

EAST AFR. PROT.  
SOUTH AFRICA  
HIGH COMMISSION

55650

Recd  
Dec 2 DEC 15

55650 *Mar*

Trans. Africa.

Anglo. Belgian Co. operation

1915

Dec. 1st

Telegram from the British at Harare

Last previous Paper

70 *1915**24/11/15**East. & Central  
S. Africa*in the papers of Belgian officers  
for conference as to East African operations

See no 55657

*Copy*

Next subsequent Paper:

70 *55657*  
*S. Africa*

161700  
15

55650

Immediate  
and  
Confidential.

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs  
presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for  
the Colonies and is directed by the Secretary of State to  
transmit the accompanying copy of a telegram as marked  
in the margin.

Foreign Office.

December 1, 1915.

(Similar letter sent to D. M. O.)

[This Document is the Property of His Britannic Majesty's Government,  
and should be returned to the Foreign Office when done with  
unless required for official use.]

BEIGIUM.

MILITARY.

Decypher. Sir F. Villiers (Havre)  
November 30th. 1915.

D. 4.45.p.m. November 30th. 1915.

R. 7.5.p.m.

No. 62.

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Your telegram No. 85.

Belgian Government have no staff officer here at present belonging to Colonial forces but an official of the Colonial Department and a military officer will be sent who can give all details respecting Belgian troops in East Africa. Also such information as Belgian Government possess with regard to enemy demonstration and intentions of Belgian Commander. They will of course be in close communication with Government here. They propose to arrive in London on Thursday morning.

Official in question is most competent and has thorough knowledge of all matters connected with operations in East Africa.

Military Officer has served in Eastern Congo.  
Despatch follows.

3) It is stated that all the Belgians  
have not been withdrawn from the  
S. frontier and that a Battalion  
still remains as a hope between  
Laken and Angoulême. But this  
appears to be a considerable distance  
from Angoulême and it is clear that  
we cannot rely on the Belgians  
for co-operation and  
hardly even for emergency assistance.

Put by (we can only wait  
and see what the War Office do)

Jan 2/2/15

Copies of these letters have been  
sent to the D.M.O. who will no  
doubt show them to Mr H. Smith-Barrow.

H. J. R.

3/2/15

I hope the War. will discuss fully &  
frankly with the Belgians & that it will  
be agreed that the French will be made  
free from all sides at once. It seems more  
playing into the Germans' hands for the  
Belgians to attack say in December &  
for us to attack say [in] February.

Mr 3/1/15

We had better leave the Belgian question  
severely alone. We are responsible for it & so  
is it better to believe them. Put by Mr 3/1/15

3/12/15

Am. War

(The other brilliant letter to the War. Office)

(3) It is stated that all the Belgians  
have not been withdrawn from the  
S. frontier and that a Battalion  
still remains at Liège between  
Laken and Angleur. But this  
appears to be a considerable distance  
from Belgium and it is clear that  
we cannot rely on the Belgians  
for co-operation and  
ready help in emergency situations.

Butly (we can only wait  
and see what he can do)

Jan 2/2/15

Copies of these letters have been  
sent to the D.M.O. who will no  
doubt show them to Sir H. Smith. Gornier.

H. J. R.

3/2/15

I hope the W.O. will discuss fully &  
frankly with the Belgians & that it will  
be agreed that the front will be made  
from all sides at once. It seems more  
plausible to attack from the  
Belgians to attack say in December &  
for us to attack say [in] February.

Mr 3/1/15

We had better leave the Belgian question  
severely alone. We are responsible for it & so.  
it's still in between them.

But by Mr 3/1/15

3/2/15

(The three battalions of the 1st Army)

In any further communication on this subject, please quote

No. 179800/1915

and address—

The Under-Secretary of State  
Foreign Office,  
London.

**Confidential**

55657

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The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents  
his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for *the*

*Bolivia* and, by-direction of the Secretary  
of State, transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned  
paper.

Foreign Office.

December 1, 1915.

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter <sup>to</sup> from Foreign Office: November 23 (163218)

Description of Inclosure.

| Name and Date.                                             | Subject                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Hon. Ministers at<br/>Home, No. 264<br/>November 26</i> | <i>Operations in Africa</i> |

(Similar letter sent to Director of Military  
Operations)

55657

553

ov. 26, 1919.

Sir,

The communication of telegrams recently forwarded to me respecting military operations in East Africa gave rise to some discussion and I took the opportunity of explaining the views of His Majesty's Government in accordance with the general considerations set forth in your despatch No. 146, Secret, (163316/15) of the 12nd. instant. I said that as the Belgian Government had definitely decided to withdraw all their troops from West Africa the question of joint operations on that front had lapsed. His Majesty's Government were, however, considering plans for an offensive from British East Africa and when a decision was reached it might be possible to propose a scheme of cooperation. They were fully alive to the necessity for an early decision and to the advantage of close cooperation with the Belgian forces, and they would not fail when the moment arrived to provide for adequate discussion between the two Staffs.

Meanwhile

Right Hon.  
Sir A. Grey, K.G., Bart., &c.

Meanwhile it would, in their opinion, serve no useful purpose to initiate spasmodic and partial joint operations such as the suggested naval demonstration against the German East African coast.

It appears from the information received by the Belgian Government that the concentration of the forces under Colonel Tombear in the Fivu district is nearly completed, he has abandoned the idea of cooperation with a British force and it is calculated that he will commence an independent offensive about the middle of next month. In view however of a possible movement from British East Africa it is now suggested that Colonel Tombear might postpone his advance and that a combined attack might be made at a later date. This would provide a force sufficiently strong to give a good prospect of such a success as would have the most important results. The Belgian Government are convinced that the occasion is one of which advantage should be taken.

The exact RF proposal made to me for the moment, and earnestly recommended, is that the Officer Commanding

the troops in British East Africa should be authorized with the least possible delay to inform Colonel Lomueur that plans for an advance upon the German Colony are being considered and to suggest that pending a decision his operations should be postponed. Colonel Lomueur who has arrived at Tivu would on his side be informed that the suggestion might be made, but he would be left complete liberty of action. The British and Belgian Headquarters are within reach of one another and as a matter of fact a regular interchange of communications has been kept up between the officers in command. There would thus be no difficulty in conveying a message to Colonel Lomueur.

With regard to the telegram forwarded in your despatch No. 143 (172101/20) to which I have already referred I may point out that the message of Nov. 11, at any rate as paraphrased, gives the impression that all Belgian troops have been removed from the neighbourhood of the Congo-Rhodesian frontier. This is not exactly the case, as the battalion mentioned in the last paragraph of my despatch No. 110, of Sept. 18, remains at Kileleshwa, between Lakes

Leero

Moero and Tanganyika, at the extreme southern point of the  
Katanga and is available for defence of the province.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant

(Sd) F. H. Villiers