

E. AFRICA  
GENERAL

19455

Recd  
Recd 28 MAY 14

19455

Foreign Office

Ivory legislation - Conference.

1914

27 May

at previous Paper.

19455

- Portuguese

Sends reply of Belgian delegates re: German  
objection to Legation Protocol without assurance  
in regard to arms question - & notes of  
conversation with Mr. von Kahlmann on the subject

~~Mr. G. F. F. F.~~  
Mr. Strachey.  
Mr. G. F. F. F.

It now appears that the German  
Govt are ready to take up the question  
of the importation of arms & amm.  
into Africa. You will see that von  
Kahlmann in his note of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May  
attached to  $\frac{70}{19075}$  no longer speaks of West  
Africa but of Africa.

The Brussels Conf<sup>ce</sup> 1904 broke down  
because we were unable to obtain satisfaction  
from the French with regard to the arms  
traffic at (A) Mousat, & (B) Jibouti.

A satisfactory agreement has at last been  
arrived at with regard to (A), so that the  
stumbling-block has been removed, &  
with

Equivalent Paper.

14.

with regard to (B), they have apparently expressed their readiness to control the traffic + imposed regulations for that purpose. On the other hand Sir W. Langley tells me that they have now indisputable proof that the Fr. minister at Addis Ababa (mons. Bruce) is mixed up in the traffic, so that we may well have our doubts as to how far the regulations at Jubate will be effective. Still the main question seemed equally hopeless at one time + this has now been satisfactorily settled. As to the arms question - N.E. Africa is a matter of vital importance for S. land, the Sudan, + the E.A.P. that I think that we sh. be not only support the Germans in their efforts to bring about a conf. but also try to rope in the Fr. If we work entirely with the Germans, we are much more likely to have difficulties with the French.

With regard to the scope of the conf., I think that we should at the least press for a discussion of the arms traffic in the zone defined by the General Act of the Brussels Conf. 1889-90, or practically the whole of tropical Africa. But, at the 1908 Conference, we were going even further than this, as the Egyptian + Sudan govts wanted the traffic regulated in their territories, + the Belgians in the Congo.

See Art. 1 of the Convention of 1908, para 1 + 2

I think, therefore, that I sh. be prepared to express <sup>her</sup> ~~our~~ readiness, if it will assist matters, to discuss the arms traffic in the whole of Africa north of the southern boundary of the zone defined by the General Act. 2.3

I think too, that we sh. be trying to get the conference (if it ever comes off) held in London, because

(1) It will attract more attention if it is held here under the presidency of someone of importance, + there will be a better chance of public opinion being stirred up at home in the country but on the Continent

(2) The impartiality of the Belgian president is not above suspicion. Belgium is much interested in the gun trade + during the Conference of 1908 Sir A. Hardinge had occasion to refer to one of his deep <sup>causes</sup> to the vicious behaviour of M. Capelle (the Belgian President of the ~~1908~~ conf.) at one of the sittings when the question of the duties on arms + amm. was under discussion.

? Feb. 1905 + 1906, + say that

Mr. Hancock thinks that H.M.'s feet  
should readily support the former foot.  
in their effort to call a conference on  
the Arms Traffic in Africa but that he  
is strongly of opinion that the discussion  
should not be confined to a portion of  
Africa but should embrace at any  
rate the zone defined by the former  
line, or if it will admit rather, the  
whole of Africa north of the 22nd  
parallel of South Lat. - that is think  
that it will be well to select the  
as a portion of the Fr. also. Pointing out  
the road as above with regard to  
Mogadishu & Jibuti - enlarge on the  
sides of the traffic in N.E. Africa  
& declare & urge that it must  
come from a purely commercial point of  
view be to the advantage of the  
Fr. to join with other Powers in  
removing the great obstacle in the way  
of the economic develop<sup>t</sup> of Africa -  
suggest that the Conference should if  
possible be held in London, for the

understand  
the Fr. want  
to say  
something about  
the  
Fr.

reason given above - with regard to  
the smaller scheme originally proposed by  
the former says that Mr. H. would be  
very reluctant to discuss this apart  
from the general question & that he  
could only consent to do so in the best  
event

H. J. D.  
29/12/14

I have already said - and I find  
Mr. H. Report fully agrees - that  
the prohibition of the importation of  
arms & ammunition into the G. Coast  
would be an act of gross tyranny -  
that would be possible would be  
to make the trade a Gt. monopoly  
through that would naturally be  
unpopular with the merchants,  
given other circumstances inpossible  
for Gt. trading -  
As far as the Colonies in this division  
are concerned relying on the justice  
of our rule, and the superiority  
of our organized forces would still  
very inferior weapons as has no  
reason to fear nations would not  
trade goods - 29/12/14

I see that Col. Hume makes on behalf of the  
Belgian side, just the same objections that we made.

I see no reason why the whole subject of the imputation  
of arms shall not be separately discussed as proposed  
by N. Reed. This amounts to nothing. But I doubt  
whether the Germans really want such a comprehensive  
discussion. The supposition that they do is a rather  
stale basis - the use of the word 'Africa' instead of  
'West Africa' in a private letter from Herr von Kuhlmann  
to Mr. Craigie. As regards West Africa we are under contract with the  
present situation. We are prohibited imputation of arms  
We undertake any international agreement.

I agree - making it clear that we  
are thereby committed to nothing more  
than reading and discussing.

W. 29 5 14

H. 20 5 14



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May 27

Dear Read,

As arranged this afternoon  
I send you a copy of the  
record of my conversation  
with Kuhlman today  
and 2 copies of Col. Henry's  
communication

yours sincerely

Wheeler

Game Conference.

19455

Please see annexed letter from

Belgian

REG. 28 MAY 14

delegate which is in reply to Herr  
letter to me of the 23rd inst.

I showed this to-day to Herr von Kuhlmann 292  
and remarked that it would be a great pity if we  
allowed our draft protocol to remain unsigned  
because one of the Powers - and possibly others,  
for this was the first reply received - could not  
authorise their delegate at the Conference to give  
the assurance suggested in his letter of the 23rd  
instant. He agreed but said that his Govt.  
attached great importance to ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ getting the  
question discussed soon and that the declara-  
tion they had proposed was entirely innocuous.  
However the Belgian refusal made it clear that  
the matter could now not be arranged in the  
manner he had suggested.

He asked whether he did not see a way out of  
this difficulty and he said that he thought that,  
if H.M.G. agreed in principle to support  
~~XXXX~~ proposal for the prohibition of arms if  
they would support the German Govt. directly  
in getting such measure of the kind accepted by the  
Powers interested, the German Govt. would be  
prepared to add their signature of the  
protocol by their delegate. I gather that the  
German draft protocol <sup>was</sup> only a tentative proposal  
and that the German Govt. would be quite ready to  
consider any amendments as regards its form and the  
area to which it should be made applicable. His  
idea was that the British and French Govts. should  
first come to some agreement through the  
diplomatic channel, as to the best form in which  
the proposal should be put forward to the other  
Powers.

19455

REC'D  
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I said that I would at once direct the suggestion to the proper quarter.

He mentioned in the course of our conversation that Mr. B. report had told him that there was a favour of the principle involve (the principle would be that of Mr. B. report) which would see something of the kind adopted.

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To sum up, the suggestion is that I will express our approval in principle of the arrangement proposed and agree to assist them in the execution of the suggestion required by the XXXX. I will be ready to sign the draft (with the exception of the elephants, leaving details <sup>of the arms proposal</sup> to be worked out between the two Governments later. The arrangement proposed in very general terms will be signed by XXXX on behalf of them; they will liaise with the Government of the living way on the former condition. It is they who are to bear the cost of the XXXX draft.

...

le Secrétaire,

*Londres, le 27 mai, 1914.*

J'AI l'honneur de vous faire savoir qu'en suite de votre note du 25 courant, me communiquant la lettre que M. von Kuhlmann vous adressait sous la date du 23 idem, j'ai pris les instructions de mon Gouvernement. Celui-ci estime que la protection de l'éléphant et le trafic des armes sont deux questions sans connexité étroite qui doivent être traitées séparément.

Ainsi qu'il a été dit au cours de la dernière séance de la Conférence, la fixation de zone dans laquelle l'importation des armes serait interdite ne tient pas compte des réalités de fait; c'est ainsi que pour le Congo belge, elle ne coïncide aucunement avec l'aire de dispersion de l'éléphant. Ces deux grands districts du nord-est — l'Uele et l'Aïri — où celui-ci abonde ne sont pas compris dans la zone, tandis que celui du sud-est du Congo, dans lequel l'éléphant ne se rencontre plus, s'y trouve inclus.

Mon Gouvernement répondra par la voie diplomatique, dans les délais nécessaires, à l'examen complet de son objet, à la proposition du Gouvernement Impérial allemand de réunir ultérieurement une nouvelle Conférence dans laquelle serait discutée la question de la restriction de l'importation des armes à feu et des munitions en Belgique.

La lettre de M. von Kuhlmann, dont il est question ci-dessus, vous avisant de ce qu'il ne pourra signer le protocole de la présente Conférence sans l'assentiment de ses collègues, les délégués à la condition qu'il pose et celui-ci ne pouvant vous être donné par moi, je considère ma mission comme étant terminée.

Je vous prie d'agréer, M. le Secrétaire, avec mes remerciements réitérés pour votre bienveillance constante, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

E. HENRI,

*Délégué de la Belgique.*

M. le Secrétaire de la Conférence internationale  
pour la Protection du Rhinocéros et de  
l'Éléphant africains, Londres.



Monseigneur,

Londres, le 27 mai, 1914.

EN réponse à votre note verbale du 25 courant et à la lettre de M. le Délégué de l'Empire d'Allemagne du 23, dont vous avez eu l'obligeance de m'envoyer copie, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire part que le Gouvernement de la République portugaise, en référence à la note verbale du Département des Affaires Étrangères d'Allemagne, au sujet d'armes et munitions, étant d'accord avec le principe posé au Protocole, tout en réservant pour discussion ultérieure les conditions de son application, de la même manière que les autres pays intéressés, désirent voir, non seulement appliquer la restriction à la vente d'armes et munitions aux indigènes, mais aussi la prohibition de la vente de boissons alcooliques dans toutes les régions de l'Afrique où l'état arriéré des indigènes justifie une telle mesure.

Je suis, donc, à même de faire la déclaration à laquelle se rapporte la lettre de M. le Délégué d'Allemagne, Herr von Kühlmann.

Veuillez bien agréer, M. le Secrétaire, les assurances de toute ma considération.

D. CINATTI, C.G.C.

M. R. L. CRAIGIE, Secrétaire à la Conférence internationale pour la Conservation de l'Éléphant et du Rhinocéros en Afrique.

20/1945/14 Enigma

R. 6

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Downing Street,

6

June, 1914.

DRAFT.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir,

I am directed by your Secretary  
Harcourt to acknowledge the receipt of  
your letters (22793/14) and (23409/14) of  
the 15th of May regarding the recent  
conference for the protection of the  
elephant and rhinoceros in Africa *and  
the question which has been raised  
by the former part of a discussion with  
Herr von Kühlmann's letter of the 23rd  
of May to Mr Craigie, the German  
Government no longer wish to confine  
the discussion of the Arms traffic to a  
portion of West Africa but to open up  
a general discussion which would  
include other parts of Africa. I am  
to state, for Secretary Sir E. Grey's*

Information

MINUTE.

Mr. Read. 4 June/14

Mr. *Edwards* 4  
Mr. *Strackley*  
S. G. Fiddes. 4

Sir H. Just.

Sir J. Anderson.

Lord Emmott.

Mr. Harcourt. 27.5.6.14 *the Arms Traffic*

information, that Mr Harcourt considers that His Majesty's Government should readily agree to support them in their effort to arrange an International Conference.

3. I am, however, to request you to inform Mr Harcourt would, however, be Sir E. Grey that be very reluctant to discuss, apart from the general question, the question of the arms traffic in the limited area originally suggested by the German Government and could only consent to do so in the last resort.

4. He is strongly of opinion that the discussion should at least embrace the Zone defined by the General Act of the Brussels Conference of 1889-90, and, if it would help to secure agreement among the Powers, he would suggest that His Majesty's Government should ~~agree~~ <sup>consent</sup> to the scope of the Conference being enlarged so as to include the extended Zone proposed by the Arms Traffic Conference which was held at Brussels

Brussels in 1908 or even the whole of Africa north of the 22nd parallel of South latitude, the southern boundary of the present Zone.

5. It will of course be understood that, while it remains to a comprehensive discussion, Mr Harcourt is unable to commit himself beforehand to the acceptance of any definite scheme such as that which has been suggested by the German Government in the case of West Africa.

*Subject to his reservation*  
6. Having made this point clear Mr Harcourt hastens to add that he is anxious to do everything in his power to bring about an early meeting of a Conference, and he would suggest, for Sir E. Grey's consideration, that as a first step it would be politic for the British and German Governments to approach the French

French Government with a view to securing their co-operation.

Sir E. Grey will remember that the Brussels Conference of 1908 broke down because this country was unable to obtain satisfaction from France with regard to the arms traffic at Muscat and Jibuti. Mr Harcourt understands that a satisfactory arrangement has now been arrived at with France with regard to the traffic at the former place, and with regard to the traffic at Jibuti, the French Government have recently issued a Decree to regulate the importation of arms into Abyssinia, which, although it is very unlikely to prove efficacious, seems to indicate that they are beginning to realize the gravity of the situation and that there is no better prospect of obtaining their support.

*Print attached 70. General  
to 1958/10*

DRAFT.

In the letter from this Department of the 13th of March 1909, attention was called to the serious situation which was being produced by the action of the French Government with regard to the arms traffic in the Red Sea. During the five years which have elapsed since that letter was written the position in North East Africa has been somewhat altered. In Somaliland the situation is critical and has deteriorated for this year alone a substantial Imperial funds of no less than £27,000; in the Sudan there has been serious fighting on the Abyssinian frontier resulting in heavy casualties among the British officers and native ranks; while in the northern district of British East Africa the Protectorate Government have for some time been engaged in arduous and costly operations against

against the Marehan tribes. *it is still impossible to state when these operations can be brought to a close.*

9. It is not too much to say that the arms traffic at Jibuti is, in the main, responsible for these troubles and that no improvement can be hoped for until matters have been placed on a better basis. If, as has been suggested above, the measures which are now being taken by the French are quite insufficient for this purpose, Mr Harcourt cannot but think that the existence of a trade which is regarded by this country as illegal and is causing such serious injury to British interests will inevitably lead to mistrust and <sup>frustration</sup> misunderstanding between the two Powers.

10. But, apart from humanitarian considerations, there would seem to be sufficient inducement on purely commercial grounds for the French Government to co-operate with the other Powers in

taking effective measures to regulate the traffic in Arms and Ammunition. Jibuti with its railway into the interior is the natural entrance and exit for the trade of a considerable portion of Abyssinia and it is clearly to the interest of France that the economic development of that country should be ensured by a strong and peaceful administration. At the present time, however, intertribal fighting has reduced Abyssinia to a condition bordering on chaos and there can be no doubt that the wide distribution of arms and ammunition among the population has greatly contributed to this deplorable result.

11. Mr. Harcourt has <sup>made</sup> ~~referred~~ <sup>special reference</sup> to North East Africa as it is here that British interests are most seriously affected by the traffic,

but

but similar difficulties are being encountered by other Powers in other parts of the Continent, and, as his predecessor pointed out in the letter referred to above, the natural obstacles in the way of the development of Africa are so great that it is only by the exercise of mutual forbearance and good-will on the part of <sup>those</sup> ~~the European~~ Powers engaged ~~in the work~~ that any solid progress can be made. He trusts that this will be recognised by the French Government and that they will now be ready to lend their powerful support to the British and German Governments in their endeavours to restrict a traffic the injurious effects of which from every point of view are out of all proportion to the pecuniary benefit derived, for the time being, by the country engaged in it.

12. Finally Mr. Harcourt would

DRAFT.

*It is better to put it  
the way I have  
already talked to  
Sir H. Langley &  
H. R.*

would suggest for Sir E. Grey's consideration that, if there seems to be a good prospect of a Conference being arranged it should if possible be held in London. An alternative place of meeting would presumably be Brussels, but for reasons which <sup>have been explained</sup> ~~will~~ <sup>unofficially</sup> ~~no doubt~~ occur to Sir E. Grey also, it seems to Mr. Harcourt that a Conference held in this country is far more likely to have a successful issue.

I am, etc.,  
*Edw. Walter D. Bell*  
for the Under Secretary of State.