked 8 months ago at Malta.

Repeated to Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, and Commander-in-Chief, Cape.

From Brigadier General Wellesley to War Office.

(No. 81 S.)

6th December, 1914, 2.30 p.m.

Three transports leave for India today. Between now and 15th December the others follow, with the exception of "Edin Tolls" and "Barbara". These two I propose to retain permanently for the purpose of operations now commencing on the coastline towards the Umba valley, and for other work. For these operations and for eventual offensive operations, I propose to retain Colonel Bailey as Base Commandant, and Colonels Raddy and * Astle as Assistant Directors, Supply and Transport Corps, and Medical Officer for the whole of the forces in British East Africa.

Repeated to Chief of the General Staff.

* These two groups are interchangeable.

From Senior Yeoman Officer, Post, Mombasa, to Admiralty.

(No. 86.)

7th December, 1914, 12.30 a.m.

"Kinfauns Castle" reports—

Strong German sparks overheard 4 p.m. 6th December DRK from DFN ten letter groups but could not decipher.

Have sent groups to Simla for possible decipher. DRK is "Rappenfels" captured Colombo 8th August.

Fain of opinion that messages may be bogus ones from "Tabora" or "Dar-es-Salaam" endeavouring to lure "Kinfauns Castle" away from guarding "Konigsberg", but an ordering to Goliath, Zanzibar so as to be in more central position.

Repeated to Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, and Commander-in-Chief, Cape.

From Senior Naval Officer, East Coast Africa, Zanzibar, to Admiralty.

(No. 22.)

7th December, 1914, 7.36 p.m.

H.M.S. "Chatham" arrived.