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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

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DATE.               ⇒ 30/6/72

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Letter from the Secretary of State, Colonial Office,  
to the Secretary, Air Ministry.

38066/35.

25th May, 1935.

Sir,

I am directed by Secretary Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister to refer to the letter from this Office of the 4th May enclosing a copy of a despatch addressed to the Acting Governor of Kenya on the subject of measures to be taken in that Colony in the event of active hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia.

2. The further appreciation requested in the fifth paragraph of Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister's despatch has not yet been received, but in a telegram dated the 22nd May (a copy of which is enclosed) the Acting Governor expresses the view that the use of aircraft as proposed in the sixth and seventh paragraphs of the Air Ministry's letter of 24th April (S. 35495/S.6) is impracticable for purposes other than reconnaissance. He asks, however, that the arrangements to hold in readiness two bomber transport aircraft (as reported in the first paragraph of your letter under reference) may stand.

3. From consultations which have taken place in London with the Governor of Kenya and the Senior District Commissioner of the Northern Frontier District (who are now on leave) it is understood that, while there is no landing ground between Moyale and Mandera suitable for troop-carrying aircraft, communication by lorry between

+ Vide No. III.

/ Vide No. IV.

o Vide No. II.

Letter from the Secretary of State, Colonial Office,  
to the Secretary, Air Ministry.

38066/35.

28th May, 1935.

Sir,

I am directed by Secretary Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister to refer to the letter from this Office of the 4th May enclosing a copy of a despatch<sup>+</sup> addressed to the Acting Governor of Kenya on the subject of measures to be taken in that Colony in the event of active hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia.

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+ Vide No. III.

o Vide No. IV.

o Vide No. II.

these two terminal stations is now sufficiently rapid and reliable to permit of the speedy transport of troops to any threatened point.

4. A further communication will be addressed to you after the receipt of the revised appreciation which has been called for. In the meantime, if the Air Council concur, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister proposes to inform the Acting Governor that the two Vickers Victoria machines will continue to be held in readiness against emergency. It is assumed that no financial charge will lie against the Government of Kenya.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) L. B. FREESTON.

C. O.

38066/55 S.

#154

Mr. Hunter 24/5

Mr. Hood 24/5

Mr. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

Secret

25<sup>th</sup> May, 1935

S2

DRAFT.

Sir

The Secy  
Air Minister

I am re. to refer to

- 18) the letter from this Office of the 4<sup>th</sup> of May enclosing -
- 12) copy of - despatch addressed to the Acting Governor of Kenya on the subject of measures to be taken in that Colony in the event of active hostilities between Italy & Ethiopia.

2. The further appreciation requested in the fifth

22 May

No 24.

FURTHER ACTION.

Reciv. M. to  
Major Colby  
I.C.

to see.

Sir Philip Cunliffe's  
para. of that despatch has not  
yet been received; but in  
a telegram dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May (24  
(a copy of which is enclosed))  
the Acting Governor expresses the  
view that the use of aircraft  
as proposed in the sixth paragraph  
of the Air Ministry's letter of April  
24<sup>th</sup> (S. 3549) (S. 6) is impracticable (11  
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be held in readiness for bomber transport  
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held in readiness against  
emergency. It is assumed  
that no charge financial  
charge will lie against

25

Ans. to 31

38066/35

PARAPHRASE TELEGRAM from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Officer Administering the Government of Kenya.

Mr. Freeston  
22.5.  
Mr. Flood 22  
Sir C. Bottomley  
23 at once

Sent 3.30 p.m. 23rd May, 1935.  
-----

No.130. Secret.

The assumption in your secret telegram No.118 is correct. It has now been decided that provided no unforeseen developments arise Glenday will return on the 23rd of June by air. Will you please forward as soon as possible after receiving my secret despatch of the 21st of May, the appreciation asked for in my secret despatch of the 4th of May. Grateful if you will also keep me informed of any reports of Italian activities in neighbourhood of Dolo and Lugh.

Copy to  
F.O.  
W.O.  
A.M.  
7/6/35  
8/12/6

Recirc. for letter to A.M.

PARAPHRASE telegram from the Officer Administering the Government of Kenya to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Dated 22nd May.

Received 2.51 p.m. 22nd May, 1936.

No.118. 22nd May. Secret.

Assume that the existing arrangements continue and that internment is regarded as an alternative.

Under local conditions I do not consider that use of aircraft as proposed by the Air Ministry is practicable for other than purposes of reconnaissance. I should be glad if arrangements for Vickers Victoria aircraft stated in first paragraph of the secret letter from Air Ministry of the 24th April No.S.35493/S.6. may stand.

Reference your secret telegram of the 18th May

No.126.

Copy to Air Ministry (no 26)

23  
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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
NAIROBI,  
KENYA.

KENYA.

No.

SECRET.

22

24<sup>th</sup>

April, 1935.

Sir,

(4)

With reference to Sir Joseph Byrne's despatch, Secret (2), of the 28th February on the subject of the present situation between Italy and Ethiopia, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of Notes on a tour in the Northern Frontier District in February and March by Mr. C.J.J.T. Barton and an extract from the Northern Frontier District Intelligence Report for the month of February.

2. These papers may be of interest as showing the local impressions of the situation, and I would suggest that Mr. Glenday, who is now on leave in England, should be apprised of their contents.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

*A. M. ...*

ACTING GOVERNOR.

MAJOR THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR PHILIP CUNLIFFE-LISTER, P.C., G.B.E., M.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET,

LONDON, S.W. 1

*Copy with recd. to F.O. 8/12 - 11/10/35 (no. 35)*

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**NOTES ON A TOUR IN THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT.**  
**27TH FEBRUARY - 11TH MARCH, 1922.**

**I. ITINERARY.**

	Miles
February 27th - Left Nairobi by train: Arrived Nanyuki	146
28th - Left Nanyuki by K.A.R. Car: Arrived Isiolo	50
March 1st - Left Isiolo by car with Officer Commanding Northern Brigade, Officer-in-Charge, N.F.D., Staff Officer to O.C.N.E. Arrived Muddo Jancho.	108
2nd - Left Muddo Jancho: Arrived Wajir	122
3rd - Left Wajir: Arrived Moyale	159
4th - At Moyale	
5th - Left Moyale where District Commissioner, Moyale, and Lt. Pyne, 3rd K.A.R. joined: Arrived Terkali	115
6th - Left Terkali: Arrived Mandera	125
7th - Left Mandera where District Commissioner, Moyale, stopped: Arrived beyond Eil Wak	121
8th - Left Camp: Arrived Wajir	101
9th - Left Wajir where Lt. Pyne stopped: Arrived Kittermaster's Camp on Uaso Nyiro River	145
10th - Left Camp, O/C, N.F.D. stopped at Isiolo en route: Arrived Nanyuki	140
11th - Left Nanyuki: Arrived Nairobi	155
	<u>1,465</u>

**II. ITALO-ABYSSINIAN RELATIONS.**

Generally in Abyssinia, according to the Consul for S.W. Abyssinia (Mr. Reese), anti-European feeling runs high. Various incidents have occurred in Addis Abeba and it appears that there is a young Abyssinian party, formed

2.

formed of youths with some European education, likely to cause both internal and external strife. Because of this anti-European feeling the Consul did not wish the Officer Commanding the Northern Brigade, the Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District and myself to visit Abyssinian Moyale and we did not do so.

It appears that while there is a general animosity against all Europeans there is a distinction in the feeling against the Italians who are everywhere regarded as the enemies of Abyssinia.

Orders have been issued to the Abyssinian soldiery and haphazard arrangements have been made for transport. The Consul said that the Abyssinians are confident of success.

There are many rumors of the size of the Italian re-enforcements. Two Czech-Slovakian journalists, named F. Stomser and F. Uher, visited Wajir during the first week in March, having travelled through Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, and reported that they saw 84,000 regular Italian European troops, 5,000 Fascist volunteers and 600 Arab recruits; that General Graziani was on his way out to command; that the main advance would be via Eritrea; that there would be a subsidiary advance through Italian Somaliland; that the campaign would begin in about a month and would take one or two years.

It can be said with some certainty that the Italians are keeping themselves informed by means of native spies, and possibly through sources such as the two journalists above, of our movements. The necessary evictions of the askaris' wives and children from Wajir to make room for the rest of the 5rd Battalion of the K.A.R. was known at Moyale when we arrived and there is

no doubt it was known to the Abyssinians and to the Italians.

We considered asking the Italian Officers at Lugh whether we might pay them a visit, but because it would have been necessary to pay a visit to the Abyssinians, of whose anti-European feeling we were aware, and because of the inevitable delays, we thought it advisable to make no advances. Shortly after we left Mandera the Officers there received an invitation from the Italian Officer at Dolo to pay a visit. This they were told to accept and they were also told that if asked as regards our tour the Italians should be informed that we were considering arrangements to prevent the incursion of tribesmen from both territories in the event of hostilities. It is quite useless to hide from either side that we are alive to the possibilities.

### III. ITALIAN ASPIRATIONS.

The aspirations of Italy, so far as they can be gauged, appear to aim at the encirclement of the Abyssinia and the establishment of at least an economic Protectorate over that country.

We heard during our tour that a neutral zone between Italy and Abyssinia was to be established and, speaking for myself, I regard this as merely a sign that the Italian arrangements are not yet perfected. I have little doubt, unless the influence of Great Britain and France is brought to bear more strongly upon both the Italians and the Abyssinians, that an "incident" will occur which will lead to war when Italy wishes. It

seems

seems that the Abyssinians will not be slow to respond.

In so far as this Colony is concerned I consider there is a danger from the encroachment policy of Italy. From a study of Italian and French newspapers in the possession of the Consul, from conversations with Italians before the cession of our former province of Jubaland and from discussion with the Consul I anticipate that Great Britain will be asked for a further territorial concession. A Swedish (Protestant) missionary came to Wajir from Kismayu early in March and asked to be granted a lien on a plot there for missionary purposes so that his Mission could establish a claim when the Italians took over Wajir on a further Cession.

I imagine that the demand will be somewhat as follows:-

The right bank of the Tana River to about the region of the Sankuri; thence to Madjo Gashi on the Sulama Gof; thence to Marti on the Uaso Nyero River; thence to, and including, Marsabit Mountain; thence to and including Kalal Mountain; thence along the East shores of Lake Rudolf to Abyssinia.

That is roughly the entire Northern Frontier District minus the Sankuru area, some 28,000 square miles.

I need not emphasize the harm to the normal administration of other native tribes which the cession of the area occupied by their neighbours causes; or the difficulties which would occur to the remainder of this Colony were an aggressive European power, not observing the Orange Basin Treaties, to occupy the convenient "no man's land", sparsely occupied and largely waterless  
which

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which abuts on the Coast, Central and Rift Valley Provinces of Kenya; or the unreasonableness of a demand for a concession of this kind without any adequate territorial return.

In the event of any such eleemosynary proposal being made by Italy it would, in my view, be bad policy even to consider a concession making the bank of a flowing river a boundary. I cannot think of any requirement of this Colony which Italy could meet by territorial exchange.

IV. POSITION ON OUR FRONTIERS.

(a) Mera Consulate: In view of the anti-European feeling in Abyssinia the Consul asked me if I was in a position to say what was the Government's policy regarding the evacuation of the Consulate. I said that it would not ordinarily be possible for standing orders to be given by this Government, that any warning from the Minister at Addis Abeba would be repeated to once, that the Consul must judge the situation for himself and that he should not risk too long a delay before retiring on Moyale. Mr. Reese undertook not to delay should the occasion arise.

(b) The Abyssinian Frontier: Here the danger is three-fold:-

1. If Italy and Abyssinia come to blows it is expected that parties of Gurreh, Degodia and Boran will seek sanctuary for themselves and their stock in British territory. Orders have been issued already to meet this situation and they were fully explained during our tour.

A difficulty

6.

A difficulty which the local Administrative Officers will have themselves to meet arises from the fact that certain of these tribesmen have formerly lived in British territory.

2. In the event of war all Abyssinian control and it is practically negligible, on the Frontier will disappear. The consequence will almost certainly be that British tribesmen will be raided by organised gangs of shiftas, or outlaws. This has happened in the past, but owing to the hopeless misgovernment and rapacity of the Abyssinian Governor of Berana it is likely to be intensified. This functionary is apparently a rich man of no breeding and a son-in-law of the Emperor.

The dispositions already made should suffice to meet this danger East of Moyale.

It would be as well to ask the Minister at Addis Abeba to approach the Abyssinian Authorities to issue their regular soldiers with some distinguishing badge. At present they cannot be recognised from outlaws.

3. A third possible danger is that if the Italian main advance is through Eritrea the soldiers of the Southern Abyssinian Provinces may attempt to attack Italian Somaliland by crossing British territory in the North East of this Colony.

In this event presumably the Italians would also seek to enter neutral territory.

The contingency seems unlikely at present, but I suggest it should be kept in view.

(c) The

(c) The Italian Frontier: Here there is the danger of the Marehan, Bartirri, Habr Suliman and Magharbul Somalis seeking refuge with their stock from requisition by the Italians. Orders have already been issued to meet this situation if it arises.

Owing to the volatile characteristics of the Somali it is probable that in the event of an Italian-Abyssinian war the various Somali tribes would become "lively", but owing to the recognition by the Italians and by the Somalis of the Lex Talionis I do not think much trouble need be expected.

Generally, if internment of refugees becomes necessary an area, seemingly vacant, in the Meru District North West of the Joabeni range could be used.

V. AERODROMES.

Work has begun on full size aerodromes at Moyale, Mandera and Isiolo. The aerodrome at Wajir is sufficient. Some difficulty may be experienced at Isiolo where there is a rock out-drop. The aerodrome some 5 miles from Moyale is perforce in the foothills. Moyale and Mandera should both be ready in about a month.

VI. BUILDINGS, ETC.

(a) It appears that the Consulate at Mega is merely a hut some years old and I propose endeavouring to find a small sum of money for rebuilding.

The Consul has no Government furniture of any kind and lives a distinctly camp life, I propose instructing an issue to him. The conditions under which he is forced to live are hard and should be alleviated where possible.

(b) I understand there is money allocated for a small hospital and for a house for the Assistant Superintendent of Police at Moyale. Both are very badly needed and it seems that if these structures were put up by the officers concerned from local material and corrugated iron bought at Lamu instead of by the Public Works Department much expense on transport could be avoided.

(c) There is a water-boring machine and a large amount of piping lying derelict at Eil Wak.

VII. POLICE RIDING CAMELS.

These are small Gabbra camels and their use is an experiment. Their saddles are heavy and are those used for much bigger animals. At present I do not think the Police so mounted should be regarded as effective camelry.

VIII. TRADE.

The following points arose:-

(a) The Consul informed me that there was a ready market for cheap carpets, tents, white and khaki drill, felt hats, cotton sheeting, earthenware, enamel ware, petrol and sugar at Mega. Moyale also has a market for similar articles.

When the situation improves I propose endeavouring to interest some substantial firm operating at Lamu. It is unlikely that the Italian trade will revive for some considerable time.

(b) Dates can, it appears, be grown at Wajir and the Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District, is endeavouring

endeavouring to get an Arab from Lamu to teach the fertilisation of this fruit which is largely used for rations in a dried state.

(c) Some myrrh and frankincense has been sent from Mandera to the Imperial Institute for examination. The report is awaited.

The Secretariat,  
15th March, 1955.

EXTRACTS FROM THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE  
REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 1935.

MOYALE.

Italian-Abyssinian Affairs.

The dispute between Italian Somaliland and Abyssini is by no means settled.

Reliable information from the Italian side has been difficult to obtain since it is known that orders have been issued and notices posted threatening all who speak on the military or political situation, with long terms of imprisonment.

Various reports as to arrivals of troops at Lugh and other developments in that area were received via the District Officer Mandera and on 19th February the District Commissioner arrived there with the object of paying a visit in Lugh in order to return the Residente's visit in December.

The Italian Authorities showed some hesitation in granting the requisite permission until stimulated by a wireless message sent to Lugh at our request from their new station at Dolo. The visit was eventually paid on 22nd February, when the District Commissioner and the District Officer, accompanied by the Asst. Inspector of Police Mandera and the Doctor from Moyale, who was over at Mandera, arrived in Lugh about 12.30 p.m. leaving again at 2.30 p.m. after lunch.

Since my last visit in April 1934 there have been few noticeable changes. A large camp has been established South of the aerodrome site and one or two new houses have been built to the right of the wireless station. The Residente's house has been improved and fitted with electric light and a very large American electric refrigerator, legacies of the King of Italy's visit in November; but the electricity supply was unfortunately out of action.

As far

As far as could be judged our visit was not particularly welcome. We were not met at the ferry and no attempt was made to show us round Lugh as formerly. Neither were any pressing invitations given to prolong our stay unduly. Possibly it was an awkward day since our arrival apparently coincided with that of the Commissario from Oddur and the Colonel O/C Troops from Baidoa.

The information obtained may be summarised as follows:-

- (1) There were numbers of Europeans, mostly military, in evidence. From ten to fifteen were seen and others could be heard in their houses talking and playing gramophones.
- (2) Signor Stancari, who used to be the Residente in Lugh in 1932-1933, has now been posted to Dolo and the Station reopened there.
- (3) The Commissario mentioned that he was leaving for Mogadiscio via Uejit, on the Oddur road, the next day in order to meet two of His Majesty's troopships which were bringing 3000 men recently embarked from Italy. Thus it is probable that some of these troops are destined for the Alto-Juba Province.
- (4) There were several Army lorries in evidence - five were actually seen and also some private cars.
- (5) Troops which were noticed consisted in the main of untrained youths in uniforms and fezz wearing the plaid sash of the Benadir regiment. They were very young and mostly carried revolvers. The impression was gained that these were the last of the people to be called up for military service, the older and fitter natives having already been drafted elsewhere.
- (6) A new military hospital is being built there and a military doctor was in attendance.
- (7) About 200 baggage camels, seventy of which had been brought in that day by the Eil Wak Gurreh, were seen.
- (8) There were, in comparison with last year, a large number of banda, but on the other hand no googli made their appearance.
- (9) There was a small military post under an N.C.O. at the point outside Lugh where the road branches for Malka Re and Dolo. The Lugh-Dolo road has very recently been repaired but no work has been done on the one to Malka Re since last year.

- (10) No attempt has been made to improve the ferry approaches or to build a larger ferry. The present one constructed on two iron pontoons just takes one lorry. Actually for military purposes against the Abyssinians, there would be little point in crossing the river Juba at Lugh and then recrossing it on the Dawa at Dolo. There is another road to Dolo from Lugh North of the Juba.
- (11) As we departed the Commissario said jestingly: "Well I hope you will come again soon - will it be during or after the war?".

From its natural defensive position, encircled on three sides by the river and the fact that a new military hospital is being erected it is possible that the Italians will use Lugh as a base in their forthcoming operations. Their activity there and in short the whole atmosphere left the impression of a people definitely embarked on a serious undertaking which is only in its early stages.

Fitaurari Birara in charge of Oddo visited Mandera on the 23rd. He was very reticent, but appeared to be alive to the Italian preparations. He stated that he knew all about their machine guns and field guns which he could hear practicing across the river at Dolo.

(On Wednesday 20th February the sound of firing by light field guns was clearly audible at Mandera from 6 a.m. to 6.30. It came from the direction of Dolo. The guns were probably the light camel guns normally used by the Italians).

The Fitaurari stated that he had heard that the Italians were repairing the road from Dolo North towards Labashilindi and that they intended to continue it further. At present there are about 20 Abyssinian soldiers posted there. But he added that he and other officials had received strict instructions from the Emperor on no account to take any action likely to provoke the Italians. Birara said that the situation was made increasingly difficult since the Italians were serving out rifles to their tribes-

tribesmen and continually inciting them to raid Abyssinian tribes in order to provoke retaliatory measures which might be construed into a legitimate pretext for the declaration of war. Representations made to the Italians only elicited the reply that Abyssinian tribesmen were constantly raiding and looting in Italian Somaliland and no redress was made by the Ethiopian Government,

Meanwhile the Italian Authorities have placed a prohibitive tax of ten liras on every kilo (about 2½ lbs) of tobacco coming in from Abyssinia and have refused to allow buni to be sold. The export of all goods is likewise prohibited so that the transit trade is at a complete standstill. No objection is however raised to the import of stock for sale in Lugh and good prices are given; but tribesmen may only export liras in return and no goods or food.

During the fifteen months that I have been in this area, the whole history of the Italian-Abyssinian situation immediately to the East and North East of our border beyond Dolo, on the Web Shebelle and further East still near Gerlogubi, Wardair and Wal Wal has been one of penetration and aggression by the Italians and resistance when driven to it by the Abyssinians. Every advantage has been taken of the undemarcated boundary for roads to be pushed further and further into Ethiopian territory and military posts to be established.

However the aggressors have been extremely clever in misleading public opinion so that it is quite probable that a certain amount of misplaced sympathy has been engendered in Europe for this civilised nation who while trying to administer the Somali tribes peacefully is continually subjected to attacks by hordes of undisciplined savages having no respect for treaty rights or anything else.

MANDERA.

The District Commissioner and Medical Officer Moyale visited Mandera from 19th to 23rd.

At the beginning of the month the Italian-Abyssinian situation appeared to be growing worse. The Italians in Lugh were reported, on fairly reliable authority, to be talking openly of war and expressing intention of seizing Labashelindi by force. It was estimated that about 3000 troops were concentrated in Lugh under a Colonel, and recruiting was being done. All strangers were very carefully watched and questioned, and many reported to have been detained in prison and made to build houses in Lugh. The road from Lugh to Dolo was repaired and a start made to continue it towards Labashelindi. Fitaurari Birara visited Mandera on 8th instant. He corroborated the reports about the road to Labashelindi.

On the 8th and 9th reports were received that 200 camels had left Dolo for an unknown destination, accompanied by 200 Italian troops on foot, and followed by about 400 troops in lorries. This is reported to have occurred the night after an important European, believed to be a General, had visited Dolo.

Some troops were seen by a lorry driver, arriving at Lugh from Dolo.

During the second half of the month, a more peaceful air has prevailed. Traders coming from Lugh stated that there was less talk of war, and fewer soldiers in Lugh, though recruiting still continued. They could not, however, say where the troops had gone to.

The troops at Dolo also decreased, but it is not known where they have gone.

The Italians ceased operation on the road to Labashelindi.

Trade was seriously interfered with by the imposition of duty by the Italians on goods entering Italian Somaliland. Even goods in transit from Mogadiscio not being allowed to pass. The amount of the tax has not been ascertained, and although some traders waited there for 3 weeks while the authorities in Lugh telegraphed to Mogadiscio, no answer was received, and finally the goods were left in Lugh unsold, and apparently unsaleable, and the traders returned to Mander.

It would appear that this is a means of collecting stores in Lugh and not really a measure of taxation.

On the 20th instant, firing of what sounded like field guns was heard in the direction of Dolo. This turned out to be only practice by the Italians.

The District Commissioner announced his intention of calling on the Residente at Lugh, and on Thursday 14th T.P. Dakane was sent to Lugh with a letter to the Residente asking him what date would be convenient. The Tribal Policeman did not return until Friday 22nd. He stated that he was delayed there by the Italian Authorities, and was very carefully watched all the time.

He was, however, able to obtain some information. A Shebelle trader, Osman Ar, who went to Lugh to trade about 3 months ago, told the Tribal Policeman that he had been imprisoned, and then released but made to build houses in Lugh. He also told him that many spies had been sent into Northern Frontier District to look at the water supplies at Malka Murre, Derkali, Takaba and Moyale to see if they were fit places for a station. This report, however, was altered later by other people who say the spies are trying to find out if we are supplying arms to the Abyssinians.

/On the

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On the 20th instant, firing of what sounded like field guns was heard in the direction of Dolo. This turned out to be only practice by the Italians.

The District Commissioner announced his intention of calling on the Residente at Lugh, and on Thursday 14th T.P. Dakane was sent to Lugh with a letter to the Residente asking him what date would be convenient. The Tribal Policeman did not return until Friday 22nd. He stated that he was delayed there by the Italian Authorities, and was very carefully watched all the time.

He was, however, able to obtain some information. A Shebelle trader, Osman Ar, who went to Lugh to trade about 3 months ago, told the Tribal Policeman that he had been imprisoned, and then released but made to build houses in Lugh. He also told him that many spies had been sent into Northern Frontier District to look at the water supplies at Malka Murre, Derkali, Takaba and Moyale to see if they were fit places for a station. This report, however was altered later by other people who say the spies are trying to find out if we are supplying arms to the Abyssinians.

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who had been shipped from Aden. They stated that all the Italians talked freely of war with Abyssinia, and the general impression appeared to be that the main attack would be launched from Eritrea and that a subsidiary attack only would be made from Italian Somaliland. They added that the Italians were not yet fully prepared to commence hostilities and they did not think that an issue would be forced for another month.

They gathered from the Italians that owing to the difficulties of the country it was anticipated that the war would last from one to two years.

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General Staff Appreciation of the Italo-Ethiopian situation on May 13th, 1935.

Reference. Sketch Map A.

1. The military measures carried out in Italy during the last three months, taken in conjunction with recent diplomatic conversations between the Foreign Office and the Italian Embassy lead almost inevitably to the conclusion that Italy intends to undertake large-scale military operations against Ethiopia in the near future, and at the same time to keep her home army at such a strength that commitments in Ethiopia will not materially weaken the forces which she could put in the field in Europe, at any rate in the near future.

Italy's Ultimate Aims.

2. There seems little doubt that the ultimate aim of Italian aggression in Ethiopia is the acquisition of a territory which would link together her two existing East African Colonies, increase their economic possibilities and provide an outlet for a proportion of her surplus population. So to enlarge and enrich her colonial possessions would also be a great satisfaction to her amour propre as a great Power.

Her Immediate Object.

3. As for the immediate intentions of Italy, there appear to be two possibilities.

(a) An advance from Somalia may be proposed with a view to the acquisition of the south eastern lowlands of Ethiopia, which are conquered territory inhabited by various Somali tribes and not by true Ethiopians. The occupation of

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this area could be secured at comparatively small cost, since it is unlikely that the Ethiopian nation as a whole would rise in its defence. It would secure for Italy the upper waters of the Fafan, Webbe Shibeli and Juba Rivers, which are adaptable to irrigation schemes for the benefit of Somalia, and it would show on the map a considerable gain in territory which might satisfy the pride of most of the Italian people. It seems unlikely however that Signor Mussolini would be content with such a limited objective. At the best, the return on expenditure would be small, and even if it was advertised as only a preliminary move, the more intelligent of the people, with whom the adventure is already unpopular, might be only too ready to brand it as a failure, with consequent loss of prestige to the regime. Moreover, if Signor Mussolini really believes, as he professes to do, that the Japanese and the Germans have designs on Ethiopia, he cannot afford to risk waiting.

(b) It therefore seems more probable that a full-scale attack from both Colonies is intended, with the object of acquiring complete control over Ethiopia. Moreover the size of the forces concentrating in each of these Colonies suggests that this is the intention. Subsequently the country might be either governed directly by Italy, a course which would be more in keeping with the Fascist spirit and with Italian practice in Libya; or it might be turned into a close protectorate by the setting up of a puppet Emperor ruling with Italian support, as has been done by the French in Morocco. It is doubtful however in view of the Ethiopian temperament whether this would be practicable. In either case a large Italian garrison would be necessary.

Considerations affecting the attainment of these objects.

Terrain.

4. The terrain in highland Ethiopia is extremely difficult for military operations. It consists of a mass of rugged mountain ridges separated by deep valleys with precipitous sides, most of which run east and west at right angles to the line of advance from Britra. Tracks are scarce and at best are fit only for pack transport. For military operations on a large scale it is doubtful if any road would be of much use except the historic line of advance through Diret-Dikulle-Hagalla traversed by the British in 1868. (Route A on Sketch-map).

5. In the south-eastern lowlands the country consists of open desert scrub-land where water-holes are few and far between. Except in the plains, however, tracked vehicles and lorries can move about almost anywhere. It is intersected by three main rivers, the Barab, Gebbe and the Guba, whose valleys are very unhealthy in drier seasons. In reaching the highlands about 4,000 ft., water becomes more plentiful and vegetation improves. Cattle and antelopes are found in this area. (Route B on Sketch-map).

6. One other track in the country is North-South, the strip of low ground which has its base on the coast from Assab to Jibuti and runs up in a point towards Addis Ababa. This has the Jibuti - Addis Ababa Railway on its southern flank and the Assab - Dessye route on its northern. The country is mainly volcanic and waterless, but it offers a quick and comparatively easy route for light motor transport into the heart of Ethiopia. (Route C on Sketch-map).

Climate.

7. In the northern highlands the climate is generally suitable for white settlers and, except during the rains, is neither unpleasant nor unhealthy. Heavy rains begin in May and continue until the end of September. During this period movement of any sort is difficult, and military operations well-nigh impossible. Air operations in particular are affected by heavy mists and clouds.

8. The country in the eastern and southern lowlands is unsuitable for white settlers, but on the other hand is seldom unfit for military operations. The annual rainfall is only from two to ten inches, most of which occurs between April and August, and provided military operations are carried out methodically with pauses when the rain is bad, the rainy season is no bar. The chief limiting factor is the monsoon, which makes the landing of troops and stores a difficult and dangerous operation from May to September, since the ports available are open roadsteads where landing has to be carried out by means of lighters.

9. Ethiopian Forces.

The armed forces of Ethiopia consist of the Imperial troops - some 35,000 in number; provincial regular troops - about 90,000 strong; and the tribal levies, which form the chief military strength of the country and are estimated to amount to over 600,000 in all. In general no higher organization than the company exists among the regular troops. The tribal levies are organized entirely on a feudal basis, each chief bringing a contingent which owes allegiance to him alone. There is no staff, command being exercised through

provincial/

5.  
 provincial governors ("Rases") who control the tribal chiefs of their provinces. No administrative services exist, each man being responsible for bringing his rations on his own back animal, though some attempts are now being made to establish a system of magazines for supply purposes. It is estimated that owing to these deficiencies in organization and administrative arrangements, the largest force which could possibly be concentrated for battle on any one front is 150,000; nor could such concentrations be retained intact for more than a few days.

10. The regular troops have a few anti-tank guns and Stokes mortars, and a fair number of automatic weapons of many types. Serviceable artillery is practically non-existent. Nearly every man in the country possesses a rifle of some sort, but it is estimated that only about 300,000 rifles of different makes are fit for service, and it is not uncommon for a rifleman to carry ammunition which does not fit his weapon. The Ethiopians are in possession of about a dozen aircraft, but owing to lack of pilots and inefficient maintenance this rudimentary air force is of little military value.

11. The Ethiopian is a fine natural fighter but leadership in general is very bad. The levies are entirely untrained and undisciplined, and the regular troops are little better, except certain portions of the imperial regular troops which have been trained by Belgian and Swedish missions and are reported to have reached a certain degree of efficiency and cohesion. These missions have laid much stress on guerilla tactics, but such methods are foreign

to the Ethiopian whose traditional tactics are those of the attack in mass in the Dervish style. It is probable, therefore, that a European army with modern equipment would have an easy success in any pitched battle during the early stages of a campaign before the Ethiopians had learnt by experience to exploit the possibilities of guerilla tactics. (For details of the Ethiopian forces, see Appendix A.)

#### 12. Italian Forces.

To oppose these forces the Italians, it is estimated, will concentrate in Eritrea one white and one native corps (each of two divisions), giving a total striking force of some 60,000 fighting men; in Somalia, one mixed corps consisting of one white and one native division, making a striking force of some 30,000 combatant troops. L. of C. and labour troops, whose numbers will be considerable, will be added in each colony. Both forces will be provided with the latest European armament and equipment, including armoured fighting vehicles, and will be supported by a powerful air force. Details of the troops are given in Appendix B. It is unlikely that much larger forces than those now being concentrated by the Italians could usefully be employed in the first instance on account of the administrative difficulties involved.

13. It is interesting, perhaps, to compare the forces employed in previous campaigns against the Ethiopians. Napier in 1868 had a total force of 14,000 fighting men including his L. of C. troops. He was, however, only opposed by the King of Tigre with about 7,000, and not by the whole nation. The Italians at Adua had a total strength of 14,519 rifles.

14. Morale.

The morale of the Ethiopians is high, although the Emperor having more knowledge of European resources, is probably an exception to this statement. In general they feel confident that, having defeated the Italians once, they can do it again.

15. The national morale of the Italian is more difficult to assess; their new found national pride and the desire to wipe out the stigma of Adua, are no doubt potent factors. On the other hand, the Italian has a kindly nature and is devoted to family life. In defence of the Brenner he would fight to the last man, but colonial adventure, though attractive in theory, is not so attractive when it comes nearer home and touches the daily life of the masses. Small, but unmistakable signs of the unpopularity of the campaign among the regular army are already evident. This is probably the reason for the large number of Blackshirts enlisted, since they consist mainly of "tough" young men who are out of work. For good or evil, however, it appears that Signor Mussolini has set his heart on this adventure, in spite of the pessimistic appreciations of the general staff and of economists. Given a quick and brilliant success, his stock will soar. A failure, however, or even a barren success might possibly cause the collapse of the regime. For this reason the campaign will certainly receive the full support of the home government and no reasonable demand from the theatre of war will be refused. Herein lies the difference from the Adua campaign of 40 years ago.

16. As regards the Italian army in the field, their Commander-in-Chief is General de Bono, an old colonial soldier-administrator, who is supported by an excellent staff,

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and is well calculated to inspire his troops with confidence. On the northern front, however, the difficult country which is unfavourable to the employment of superior armament, and the proximity of the ill-fated field of Adua may well cause the morale of the Eritrea Army to be less high than that of the Somalia Corps, which is led by the redoubtable General Graziani with a brilliant record of success in similar operations in North Africa.

17. Economic Factors.

Ethiopia has no arms factories of her own and is in a very disadvantageous position for raising funds to import foreign munitions, since the wealth of the country at present lies in agricultural products. In any case, having no ports of her own, her seaborne supplies are at the mercy of Italy, Great Britain and France.

18. Italy's eventual economic position looks disastrous, but thanks to recent financial regulations, she can for the moment, and for some time to come, obtain sufficient credit abroad to buy all the raw materials for munitions which she needs. The other expenses such as pay, shipping, building materials, etc. can, as in the past, be met by internal loans just so long as the nation continues to have confidence in the lira or, in other words, in the regime. Speed is, however, necessary since the East African adventure up till the end of March has already been officially admitted as costing 375 million lire (roughly £6½ million at present rate of exchange), and if the troops which have been called up on the home front to replace divisions sent to East Africa are taken into account, probably a great deal more.

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COURSES OPEN TO BOTH SIDES.

19. Ethiopia.

The Ethiopians can either make such concessions to Italy as will satisfy her without fighting, or they can resist her demands by force. It is possible that the Emperor, who realizes the odds against him, might be willing to consider the former course, but his own position with the big Russes is so insecure that he would lose his throne if he yielded. In any case would Italian appetite, once whetted, ever be satisfied? The Ethiopians, therefore, have apparently no alternative but to fight, and all the information available points to their readiness to do so. It is extremely doubtful, however, whether they will be persuaded to follow the advice of their foreign advisers and adopt guerrilla tactics. There seems every probability that the Ethiopian army will assemble in strength on one or both fronts to oppose any Italian advances, and seek to settle accounts with the invaders in a pitched battle. Their reading of the history of the war may well spell initial disaster for them.

20. Italy.

The Italians can advance from one or both colonies simultaneously or on a timed programme. They may also employ the Assab - Dessaye route (Route "B") for an additional line of advance using highly mobile forces.

(a) An advance from Somalia (Route "B").

An advance from Somalia can be started as soon as General Graziani is ready, provided it is methodically carried out with such pauses as local rains may impose. It would meet opposition from the weak Ethiopian forces now facing the Italians, but when these had been overcome would continue through Ogaden Somali country until the foothills of the Harar

range were reached. The Ogaden Somalis would probably not offer any serious opposition, and in any case in this open country any concentration which they might effect to give battle would be very vulnerable to air attack and to the action of an army equipped with modern weapons. Although such an advance would be most disturbing to the Emperor, since Harar is his ancestral province and the area which he draws his personal revenues, it would be of little interest to the northern chieftains. Fresh Ethiopian forces could best only be most unlikely to rally forth into the field to fight. Nevertheless, in view of the distance and the conditions of the campaign, it is unlikely that the Somali force would be within striking distance of Harar in under six weeks from the time of starting. The advance could probably take place simultaneously by the Jebbe (Hibeal) (Route A.2) and across from Wal Wal - Gerlogubi to the Upper Bafin (Route B.1). A subsidiary column might also move by the Suba (Route B.3). During this advance, the cost in Italian lives should be small, though columns moving by the rivers might have a high sick-roll from fever.

(b) A. advance from Britoa (Route A.1).

A. advance from Britoa across the mountain ridges of Ethiopia presents great military difficulties and requires a highly organized L. of C. system behind it. There is evidence that the Italians are now working feverishly on the production of such a system. As soon as the Italian forces cross the frontier they would probably be opposed by the greater part of the Ethiopian nation. The Italians would lose some of the advantages due to superior armament in this country, but if, as seems probable, (vide para. 11) the

Ethiopian Army concentrates to give battle the Italians will have an opportunity, so rare in this form of warfare, of obtaining quick, and perhaps decisive, victory. Nor should the issue in a pitched battle be in doubt. With air forces to give information and to attack the Ethiopian masses with bomb and machine-gun; and with the superior weapons and discipline of the Italian Army, it is hard to see how the Italians can fail to gain the victory. Defeat of the Ethiopians would almost certainly lead to strong and probable civil war, which might give the Italians their opportunity to gain control of the country.

(c) An advance from Asmara through Route "C" could be carried out by a highly mobile mechanized force, and if correctly timed might have considerable effect on Ethiopian morale. It would not be practicable, however, to employ anything but comparatively small forces on this line, owing to the physical difficulties.

21. Air Action.

From the beginning of hostilities Italian Air Forces are likely to play an important role. Apart from their co-operation with the advances from Somalia and Britrea which has already been touched upon, they may be employed:-

- (a) To disseminate propaganda.
- (b) To strike at concentrations out of reach of the armies.
- (c) To overawe the inhabitants by attacks on important centres.

22. By their propaganda the Italians may seek to sow dissension among the Rasas and particularly to undermine such loyalty as they owe to the Emperor. They will endeavour to make it clear that Italy has no quarrel with the Ethiopian

people and that her one desire is to see a free and united Ethiopia under good government which the Emperor has signally failed to provide. The lure of the lira may play a not unimportant part in such a relatively poor and undeveloped country.

23. The power of air forces to strike at concentrations out of reach of the armies will require to be used with judgment. It may be inadvisable to strike at relatively small concentrations, as such action might militate against the formation of larger concentrations offering a more vulnerable target and providing that much-sought opportunity in this form of warfare of striking a really decisive blow. In pursuit the Italian air forces will have a particularly important role to play.

24. A still more difficult decision for the Italians will be the extent to which it will be expedient to initiate air attacks on centres of importance. Air attacks on Addis Ababa might well disrupt the Ethiopian government, but on the other hand the casualties to neutrals which such attacks might cause might lead to awkward complications. Threats of heavy air attacks on other centres of importance such as Harar might well play an important part in inducing certain of the Races to come to terms, but the expediency or otherwise of actually carrying out such threats would depend upon whether at the time they would be more likely to cow or to exasperate those against whom they were directed.

25. Forecast of Probable Course of Operations.

Taking all the above factors into consideration, the following is the most likely course of the operations :-

(a) /

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#### 25. Forecast of Probable Course of Operations.

Taking all the above factors into consideration, the following is the most likely course of the operations :-

- (a) As soon as General Graziani is ready, and in any case not later than mid-August, the Somalia Corps will start on a methodical advance with the line of foot-hills south of the Harar ridge as the objective. The advance will be carried out at no great cost and he will ensure the good behaviour of the Ogaden behind him either by exemplary severity or by purchasing their allegiance.
- (b) Meanwhile, air operations on the lines suggested in paragraphs 21 - 24 will be initiated, communications in Eritrea will continue to be improved, and the Eritrea Army will move to concentration areas.
- (c) About the end of September the Eritrea Army will advance on Adigrat and possibly Adua, while the Somalia Corps continues its advance on the Harar ridge itself, with objectives Harar and the Addis Ababa Railway.
- (d) These operations might be accompanied by a raid of a highly mobile force from Assab on Dessaye and the railway.
- (e) The Ethiopians will give battle on both fronts and in each case a decisive victory for the Italians should result.
- (f) After defeat in a pitched battle the Ethiopian forces are likely to disintegrate, each Ras playing his own game. Some would seek to gain the Emperor's throne, others would try and compound with the Italians, and others would continue to oppose the invaders in guerilla warfare.

26. Subsequent Developments.

Beyond the initial defeat of the Ethiopian forces it is impossible to forecast the course of events in any detail, since the factors are far too imponderable, nor does the study of previous colonial wars give any true parallel. Assuming, however, that Italy is able to follow up her initial successes,

it is certain that the drain of men and resources would be severe for some time, while the country was being brought under control. Any dividends that might accrue from the conquest of Ethiopia would be very slow in materializing and an enormous amount of money and labour would have to be employed before Italy would have anything to show for the expenditure incurred. She would undoubtedly make the most strenuous efforts to prevent this drain from adversely affecting her strength in Europe. At the best, however, owing to the magnitude of the task, there would inevitably be great distraction of effort and consequent diminution of force on the European front which might have serious repercussions on the Contingent. At the worst the long strain of the operations in East Africa and the subsequent pacification of the country might cause the disastrous history of Spain in Morocco to be repeated in the case of Italy. There have been instances in past Italian history of sudden reactions against colonial adventure, and if the price of colonization seems too high a sudden revulsion of popular feeling might set in which would probably involve the collapse of the present regime.

Effect of Italian operations on British interests.

27. As an epilogue to this paper it seems necessary to consider in what ways Italian aggression in Ethiopia is likely to affect our problem of Imperial defence.

28. Apart from the reactions in Europe including the disastrous result which war between two members will have on the League of Nations, and the political complications that an Italian blockade in the Red Sea may bring about, there will

also inevitably be repercussions amongst the tribes on the borders of the neighbouring countries for which we are responsible. Such repercussions may take the form of :-

(a) Incursion of numbers of refugees with their stock, anxious to escape the consequences of the campaign. This would impose a strain on the already exiguous water supplies in our territory, and might lead to inter-tribal friction demanding military intervention.

(b) Incursion of armed bands who would have to be resisted by force of arms.

(c) Desire of certain of our own tribes to join in any Italo-Ethiopian conflict, and our possible embarrassment with those Governments.

The Kenya Government, should the incursions take place, are proposing to shepherd refugees into areas where they will least disturb the normal life of the border tribes. This policy has been agreed to by the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office. The enforcement of this policy will necessitate increased military control on the Kenya frontier, but it is hoped that the military forces already at the disposal of the Colony will be sufficient. In Somaliland, the Government hope, by calling up the Camel Corps Reserve and increasing the police and irregulars, to produce a force capable of dealing with the situation. Should military reinforcements become necessary, the reserve battalion of the King's African Rifles for Tanganyika is earmarked for despatch to Somaliland.

29. On the Sudan frontier it is unlikely that there will be any serious reaction. The scene of operations will be a long way from the Sudan, and in the opening stages at any rate it seems improbable that Ethiopian tribesmen will

be forced across the Sudan border. Some local strengthening of our existing military forces on this border may be necessary as a precautionary measure.

30. In the event, however, of Italy obtaining control of a part or the whole of Ethiopia, our defence problem would be affected in two respects:-

- (a) British colonies would have an increased land frontier with territory under control of a first-class European power; if Italy were to assume sovereignty over the whole of Ethiopia this increased land frontier would amount to some 2,000 miles.
- (b) The strengthening of Italy's position on the Red Sea littoral which this vast accession to her colonial empire would connote, might at some future date constitute a serious threat to our vital sea communications with the East.

Re-Orientation of Local Defence.

31. The armed forces of Ethiopia constitute no potential threat to adjacent British territory. Ethiopia has no idea of territorial aggrandisement, and the Ethiopian dislikes fighting outside his highland areas. Frontier incidents are of common occurrence, but seldom present any serious military problem. The local forces which have hitherto been found sufficient to cope with problems on the frontier are as follows:-

(a) In the Sudan.

Two Infantry Companies, and one Camel Company, Sudan Defence Force.

(b) /

(b) In Kenya Colony.

One weak battalion of King's African Rifles (strength under 500 men) and a detachment of about 100 men from the Uganda battalion.

(c) In British Somaliland.

500 men of the Camel Corps.

32. The colonial forces which Italy would maintain in an Italian Ethiopia would be a more powerful weapon than the existing Ethiopian army which is really only formidable when operating in the hilly country in the interior. These colonial forces would be officered by Italians and, judging from the Italian colonial forces in Libya and Eritrea, would be provided with modern arms and equipment. The existence of such forces coupled with the vulnerability of a long land frontier with an aggressive European military power would be a serious potential threat to the Sudan, Kenya and British Somaliland. In peace time alone the military situation would probably compel us to revise our ideas of defence requirements for these territories.

Frontier Administration.

33. On the other hand, as a general rule in peace, a frontier with a first-class European Power is to be preferred to a frontier with a semi-civilized nation, since the strong Power will more effectively control the inhabitants. Local administration is made easier, since a civilized power with orthodox views on the rigidity of demarcated frontiers may be expected to discourage the petty incidents which frequently give rise to friction in less civilized border lands. This

is true of the frontiers of our possessions in Africa which are contiguous with territory in the possession of France, Belgium and Portugal.

34. On our frontiers with Ethiopia we have generally pursued an "open border" policy, and the tribes have been allowed to move to and fro across the border in search of water and grazing, according to the season. The result has been constant friction with the Ethiopian Government, much of which is inherent to the "open border" policy, owing to the vagaries of the migrants themselves. Difficulties have undoubtedly been accentuated, however, by the loose allegiance which the semi-independent feudal chiefs acknowledge to the Emperor. No real improvement can be expected until central control is tightened up. It is for this reason that the Italians object to the "open border" policy. Should Italy assume territorial sovereignty over Ethiopia, their normal "closed border" policy would probably be satisfactory, provided the frontier is intelligently demarcated with due regard to tribal grazing and water rights.

Security of Imperial Communications.

35. The acquisition of Ethiopia would strengthen Italy's strategical position vis-a-vis Aden. It may be assumed that the Italians would maintain in Ethiopia considerably stronger army and air forces than are at present normally located in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. They would also improve the communications to the coast. In the event of war, these increased army and air forces and improved organization would enable Italy to develop an air power which might be so employed as to cause serious interference with British shipping in the neighbourhood of Aden.

36. With Ethiopia an Italian protectorate, the defence of British Somaliland in the unlikely event of war with Italy would present a difficult problem - practically surrounded as it would be by Italian territory. If British Somaliland were to fall into the hands of a hostile Italy the ports of Berbera, Zella and other roadsteads would be of value to Italy as anchorages for submarines attacking shipping in the approaches to the Gulf of Aden. At the same time Italy already possesses Massawa and Assab Bay, which could be used as bases for submarine operations in the Red Sea. Our control of the Suez Canal and Straits of Gibraltar would prevent Italy sending naval reinforcements into the Red Sea ~~once~~ war had broken out, but any expansion of Italian interests in North East Africa would probably lead to additional naval forces being stationed in the Red Sea in peace time, and thus tend to increase the threat to the security of our sea communications through the Red Sea.

Future of Italian Colonial expansion.

37. Although it means looking a long time ahead, it is considered that attention should be drawn to the strategical implication of the policy of future expansion most likely to be attempted by Italy if she is successful in consolidating her position in Ethiopia. The conquest and consolidation of Ethiopia will keep Italy occupied for some years. When her position in that country is established, the broad situation in North East Africa, from Italy's point of view, will be that Egypt and the Sudan are a wedge of foreign territory separating her colonies of Libya and Eritrea-Ethiopia. It seems inevitable that Italy in her present ambitious mood will aim at linking up these colonies. Italy's designs on

power in the Eastern Mediterranean were stated by Crispi many years ago as Italy's historic policy, and there is nothing to show that Italy under Mussolini will not continue this policy. Italian influence is already undesirably active in Egypt. Possession of Lake Tsana would give her a powerful economic lever, which, skilfully used, might well further her political aims in the Sudan. If, as seems probable, Italy's policy of colonial expansion in North East Africa, stimulated by the acquisition of Ethiopia, develops along such lines, she will clash with vital British Imperial interests.

ETHIOPIAN FORCES.

1. The military forces of Ethiopia consist of :-

The Imperial Bodyguard.

The Emperor's own standing army.

Regular troops maintained by governors of provinces.

Tribal levies.

The Air Force.

(a) The Imperial Bodyguard consists of:-

Three battalions of infantry, a machine gun company, a battery of six Stokes-Brandt mortars, and a squadron of cavalry, with a strength of 2,400 infantry and 150 cavalry.

(b) The Emperor's own standing army numbers some 33,000 men who are drawn mainly from the Emperor's own provinces; it comprises about 5,000 cavalry, two pack batteries, two machine-gun platoons and the remainder infantry. At present the highest formation among these troops is the company of about 200 men.

(c) The regular troops maintained by governors of provinces number theoretically about 90,000 men. The size of the force to be maintained in each province is fixed by the Imperial Government and depends on the size and importance of the province itself.

(d) The tribal levies are the main military strength of Ethiopia, and it is estimated that the country could produce in emergency 600,000 to 800,000 fighting men, since every man is liable for service.

A/a

(c) Air force. According to the latest information there are twelve aircraft at Addis Ababa although it is unlikely that all will be serviceable or that their equipment and armament will be complete. Technical personnel is deficient, the only pilots available being two Frenchmen who are free-lances employed by the Emperor and four Ethiopians, whom they have trained. Three European mechanics of French and German nationality are also employed on similar terms to the two French pilots. It is reported that a negro aviator - Hubert Julian - is en route for Ethiopia with five machines and a certain amount of trained personnel. It is doubtful, however, whether this reinforcement will ever, in fact, materialise.

2. Training.

The Imperial Bodyguard is instructed by a Belgian military mission and is the best-disciplined and best-trained force in Ethiopia, although it does not reach European standards. The troops are all picked men, the N.C.Os. being mostly ex-soldiers of the King's African Rifles. Belgian and Swedish missions are also undertaking the training of the Emperor's own standing Army and, judging by recent reports of troops seen at Harar, their efforts have met with a very considerable amount of success. Only a comparatively small number of troops, however, have been trained by these missions.

The /

The remainder of the Ethiopian forces, consisting of the provincial regular armies and the tribal levies, are absolutely untrained; the only difference between these two is that the former are permanently retained as soldiers while the latter are only called up in emergency. In war both will depend entirely on their own natural fighting instincts.

3. Armament.

There are said to be some 300,000 rifles in the country, but of these only about 300,000 are likely to be serviceable. The rifles are of all makes and nationalities, and soldiers frequently carry cartridges of a different calibre from that of their rifles.

In 1933 it was reported that there were about 200 guns in the country, of all ages and makes. Most of these probably are unserviceable, and in any case ammunition would be lacking even if there were gunners trained to man them. Recently however Ethiopia has imported considerable quantities of modern arms. Since 1933 she is known to have received approximately the following:-

- 52 machine guns
- 410 light automatic weapons
- 26 anti tank guns
- 6 Stokes-Brandt mortars
- at least 40,000 rifles
- 19,000,000 rounds S.A.A.

She also possesses three light tanks of Italian make but it is doubtful whether these are now serviceable.

4. Organization and Command.

Command in the field is exercised by a leader who acts for the Emperor and is appointed by him. The subordinate leaders are the provincial and local governors. The feudal system, which obtains in the government of the country, is reflected in its military organization. Each chieftain provides a contingent of tribal levies and owes allegiance to his own provincial governor and no other. On the loyalty of provincial governors, therefore, depends the response to a national call to arms.

There is no regular staff at all and practically nothing in the way of administrative services. The normal system is for each man to bring his food on his own pack animal and to be responsible for keeping himself supplied. Recently the Emperor has taken some steps towards establishing a system of magazines for supply purposes in various parts of the country, but it is not known to what extent this policy has really been put into practice.

5. Fighting Value.

The Ethiopians, particularly the true highlanders, of whom there are some 300,000 are fine natural fighters; their assets are their hardiness, mobility and skill in the use of ground. On the debit side however is inter-tribal jealousy and the complete lack of cohesion and discipline. The natural tactics of the Ethiopians are those of the attack in mass, and although the foreign missions have tried to teach the use of guerilla tactics, it is doubtful whether, when the day comes, their teaching will be remembered.

ITALIAN FORCES IN EAST AFRICA.

ERITREA.

G.H.Q. East African Force (Gen. De Bono)

White Corps (Gen. )

Gavinana Division

Sabauda Division

Corps Troops.

Native Corps (Gen. Pirzio Biroli)

(A) Native Division

(B) Native Division

Corps Troops.

1st Eritrean Blackshirt Bn.

2nd " " "

3rd " " "

X (? 161st) Blackshirt Bn.

SOMALIA.

Somalia Mixed Corps (Gen. Graziani)

Feloritana Division

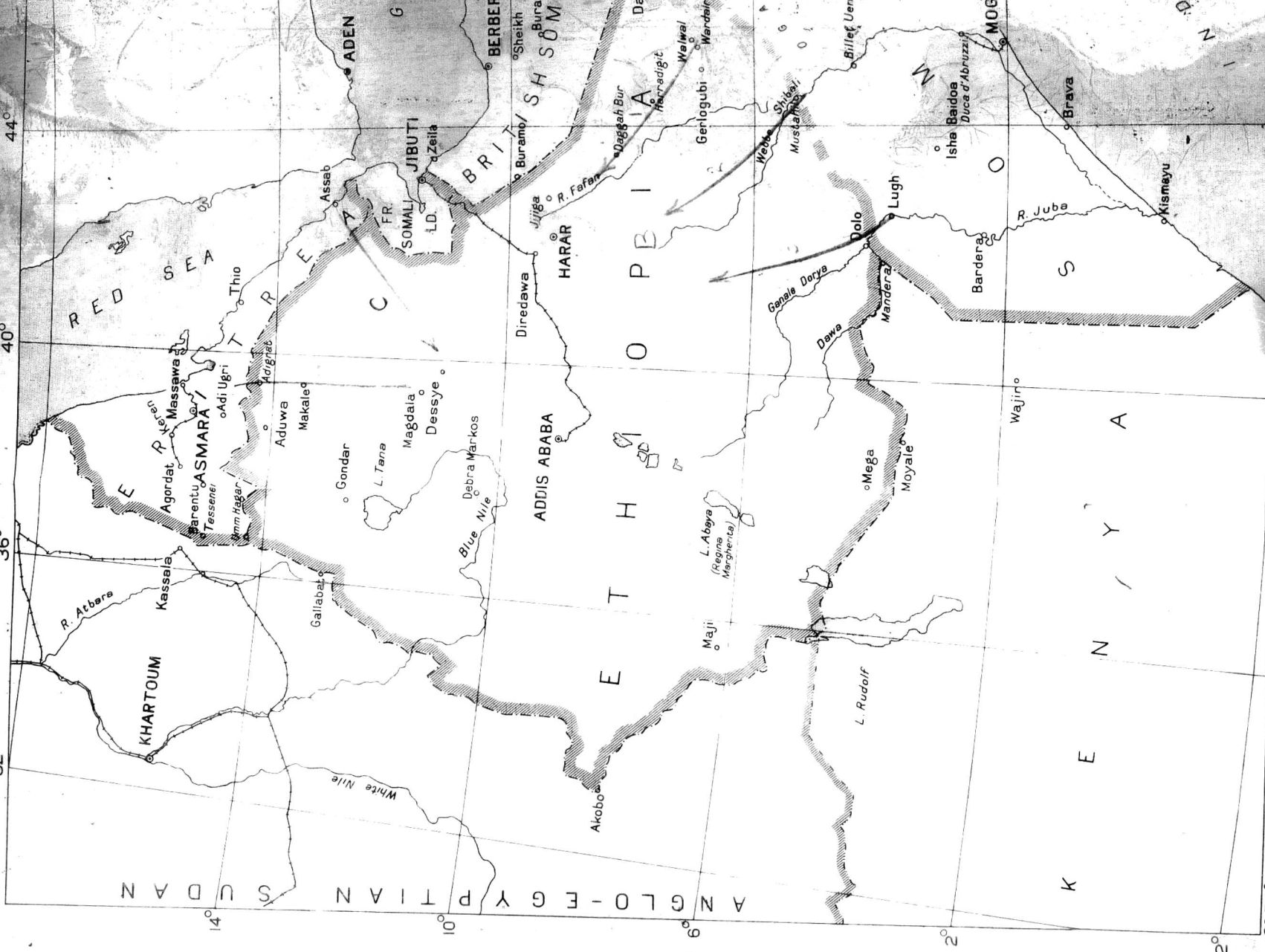
(C) Native Division

Corps Troops

Unallotted at present - probably L. of C. troops, mainly for Eritrea.

- X March 23rd Blackshirt Div. )
- X October 28th " " ) (2/3 strength of regular div.)
- X Four Blackshirt Bns. (independent).

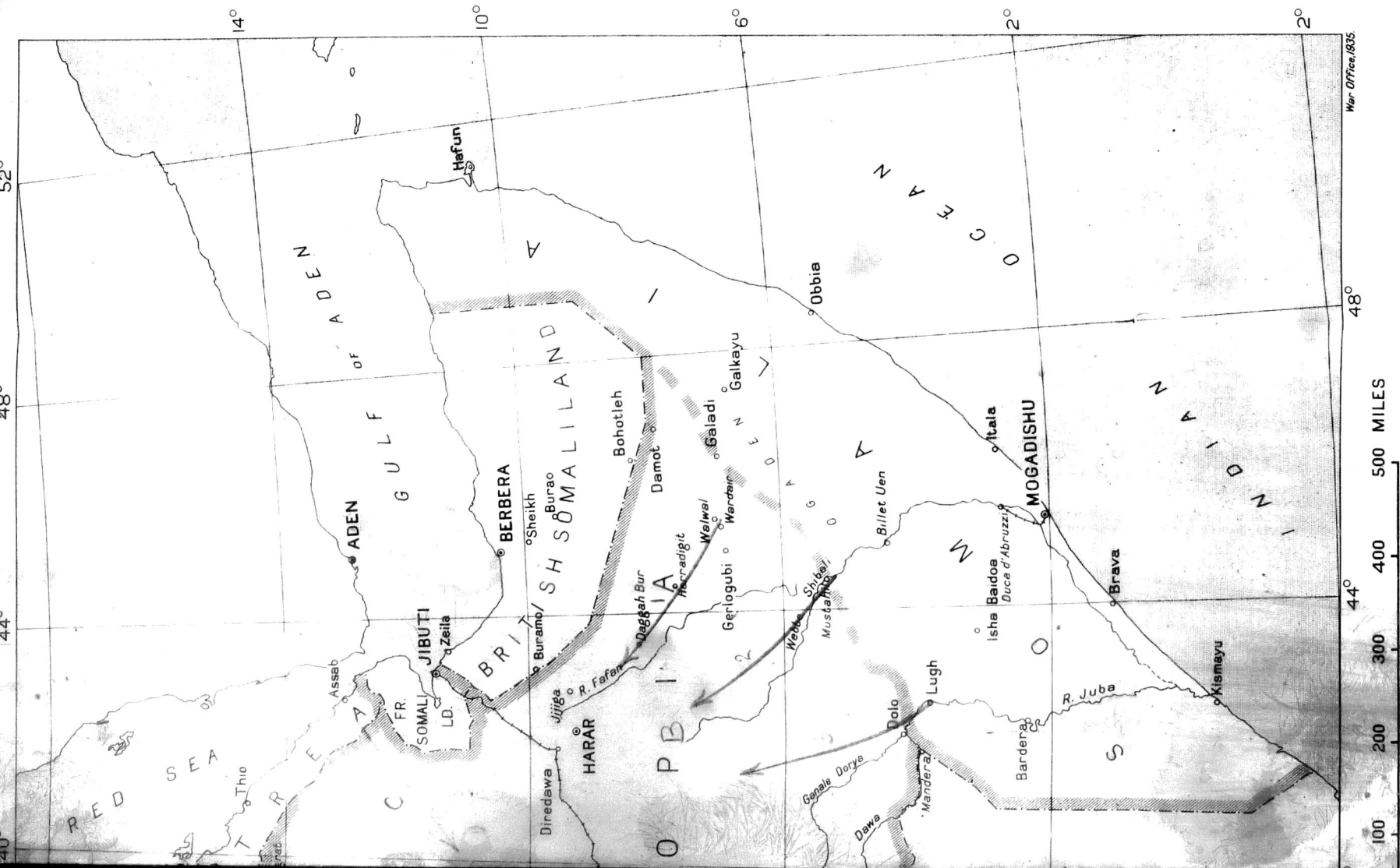
X Under orders, not yet embarked.



D.R. 744°



International boundary  
Intercolonial



boundary

20  
202

38066/35

PARAPHRASE TELEGRAM from the Secretary of State

Mr. Freeston for the Colonies to the Officer Administering the  
18.5 Government of Kenya.

(Sent 1.40 p.m., 18th May 1935)

Sir C.  
Bottomley  
18.5.  
at once.

- - - - -

No. 126 Secret.

Most recent information suggests possibility that active hostilities may be expected about the middle of August. Governor and Hunday have been consulted and it is possible that latter may be asked to return to Kenya by air so as to arrive in the Colony early in June. Meanwhile the appreciation requested in the fifth paragraph of my despatch may be suspended. Reference my despatch 4th May secret.

No. 12

C. O.

Mr. Freeston. 2/ 5.35.

Mr. 2-5 of

Mr.

Mr. Parkinson.

Mr. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shackburgh.

Permi. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

38066/35. Kenya, Secret.

203

To go by Air Mail.

Downing Street.

4<sup>th</sup> May, 1935.



**DRAFT.**

Sir,

13

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Sir Joseph Byrne's Secret despatches of the 16th and the 28th of February, regarding the action to be taken by the Government of Kenya in the event of hostilities between Ethiopia and Italy.

2. The precautionary measures reported in the later despatch under reference meet with my full approval.

3. You will observe from the enclosed copy of correspondence with the Foreign Office that, while the interpretation of the Treaty position

advanced

KENYA.

SECRET.

O.A.G.

2/ 4)

To Foreign Office. 26th March.  
(5)

Fr. Foreign Office. 10th April.  
(10)

Fr. Air Ministry. 24th April.  
(11)

copy to Lyanda (No. 13)  
D. C. (No. 16)  
W. O. (No. 14)  
T. P. (No. 17)  
Admiralty (No. 15)  
Air Ministry (No. 18)

**FURTHER ACTION.**

Copy with enclosures to Governor, Uganda; Secretary, O.D.C.; War Office; Admiralty, lff. Copy with last encl. only to Foreign Office. Copy with first two encls. only to Air Ministry lff.

Secret.

advanced in Sir Joseph Byrne's despatch of  
February 16th is endorsed, the Secretary of  
State for Foreign Affairs shares my view  
that any attempt to close the frontier  
completely would <sup>actually</sup> be neither prudent nor  
practicable; and the alternative is  
suggested of arranging for the concentration  
of refugees and stragglers, after they have  
been disarmed, in suitable areas behind the  
frontier. You will no doubt cause  
preliminary consideration to be given to  
the details of such arrangements, in the  
light of the forces available for intercepting,  
disarming, and shepherding the immigrants to  
the area or areas selected for their concentration.

4. The possibility of co-operation by the  
Royal Air Force has been under discussion with  
the Air Council; and in the letter of the  
24th April, of which a copy is enclosed, they  
suggest that the rôle played by the Force  
should be that of reconnaissance and deterrence

rather

C. O.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. Parkinson.

Mr. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Perm. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

**DRAFT.**

**FURTHER ACTION.**

204  
rather than the rapid transport of  
ground forces.

5. The contingency against  
which these various plans are intended  
to provide does not appear, so far  
as can be judged at the moment, to be  
imminent. I shall look with interest  
to receiving from you a revised  
appreciation of the situation, framed  
in the light of the policy suggested  
in paragraph 3 above, the Air  
Ministry's proposals for co-operation,  
and the recent visit paid to the  
frontier by the Officer Commanding  
the Northern Brigade.

6. A copy of this despatch,  
with enclosures, is being sent to the  
Governor of Uganda.

I have, etc.

(Sgd.) P. OUNLIFFE-LISTER.

TEL. NO. HOLBORN 3434.

Any communications on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:-

THE SECRETARY,  
AIR MINISTRY,  
ADAMSTAL HOUSE,  
KINGSWAY,  
LONDON. W.C. 2.



AIR MINISTRY,  
LONDON, W.C. 2.

and the following number quoted :-

S.35493/S.6.

SECRET.

24 April, 1935.

Sir,

I am commanded by the Air Council to refer to Mr. Flood's letter <sup>38066/35</sup> of the 26th March, 1935, regarding the measures which it will be necessary to take on the Kenya frontier in the event of hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia and to acquaint you, for the information of Secretary Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister that arrangements have been made to hold in readiness two bomber transport aircraft against the apprehended emergency.

2. The Air Council observe, however, that the nature of the defence preparations proposed on the Northern Frontiers of Kenya will necessitate both these aircraft being continuously ready for operation at the shortest notice. Under such conditions it is doubtful if reliance can be placed on so high a degree of day-to-day serviceability over an unknown period, and it is considered that in order to implement the scheme at present proposed, at least one spare aircraft additional to foreseeable requirements would be required. In the absence of any precise information as to the loads to be carried and the probable incidence of work on these aircraft, it is not possible precisely to determine the number of aircraft required to implement the scheme proposed, but, should it become obvious in the light of more complete information that a greater number of bomber transport aircraft than the two asked for is, in fact, necessary, some difficulty may be experienced in providing them in view of a possibly concurrent commitment for the evacuation by air of the British subject population from Addis Ababa.

The Under-Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office,  
S.W.1.

3. In regard to the defence arrangements for the frontier outlined in the despatches from the Governor of Kenya, as Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister is aware, it was agreed, as the result of discussion in the Oversea Defence Committee on the 10th April, 1935, that the Air Ministry views should be represented to the Colonial Office direct with a view to their being forwarded, if considered desirable, in the form of a despatch to the local authorities concerned.

4. The Air Council note that the plan outlined at the Conference in Nairobi on the 22nd February, 1935, and referred to in the Governor's covering despatches, postulates the immediate despatch of troops by air to threatened portions of the frontier for the purpose of supporting local police detachments should the necessity arise. In this connection it is necessary to observe that no landing grounds appear to exist on the frontier for the deplaning of these troops, apart from those at Mandera, Moyale and Lokitaung. It would not, therefore, seem possible to rely upon the suggested method of reinforcing the police, because the inherent immobility of the troops after their arrival at any one of these widely separated landing grounds leaves unsolved the problem of rapidly reinforcing any threatened point on a frontier which is described by His Excellency the Governor as "long and desolate." In these circumstances the Air Council entertain the gravest doubts of the probable efficacy of the methods proposed to meet the emergencies apprehended.

5. On the other hand it was, as Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister is aware, at his suggestion that a detailed investigation of defence requirements on this frontier was recently carried out by the Air Officer Commanding, Middle East Command, and the Inspector-General of the King's

African Rifles, with the assistance of the local civil and Military authorities. The problems then investigated were similar to those now under consideration, and the views expressed in the Report, to the effect that the proper use of aircraft on this frontier offered the best solution, were unanimously endorsed by Their Excellencies the Governors of the East African territories.

6. In these circumstances the Air Council wish to put forward their view, for the consideration of Secretary Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, that the emergencies now envisaged, which do not appear adequately to be met by the plan at present proposed, lend themselves more readily to solution if the police detachments, in whose hands the initial responsibility must always remain, are directly supported by an adequate force of aircraft, both for reconnaissance duties and, in the last resort, for direct action of a degree suitably tempered to the occasion. Such a force would be able not only to keep the administration and the frontier detachments speedily informed of movements across the frontier, but also quickly to reach and, if necessary, take effective action in any part of the vast and desolate regions involved. Many precedents could be quoted regarding the efficacy and humanity of this method of controlling tribal migration and opposing armed incursion.

7. If the Secretary of State is favourably disposed towards these suggestions, and if the local authorities are willing to accept the solution now suggested to their problems, the Air Officer Commanding, Middle East Command, will be instructed to hold in readiness a detachment of aircraft adequate for the purpose. It is necessary to point out, however, that in the event of disturbances being apprehended on the frontier more than 150 miles to the West of Moyale, an additional landing ground would be necessary about half way between that place and Lake Rudolf; also that although the aircraft detachment would arrive

suitably organised to operate for one month, as much notice as possible is desirable in order to allow time for the despatch of certain supply requirements by sea.

8. The question of what financial adjustment, if any, will be necessary in the event of the aircraft being required, will be a matter for subsequent consideration in the light of all the relevant circumstances.

9. Finally, I am to add that the plan recommended above appears to approximate more closely to the preparations being made to meet a precisely similar situation in Somaliland.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

*J. H. Keadell*

In any further communication  
on this subject, please quote

No. J 1201/1/1.

and address—

not to any person by name,

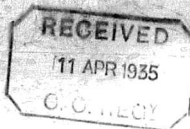
but to—

"The Under-Secretary of State,"  
Foreign Office,  
London, S.W.1.

10  
207  
FOREIGN OFFICE.

S.W.1.

10th April, 1935.



Sir,

I am directed by Secretary Sir John Simon to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 38066/35 of 26th March last enclosing copies of two despatches from the Governor of Kenya concerning the measures which it will be necessary to take on the frontier of that colony in the unhappy event of the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Italy.

2. The Secretary of State, who concurs in the interpretation of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1907 set out in paragraph 4 of your letter under acknowledgment, agrees with Sir Philip Cunliffe Lister's proposal to invite the Government of Kenya to consider whether it would not be preferable not to adopt a policy of closing the frontier to refugees, but to arrange for such refugees to be temporarily concentrated and accommodated in an area where their presence would involve the least possible interference with the local inhabitants.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

The Under-Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office.

C. O.

38066/35. Kenya. Secret.

6  
9  
208

Mr. Lee. 23 3.35.

Mr. ~~Fresh~~

Mr. ~~Flinn~~. 23 *js.*

Mr. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Parli. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

Downing Street.

26<sup>th</sup> March, 1935.

SECRET.

Sir,

DRAFT.

I am etc. to transmit

- 1. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, WAR OFFICE. *6 32*
- 2. THE SECRETARY, ADMIRALTY. *527*
- 3. THE SECRETARY, AIR MINISTRY. *528*
- 4. THE SECRETARY, OVERSEAS DEFENCE COMMITTEE. *529*

- to you, for the information of
- 1. the Army Council,
- 2. the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty,
- 3. the Air Council,
- 4. the Overseas Defence Committee,

copies of two despatches from the Governor of Kenya concerning the measures which it will be necessary to take on the Kenya frontier in the event of hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia, together with a copy of a letter which has been sent to the Foreign Office, ~~in the matter.~~

2. I am to invite attention to the fact that, should the

necessity

From GW 16/2/35  
From GW. 20/2/35  
To F.O.  
*amps lw.*

FURTHER ACTION.

Air Ministry only.

necessity arise, the Governor <sup>will</sup> probably  
have to ask for the services of two Vickers  
Victoria troop carrying aircraft to be  
located at Nairobi, in order to facilitate  
the rapid movement of troops and supplies  
to any areas affected. The Secretary of  
State would be glad to have the observations  
of the Air Council on this particular  
question.

I am, etc.

(S) C. W. FLOOD

C. O.

- Mr. Lee. 28 3.35.
- Mr. ~~Frank~~
- Mr. ~~Flem~~ 23. 3
- Mr. Parkinson.
- Sir G. Tomlinson
- Sir C. Bottomley.
- Sir J. Shuckburgh.
- Permt. U.S. of S.
- Parly. U.S. of S.
- Secretary of State.

38066/35. Kenya

Downing Street.  
26<sup>th</sup> March, 1935.

SECRET.

Sir,

DRAFT.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE.  
FOREIGN OFFICE.

I am etc. to transmit to  
you, to be laid before Secretary  
Sir John Simon, copies of two despatches  
from the Governor of Kenya concerning  
the measures which it would be  
necessary to take on the Kenya frontier  
in the event of an outbreak of  
hostilities between Ethiopia and Italy.

2. It will be seen that  
Sir Joseph Byrne anticipates that  
if hostilities were to begin, there  
would almost certainly be an attempted  
~~incursion~~<sup>enhance</sup> incursion into Kenya of numerous  
Italian and Ethiopian tribesmen, either  
in order to avoid the heavy demands  
which would naturally be made upon  
their

Answered 10  
S

From Gw. 16/2/35

From Gw. 28/2/35.

26.3.35 (6-9)  
about 11.45  
copy 1. an. 11.45  
WVO  
DRC

FURTHER ACTION.

C.C.

Mr.  
Mr.  
Mr.

Mr. Parkinson.  
Sir G. Tomlinson.  
Sir C. Bottomley.  
Sir J. Shuckburgh.  
Parlt. U.S. of S.  
Parly. U.S. of S.  
Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

FURTHER ACTION.

their resources by their respective Governments or, more particularly where the Ethiopian tribes are concerned, to escape the general conditions likely to arise in the event of a campaign being undertaken on any considerable scale.

3. While at the recent meeting of the Overseas Defence Committee which examined questions likely to arise in the event of an outbreak of hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia the view was expressed that the main fighting - in so far as this did not take place in the areas near Eritrea - would take place to the north of the Webbe Shibelli, the possibility of general unrest on the Kenya frontiers, and of the attempted incursion <sup>in Kenya</sup> of large numbers of refugees, must clearly be <sup>considered</sup> expected; and it is therefore a matter of importance to decide what policy the Government of Kenya should adopt in

such

such an eventuality.  
4. The Secretary of State assumes that, as regards the legal position, there can be no doubt that the Government of Kenya would have the right; if it so chose, to close the frontier against refugees from Ethiopia or Italian Somaliland, despite the provisions in the 1907 Treaty to which Sir Joseph Byrne refers in his despatch of the 16th <sup>4/</sup>February. ~~He~~ would be glad to learn whether Sir John Simon concurs in this view. The wider question, however, of whether such a right could or should be enforced in practice must, in the Secretary of State's <sup>opinion</sup> ~~view~~, be taken <sup>into</sup> ~~into~~ consideration. <sup>his & this,</sup> The Secretary of State's view is that it is very doubtful how far, having regard to the nature of the frontier and of the resources at the disposal of the Kenya

authorities

C. O.

- Mr.
- Mr.
- Mr.
- Mr. Parkinson.
- Sir G. Tomlinson.
- Sir C. Bottomley.
- Sir J. Shuckburgh.
- Permt. U.S. of S.
- Parly. U.S. of S.
- Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

**FURTHER ACTION.**

authorities, it would in any event be possible to enforce a policy of closing the frontier. Further, he doubts whether, on grounds of common humanity, an attempt should be made to enforce such a policy. He feels that while it would naturally be necessary for the local authorities to see that refugees did not disturb the ordinary life of the native population actually domiciled in Kenya, and to arrange for such refugees to be disarmed as far as possible, it would be impossible to contemplate denying them any access to Kenya, if only because ~~to do so would probably mean that~~ <sup>→ would,</sup> in view of the inhospitable nature of the country, to turn such refugees (many of whom would be women and children) back from the frontier would condemn a large proportion of them <sup>inhabitable (from starvation or thirst)</sup> to death. Subject, therefore, to the views of Sir John Simon, the Secretary of State would propose to ask the Governor to consider whether it would not be preferable not

not to adopt a policy of closing the frontier to refugees, but (as indeed is apparently already contemplated as a possible alternative) to arrange for such refugees to be temporarily concentrated and accommodated in an area where their presence would involve the least possible interference with the local inhabitants. Such considerations would not, of course, apply to armed bands who might be tempted by the prevailing disorder to enter Kenya in the hope of loot. It would clearly be necessary to oppose such bands by force of arms and for that reason at any rate a strengthening of the forces on the frontier would undoubtedly be necessary. It will be seen that, <sup>by this means</sup> at this point, the Governor has already taken preliminary measures to concentrate a battalion of the Northern Brigade at Wajir and to strengthen the Police

force in the area in question; and the Secretary of State thinks that, at any rate for the present, there is no need to contemplate any further measures in this respect.

6. Copies of the Governor's despatches and of this letter are being sent to the War Office, the Admiralty, the Air Ministry and to the Secretary of the Overseas Defence Committee.

The attention of the Air Ministry is being specially drawn to the fact that, in the event of actual hostilities, the Governor would probably have to ask for two Vickers Victoria troop carrying aircraft to be sent to Nairobi.

I am, etc.

(Signed) J. E. W FLOOD

5. ~~See Action Summary~~

If, however, it should become necessary for the Govt. of Kenya to undertake any extensive measures in connection with refugees, the question of expense will require serious consideration as the Govt. is not at present in a position to meet any heavy liability on such an account.

L. Rudolf

° MEGA

° MOYALE

° DOLD  
° MANDELA  
° LUGH

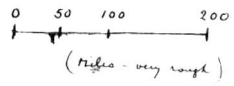
° MOGADISHU

° EL WAK

° MAKSABIT

° OWAJIR

— River  
JUBA



LORIAN  
SWAMP.

AIR MAIL



213

KENYA

No.

SECRET. (2)

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
NAIROBI  
KENYA

RECEIVED

SMAR1935

28th February, 1935.

O. REGY

6c

46 011/1/35  
Somali

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your Secret telegram No. 55 of the 27th February in which you ask me to consider and to advise as to whether, in the event of hostilities between Ethiopia and Italy, any action will be necessary on the Kenya frontier.

2. I had already consulted my Civil and Military advisers and arranged for certain plans to be prepared and for certain precautionary measures to be taken, and I enclose a copy of the record of a meeting held at Government House on 22nd February.

3. The concentration referred to in the fourth paragraph of the enclosure hereto will be completed by the 7th March.

4. Should the necessity arise I may have to ask for two Vickers Victoria troop-carrying aircraft to be located at Nairobi so as to facilitate the rapid movement of troops and supplies to any areas affected.

5. I have sent a copy of this despatch and enclosure to the Governor of Uganda.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

BRIGADIER-GENERAL,  
GOVERNOR.

Copies to FO  
NO  
Adm  
Au Min  
ODI  
Secur  
26.3.35 (5-9)

Present:

His Excellency the Governor.  
The Deputy Colonial Secretary.  
The Senior Assistant Colonial Secretary.  
The Officer Commanding Northern Brigade.  
The Commissioner of Police.  
Major T.M. Brick. O.B.E.  
Capt. J.B. Grenfell-Hicks.  
The Staff Officer, Northern Brigade.  
Major T.C. Wells. O.B.E., M.C.  
Mr. L.A. Weaving. (Secretariat).

-----

His Excellency the Governor informed the meeting that the Ethiopian-Italian situation had not, in his opinion, sufficiently developed to demand active measures on the part of the Kenya Government at present. He thought, however, that the Italian line of advance, in the event of hostilities being commenced, would be Mogadiscio - Lugh - Dolo, with the probability that the Northern Frontier District of this Colony would be invaded by refugee tribesmen both from Italian territory and Ethiopia.

It was obvious that, if possible, this tribal movement should be prevented. The alternative seemed to be to escort refugees to some place where water and grazing could be provided for men and stock.

If necessary troop carriers would be asked for from the Middle East Command to enable troops to be moved rapidly with a view to preventing migrations. An aeroplane for emergency scouting purposes could be obtained locally at short notice.

2. Mr. Barton considered the entry of tribesmen must, if possible, be prevented. Should this prove impossible, all he could suggest was that refugees should be concentrated and "corridorred" by the troops to a place, possibly South East of the Lorien Swamp (the actual place to be selected by the Administrative Authorities). The situation would, however, be difficult owing to water and grazing difficulties. Obviously, however, the immigrants could not be allowed to remain in the North East corner of the District without.....

without causing a serious inter-tribal situation.

3. His Excellency considered the Mandera triangle should be occupied, and that immigrants who did cross the frontiers should be disarmed. He would prefer this situation to be handled in the first instance by the police, with the troops in reserve.

It was generally agreed any attempt either to prevent the refugees from entering or to disarm them would be resisted.

4. The Officer Commanding, Northern Brigade proposed to occupy El-Wak, Mandera and Moyale: two platoons (one of which would be mobile) at Mandera, and one platoon each at El-Wak and Moyale. These dispositions would be made from the Company or detachment at Wajir; but he considered the remainder of the Meru battalion should be moved forward to Wajir before the rains. Otherwise, in the event of a major situation arising, the troops might not be able to move forward. Adequate ration arrangements would be made.

5. The Commissioner of Police stated he had 95 African Police with two European Officers in the area. These he proposed to reinforce by 40, drawn from Isiolo and Marsabit, with a view to establishing mobile posts of from five to ten men round the triangle. He would require two lorries. It was emphasised that the Police would not be numerically in a position to engage refugees in any numbers who refused to comply with orders, but that in such an event the troops would have to be called. Police patrols would be quick moving, i.e., mounted on mules or camels. On occasion lorries would be used.

6. His Excellency, in regard to military dispositions, authorised the concentration of the Meru battalion at Wajir on the understanding that the move would be made in such a way as not to suggest it was in any way connected with the international situation. His Excellency instructed, however, that the proposed movements north of Wajir should await further developments.

7. In regard to the Police His Excellency authorised the increase proposed by the Commissioner. The number of patrols

was not, however, to be increased without His Excellency's instructions.

8. His Excellency instructed that until the Civil Officers were of opinion that the situation had got out of control they would remain responsible for their respective areas.

9. It was agreed that, if the situation got out of control, the Senior Military Officer would assume command of the Military and Police; and would act in co-operation with the Civil Officers.

10. Mr. Pilling suggested it would be wise to warn the Colonial Office that air craft might be required. His Excellency did not, however, consider that this was desirable at present.

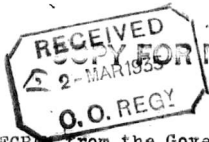
11. In regard to emergency arrangements, the Officer Commanding Northern Brigade thought it might prove necessary to concentrate a part of the 4th Battalion at Eldoret where it would be available for emergencies on either side of Lake Rudolf. It was arranged he should discuss with the Railway Administration with a view to the necessary rolling stock being kept available in case this movement of troops became necessary.

12. Medical arrangements would be discussed by the Officer Commanding Northern Brigade with the Director of Medical Services.

13. The Officer Commanding Northern Brigade suggested it might be advisable to mobilize the K.A.R. Reserve at Nairobi. His Excellency, however, did not consider this to be necessary at present.

14. His Excellency instructed Mr. Barton to accompany the Officer Commanding Northern Brigade on his coming visit to the Northern Frontier District, with the special object of discussing the situation with His Majesty's Consul, Mega.

15. Generally it was agreed that, if necessary, the Italian and Ethiopian Governments should be asked to co-operate in preventing their nationals from crossing the frontiers.



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PARAPHRASE TELEGRAM from the Governor of Kenya to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Dated 1st March, 1935. Received in the Colonial Office at 1.32 p.m., 1st March, 1935.

No.44. Secret. (1)

*copy sent* A reply to your secret telegram No.56 of the 27th February has left by air mail this morning.

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AIR MAIL



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
NAIROBI  
KENYA

KENYA

No.

SECRET

16th February, 1935.

6

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the situation at present existing between Italy and Ethiopia.

2. In so far as present developments are concerned this Government has not been directly affected except by a general feeling of unrest on the frontiers which is a natural result of the many rumours which the political situation has occasioned.

3. It must, however, be appreciated that one of the results of any outbreak of hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia within any reasonable distance of the North Eastern frontiers of this Colony would be certain to result in the incursion of numerous Italian and Ethiopian tribesmen with their stock into this Colony; either in order to avoid the heavy demands which would naturally be made upon their resources by their respective Governments or, more particularly where the Ethiopian tribes are concerned, to escape the general conditions inevitably to arise in the event of a campaign being undertaken on any considerable scale.

4. You are well aware that over a period of years the general racial tendency has been, and this applies of recent years more particularly to Italian Somaliland, for the tribes of that Colony and of Ethiopia to endeavour to migrate to this Colony, but up to the present, and with normal conditions,.....

(1)

MAJOR THE RT. HON. SIR PHILIP CUNLIFFE-LISTER, P.C., G.B.E., M.C., M.P.,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,  
COLONIAL OFFICE,  
DOWNING STREET, S.W. 1.

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conditions, such movements as have taken place have not produced a major political situation.

Any mass incursions, however, which might result from the outbreak of hostilities would produce a very different problem.

The immigrants would utilise water and grazing of which there is, as you are aware, already insufficient for Kenya tribes; and inter-tribal friction would result which would be likely to lead to tribal conflicts requiring military intervention. Further, the situation would be aggravated by the racial antagonism already existing between certain of the Italian and Ethiopian tribes and the British tribes to the South and West of the frontiers.

5. In accordance with the 1907 Treaty with Ethiopia "the tribes occupying either side of the line shall have the right to use the grazing grounds on the other side as in the past, but during their migrations it is understood that they shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the territorial authority. Free access to the nearest wells is equally accorded to the tribes occupying either side of the line".

Clearly, however, this provision was not intended to cover a contingency of the nature now contemplated.

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Vol II. 2445

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"If, however, the enquiries of the Commission referred to in Article 12 show that in the neighbourhood of the sector of the new frontier running from El Beru to the Jubaland - Tanaland boundary there exists a shortage of pasture for the tribes situated on the Italian side of the frontier, and if these enquiries also show that during the rainy season there is on the British side of that sector and in the region bounded on the east by the new frontier and on the west by the line Goochi-Ribba - El-Tulli - Lakola - Toor Guda - Ramaguda more pasturage available than is required for the tribes in British territory, then the Commission will have power to decide that for a certain period, not less than five years, Somalis or other natives of the transferred territory may during the rainy season cross the boundary to such a distance and in such numbers as the Commission may prescribe, it being understood that in no case shall such Somalis or natives be allowed to pass to the west of the line Goochi - Ribba - El-Tulli - Lakola - Toor Guda - Ramaguda. The decisions of the Commission shall be carried into effect by the authorities concerned, and at the end of the period so prescribed the position will be reconsidered in a friendly spirit in the light of the experience gained and of the requirements at that time of the tribes in British territory",

the Commission appointed under the Treaty ultimately decided that there was no case for the concession referred to in that Article.

Moreover, it is provided in the same Article of the Treaty that "the two Governments undertake that they will respectively endeavour to prevent any migrations of Somalis or other natives across the frontier".

6. In the event, therefore, of such a contingency arising there would appear to be no treaty obligation which would render undesirable any action which this Government may find it necessary to take in order to prevent mass migrations.

On the contrary any acquiescence in such movements would be not unlikely to embarrass seriously this Government with one or other of the Governments concerned for

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7. You will, however, appreciate that it may well prove impossible for this Government to take adequate preventive measures along so long and desolate a frontier, and in the circumstances I have thought it advisable to address you in order that you may indicate in any way the policy which it is desirable this Government should adopt.

8. I am communicating a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,



BRIGADIER-GENERAL.  
GOVERNOR.

AIR MAIL.  
SECRET.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
KENYA,  
EAST AFRICA.

20th February, 1935.

The Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Kenya presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies and has the honour to transmit herewith two copies of Kenya Secret Air-Mail despatch dated the 15th February, 1935, on the subject of the situation arising from the present state of Ethiopian-Italian relations. The Private Secretary has reason to believe that possibly by a mistake the original despatch may have been sent by sea instead of air mail.

*Handwritten signature*

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5. In accordance with the 1907 Treaty with Ethiopia "the tribes occupying either side of the line shall have the right to use the grazing grounds on the other side as in the past, but during their migrations it is understood that they shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the territorial authority. Free access to the nearest wells is equally accorded to the tribes occupying either side of the line".

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