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Colonial Office

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19 April

List previous paper.

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Italian Aspirations

Correspondence with Italian Colonial Ministry (Barratt), mainly by Mr. Spedding as formal partner of negotiation, also memorandum on Ethiopia, Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Italian Colonial Empire, Communication - Africa, Economic Aspects, Economic Aspects of Italy in Africa.

W. B. St. J. J.

Registered for record.

Pub. by

Recd

17.4.20

W.B. St. J. J. 20.4.20 at home

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Next issue sent by

Lombard

122 avvent de 1910

L'Espresso

Je me suis empressé de communiquer à S. E. Scialoja la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser hier soir, sur la question de la franchise de l'industrie.

S. E. Scialoja se réjouit de vos idées personnellement.

Je présente à Votre Excellence, avec mes respectueux hommages, les sentiments de une profonde reconnaissance pour votre bienveillant accueil, et pour toutes les facilitations et les marques de sympathie et de courtoisie exprimées que j'ai eues ici dans l'accomplissement de ma mission.

En votre dévoué et très obéissant
serviteur

Edoardo Baccan

Dr. H. H. H. H.

This correspondence
should now be placed
on record.

H. H.

6/4/20.

R. Co

Sup

Levent

March 31/20

Dear Thornton

Send Milner write the
enclosed answer to Baccare
& ask me to send it off
at once - which has been
done - & to let you have
a copy

I am sorry for the typists
error on line 5

Ys sincerely

R Spurling

Sir W. Bland

Lord Palmer has not
yet seen this

Could you be available
at 3 p.m. today to
talk it over with
him?

Yes
30/1/20

Ernest Thornton

Certainly

A. J. Smith
30/1/20

~~Ernest Thornton~~
~~30/1/20~~

URGENT

Foreign Office

March 29th,

Dear Thornton,

Lord Curzon sent for me a few minutes ago to say that Signor Scialoja had expressed to him the hope that H.M.G. would cede to Italy the extra piece of Jubaland for which they were asking.

I explained the situation with regard to the African negotiations, about which, as it happened, I had just written the memorandum enclosed, because I had to refer for instructions on that identical point.

Lord Curzon said that he felt inclined to reply to Signor Scialoja that as we had already offered Italy Jarabub and had increased the area in Jubaland which we had previously offered, he thought the Italian Government had ample material on which to base a defence in Italy of the cession to Egypt of the strip of coast near Sollum.

At

interpretation of which has been a bone of contention between the two Governments since it was signed.

We maintain that the agreement gives His Majesty's Government territorial as well as "hydraulic" rights in that part of the Nile basin which lies in Abyssinia. The Italian Government claim that our rights are only "hydraulic", i.e. the control of the Nile waters. The Egyptian authorities say that they must exercise administrative rights in the Nile basin if they are to control the waters and that no compromise is possible on this point.

We cannot admit that British interests should be excluded from any part of Abyssinia especially that part in which they are already operating, and to which British capital is being increasingly attracted.

I have therefore told Signor Baccari that we cannot comply with the Italian request. He asks that the door may at least be left open for future discussions and I should propose to say that as Abyssinia is not a British colony or dependency the question does not arise out of the London Agreement of 1915, on the strength of which alone the Italian Government are entitled to any compensation from His Majesty's Government in Africa. The question is therefore left in statu quo.

(2) ~~Arabic~~. This is an attempt by the Italian Government to secure a political footing in Arabia under the guise of a request for trade facilities. After consulting the proper Department I have told Signor Baccari that we cannot admit that the treaties quoted

support...

support the Italian claim; that trade between the two shores of the Red Sea, apparently interrupted by the war, is now perfectly free and that there is nothing more for His Majesty's Government to concede.

(3) and (4) Sudan and Egyptian Frontier.

We have offered a rearrangement of the Egyptian frontier giving Italy Jarabub, which they are most anxious to get, and a good deal more territory, which looks imposing on the map, but has little intrinsic value. In return we have asked the Italian Government to give Egypt a strip of territory about ten miles wide on the Mediterranean and round Sollum. This territory is of no value to Italy except as a means of embarrassing the possible defence of Sollum. The net result is that so far as the Egyptian frontier is concerned, the concessions on either side about balance one another.

In Jabalana we have offered Italy nearly, but not quite all, the province of that name. This concession carries with it two useful ports, Kismayu and Port Burford, and a good deal of valuable territory. This is an increase on the offer made by Lord Milner to Signor Tittoni last year, but the Colonial Office consider that the boundary now proposed would be the best both for His Majesty's Government and Italy.

On referring home, Signor Baccari was informed that there were strong objections to Italy's asking the 10 mile strip and other incidents in the Egyptian arrangement. He thinks however that it can be done.

ATTESTED

acceptance of the two arrangements about Egypt and Jubaland respectively, if His Majesty's Government could see their way to regarding the remainder of the province of Jubaland,

The Colonial Office do not consider that they can make any further concession in Jubaland, and that the line of demarcation, which they have already offered, is the best possible boundary both from the military and political point of view. Consequently there is some danger that the whole negotiation may break down over this one point.

The result would be that Italy would not have accepted the compensation offered by His Majesty's Government under the treaty of 1914, though our offer - at any rate as regards Jubaland - can only be regarded as generous seeing that the treaty only refers to a rectification of frontiers.

Secondly, Italy would not get Jarabub, nor any increase of territory in Cyrenaica; on the other hand the frontier of Cyrenaica on the Mediterranean would run quite close to Sollum, where the presence of the Italians is regarded as very embarrassing by the Egyptian authorities. Italy might also defer recognition of the British Protectorate in Egypt which was to be a condition precedent to the readjustment of the Egyptian frontier.

Such are the pros and cons of the situation which might arise if we were to present Italy with an ultimatum that our present offer must be accepted or will be withdrawn altogether.

(5) Means of communication. This is so vague that I have asked Signor Barzani for a draft agreement, explaining what is meant by it. He has referred to K22, but has not yet been able to give me a draft. It is not an important matter.

important point.

(6) ~~...~~ Signor Baccari, seemed to have agreed to the establishment of Italian Consulates in Rome and Lagos. I gather that this is all that the Italian Government want.

(7) Angels. It was ascertained that the Italian Government desired the conclusion of an agreement similar to the secret agreement formerly existing between His Majesty's Government and Germany. In accordance with instructions I told Signor Baccari and the Italian Ambassador, who was present on that occasion, that any such arrangement was quite out of the question and added that they would be well advised to drop the proposal. I do not think we shall hear of it again.

(Signed) R. SPENCER.

29th March, 1920.

AFRICA

[November 1919]

CONFIDENTIAL

SECTION I

[183037]

No. 1.

Documents are to form the subject of an Agreement between the Government of His Majesty and the Government of the King - Communicated by Special Delegation in London. - (Received November 18, 1919.)

(Private)

1. ETHIOPIA (with one map⁵).
2. Arabia.
3. Adenland.
4. Frontiers between Cyrenaica and Egypt (with one map).
5. Joining up of ways of communication in Africa.
6. Commerce agreements.
7. Economic activities of Italy in Angola.

In respect of each of these questions a special memorandum is annexed. London, November 17, 1919.

Memorandum

No. 1. - Franco-Italian Agreement

Italy invites Great Britain to support the claims of Ethiopia, in which country there exist resources of great value for the civilization, and which is very far from attaining the economic development warranted by its extent, its wealth, and its fertility.

However, the Ethiopian Empire, although in a position to benefit from this condition of inferiority by the means at its disposal, has refused to accept all offers of help on the part of the three Powers, and that their economic, industrial, and financial survival would be the direct result of the present occupation.

Disturbed by this fact, Ethiopia has attempted to obtain by her own interests to secure concessions which have been refused to her separately, an object which the conflicting views of the three Powers has discouraged.

There is no reason why the three Powers should not, in their own interests, and that Great Britain, France, and Italy should without any additional cost, or without any collaboration for the benefit of Ethiopia.

It is evident that it is necessary to restore Ethiopia that Great Britain, France, and Italy should, by their industry and enterprise, as well as by their financial resources, take the initiative in approaching the Ethiopian Government, and by giving them a special and precise assurance that it is the joint intention of the three Powers to guarantee the integrity and independence of Ethiopia, each of the three Powers guaranteeing the fulfilment of the intention of the others.

The form of this assurance, which is in agreement with our loyal intentions, must be explicit and such as to inspire the most absolute confidence of the Ethiopian Government. It is necessary to prove to the Ethiopian Government that the three Powers are not merely to be satisfied by the exploitation of the resources of Ethiopia, but that they are to be satisfied by the development of the three Powers.

The three Powers, in their own interests, and that Great Britain, France, and Italy should, by their industry and enterprise, as well as by their financial resources, take the initiative in approaching the Ethiopian Government, and by giving them a special and precise assurance that it is the joint intention of the three Powers to guarantee the integrity and independence of Ethiopia, each of the three Powers guaranteeing the fulfilment of the intention of the others.

No. 4.—*Frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt.*

The Italian Government proposes to the British Government that the frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt should be defined, in conformity with the following proposals:

The line shall start from the Djibeli Sollu (Bosaso, Foin) and thence to the north-west, and then to the west in a direct line as far as the longitude 23° 30' Greenwich, then parallel 30' north, passing between Amara and Sollu, thence to the west to the Oasis of Bahariya, leaving the south-west to meet the 10° north parallel. It follows this parallel towards the west until it meets the line of demarcation between the French and English spheres of influence defined in the additional Declaration of the 11th March, 1894.

No. 5.—*Joining up of Ways of Communication in Africa.*

Great Britain and Italy recognize the economic right of joining up railway communications, caravan routes, and all other ways of communication which may be established in future in the Colonies.

Great Britain and Italy likewise agree that on the said ways of communication cumulative services of transport may be established, and that equality of treatment may be applied both to passengers and to goods.

No. 6.—*Commercial Agencies.*

Italy demands from Great Britain that the concession may be granted to her to establish commercial agencies in Abyssinia, in Darfur, in Cordofan, and in the Sudan with a view to facilitating commerce between those regions and the Italian possessions.

No. 7.—*Economic Activities of Italy in Africa.*

Italy has turned her attention to the Portuguese possessions in West Africa with a view to placing there a portion of her manufactures, and to procuring for her own industries the raw materials which she needs. Preliminary understandings of a friendly nature have been entered into with the Portuguese Government, and Italian companies have already begun their operations in this end of the view.

Italy requests that Great Britain should not be in any way suspect with the Portuguese Government in the smooth development of these relations which are purely economic, and she requests more particularly that the Government of the British Empire should in order that the Italian companies may establish their operations in respect of concessions granted to the latter by the Portuguese Government.

In view of the proposals made in respect of the control of the railway of the Sudan, the Italian Government desires to support in the most effective manner possible the economic activities of Italy in Africa, and she desires to see the frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt defined in conformity with the proposals made in the present document. Italy desires to see the frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt defined in conformity with the proposals made in the present document. Italy desires to see the frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt defined in conformity with the proposals made in the present document.

Italy recognizes the concession to Great Britain to run the railway from the frontier of Egypt to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, such railway, according to the Tripartite Agreement must pass to the west of Addis Ababa. It is understood that this railway, together with all the necessary works for its construction and for its running, must have an entirely free passage through the above-mentioned countries.

Italy demands from Great Britain—as she also reserves to herself the right to demand from France—exclusive economic influence in the west of Ethiopia and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway, and the promise to support with the Ethiopian Government all the demands for economic concessions regarding the territory.

The three high contracting parties will have to agree to meet collectively and by common accord, immediately after having given collectively and by common accord the above-mentioned legal assurances, under these requests, or all the demands for concessions of an economic character already known to the Ethiopian Government, since it is only thus possible, by eliminating suspicion, to remove all reasons for future dissension.

The Italian Government hopes that this statement, based on a true consideration of their common interests and of those of Ethiopia, herself, may be favourably received by the other two Governments.

In this trust, the Italian Government, after having examined separately the proposals, the predominant Anglo-Italian and Franco-Italian interests reserves to itself the right to demand that a common agreement shall be signed at once in detail, by an interchange of notes, the contents of which shall be subject to the ratification of the Anglo-Franco-Italian Governments in respect of the maintenance of economic order in Ethiopia.

Such a maintenance of economic order will be able to be realised by the assumption on the part of an Anglo-Franco-Italian company of monopolies of public works and services in respect of the whole of the territory of the Ethiopian Empire.

In the zones of respective influence the said monopolies, works, and public services will have to be sub-contracted to subjects or companies belonging to the State to which the zone of influence devolves.

The capital of the Ethiopian Empire will remain outside of all spheres of influence, and the respective monopolies, works, and public services will interest on an equal footing the three high contracting parties.

No. 8.—*Arabia.*

Referring to paragraph 10, B, of the Convention regarding the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf of Aden, signed at London on the 26th of May, 1913, the British Government, in conformity with the wishes expressed by the Italian Government, desires to see the frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt defined in conformity with the proposals made in the present document.

The British Government desires to see the frontier between Abyssinia and Egypt defined in conformity with the proposals made in the present document.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

END

TOTAL EXPOSURES →