

E. AFRICA

C. O.  
41185

41185 Secret

RECEIVED  
26 OCT 14

Foreign Office

Belgian Operations in German East Africa

1914

October 24<sup>th</sup>

Consider that if the Belgian Govt. is to be urged to abstain from offensive movements against German East Africa, a full and frank exchange of views between the two Governments would appear to be necessary.

Last Previous Paper

4037

Secret

for ~~Belgium~~ <sup>to Paris</sup> Gen. G. Fiddler

This will no doubt be considered by the Officio Publico as the 20. suggest.

The 20. has seems a very sound one. I must confess and it is obvious that we shall have to let the Belgians alone and leave them to do what they can for themselves. They may cause us some inconvenience but probably not much harm at all. I only trust that we shall not be cut off from the Eastern side of Lake Tanganyika.

Dr. Fiddler to Gen. 24.10 ✓  
Copy 12/11 to G.O. B/1a 31/10 ✓ (42105)  
Copy 12/11 to G.O. B/1b 1/11 ✓ (42106)  
Copy 12/11 to G.O. B/1c 3/11 ✓ (42289)  
Copy 12/11 to G.O. B/1d 3/11 ✓ (42289)  
Copy 12/11 to G.O. B/1e 3/11 ✓ (42289)

Next subsequent Paper

42012

Secret

(We have not heard any thing  
of the alleged German attack on  
the Belgians near Lake Kivu.)

26.10.14

H. J. R.  
26/10/14

In the circumstances I think we may let  
the matter drop. The Belgian operations  
were described as a 'raid' and they  
may have withdrawn. We might  
ask the Gov. by telegraph whether  
the Belgians are still at Goma or  
have returned.

Ch. 26.10.14

Yes, we had better let this drop  
but tel. as proposed by Sir J. Anderson

26.10.14

Thought  
we had  
H. J. R.  
an object  
Lake  
Tanganika

In any further communication  
on the subject, please quote

No. 61632/14.

and address—  
The Under-Secretary of State,  
Foreign Office,  
London.

~~2 copies~~  
FOREIGN OFFICE

October 24th, 1914.

secret.

517

Sir:-

I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, 40321/Secret, regarding Belgian offensive operations in German East Africa.

I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey would be prepared again to urge the Belgian Government to undertake no offensive movement from the Congo in view of the fact that His Majesty's forces are not yet in a position to support them in such a movement. Such advice would, however, amount to a request that the Belgian forces should abstain from what might appear to them an opportunity for a successful offensive and should in general abandon a line of action which they are known, rightly or wrongly, to consider as necessary for the defence of Belgian territory.

It

The Under Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office.

It would therefore be difficult to tender such advice except on one ground that operations against German East Africa, from whatever side, must be regarded as one strategic problem, and that isolated action by the Belgian forces may consequently compromise the whole plan of campaign. These considerations, however, might with justice be considered by the Belgian Government as equally applicable to any military action intended by His Majesty's Government and they might fairly ask that His Majesty's Government should inform them fully and without delay of their present and future plan of operations against German territory, with a view to concerted arrangements for a temporary defensive and for any eventual offensive expedition in which the Belgian Government might desire to co-operate.

It is, indeed, true that the Belgian Government had previously adopted the attitude that they desired to maintain so far as possible the neutrality of the Congo Colony, but I am to observe that His Majesty's Government have only given a qualified assent to that attitude and that

that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have expressed the opinion that any absolute assent to it would be undesirable. Moreover there is no evidence that the German Government desire to pay any respect to such an attitude of neutrality on the part of the Congo, and indeed in this particular instance it appears doubtful whether the present Belgian offensive is not in the nature of a counter-attack to one already delivered by the German forces against Belgian territory in the region of Kivu.

His Majesty's Government cannot therefore proceed on the assumption that Belgian territory in Africa is to be regarded as neutral, and it would be difficult for them to tender advice to the Belgian Government in the matter now under discussion except on the basis of a full and frank exchange of views between the allied Governments.

I am, therefore, to enquire whether Mr. Secretary Harcourt would be willing to enter upon such an exchange of views with the Belgian Government as to military policy in Africa, and I am to suggest that the subject is one which might

(61632/14)

853

might now usefully be considered afresh by the Operations  
Operations Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial  
Defence.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

*E. J. [Signature]*

Copy

591

61632/14.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

October 24th, 1914.

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Operations Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial  
Defence.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble Servant,

4185 / Epica

9.4

instance sent in Jphes  
Egus 4.45pm  
27.10.14

6.30.27

- 172

(Egper)

leave inform  
me whether <sup>the</sup> Belgians  
are still at Goma  
or whether they  
have retired

DRAFT Telegram

Governor <sup>Montana</sup>  
Nairobi

MINUTE.

- Mr. Egus 27/10/14
- Mr. Bokum 27/10/14
- Mr.
- Mr.
- Sir G. Fiddes.
- Sir H. Just.
- Sir J. Anderson.
- Lord Emmott. Islington.
- Mr. Harcourt.

Harcourt

Paraphrase,

Telegram. The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the  
Governor of the East Africa Protectorate.

(Sent 4.45 p.m. 27th October 1914).

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October 27th.

Your telegram 18th October No.172, please  
inform me whether the Belgians are still at Goma or  
whether they have retired.

HARCOURT.