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CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

SUPPRESSION OF SLAVE TRADE

IN

EAST AFRICAN WATERS.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
November 1888.*

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## Correspondence respecting Suppression of Slave Trade in East African Waters.

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No. 1.

*Memorandum communicated by Count Leyden, October 8, 1888.*

(Translation.)

THE exchange of views which has hitherto taken place between the Cabinets of Berlin and London on the existing disturbances in East Africa and the position of the Sultan of Zanzibar has happily shown the existence of a full understanding between the two Governments in the main points of their policy in those regions. The Chancellor has seen with special satisfaction that Lord Salisbury unreservedly recognizes the community of German and English interests in Zanzibar, and shares the conviction that it is only by a mutual co-operation, founded on reciprocal trust on the part of the two Powers, that the task of Christian civilization in East Africa can be satisfactorily fulfilled.

The German and English Governments are united in the opinion that the first thing to be done is to restore and uphold the authority of the Sultan of Zanzibar against the insurrectionary movement on the mainland. The disturbances which, according to the later information, appear to have arisen in the districts around the sources of the River Rovuma and the Lake Nyassa, and then to have spread northwards, have no doubt been long prepared, and brought forward principally by the Arabs who are interested in the Slave Trade. The Sultan of Zanzibar's own forces are not strong enough for a forcible suppression of the insurrection. His rule over the mainland appears to have been entirely broken up. It is therefore to be considered how the authority of the Sultan can be supported, and the agitation of the fanatical and stranger-hating Arab element can be withstood.

It appears doubtful to the German Government whether military expeditions into the interior are suited for such a purpose. Besides the extent and pathlessness of the land, the enemy, who knows the country, will always be able to avoid the shock of a superior force, and renew the struggle at places and times of his own choosing. Standing garrisons of European troops could be maintained in the interior only, if at all, with the heaviest sacrifice of men and money. Under these circumstances, it appears desirable to confine the joint action of Germany and England in support of the Sultan at first to maritime action, and for this purpose perhaps to establish a blockade of the coast of the mainland of Zanzibar between Kipini and the River Rovuma, by German and English ships in co-operation with the Sultan of Zanzibar. The object of such a blockade would be to cut off all traffic with the insurgent coast districts, and especially that in slave-vessels, and the carriage of arms and ammunition.

In order to arrive at this last object, the Portuguese Government must also be pressed to forbid the export of munitions from their neighbouring East African possessions, as otherwise the insurgents in the southern ports of the Sultanate of Zanzibar could supply themselves through their connection with the Arab traders in Mozambique. So far as the blockade is concerned, it is principally the Arab sailing-vessels which carry on the trade between the mainland ports and Zanzibar which will be affected

by it. Notification of the blockade to all the Powers interested in the trade in those parts could be carried out in the name of the two allied Governments and the Sultan.

The Imperial Government is desirous of learning the views of Her Majesty's Government on the foregoing proposals. In the event of an understanding in principle being come to, the more particular instructions necessary for carrying out the common programme of action could then be drawn up and communicated to the German and English Representatives in Zanzibar.

*German Embassy, London, October 8, 1888.*

No. 2.

*Count Hatzfeldt to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 3.)*

(Translation.)

*London, November 3, 1888.*

THE Undersigned Ambassador of Germany near the Court of St. James, has the honour, by order of his Government, to make the following communication to his Excellency the Marquis of Salisbury, Her Britannic Majesty's Minister for Foreign Affairs :—

In view of the increasing extent of the hostility that the slave-traders of Arab nationality oppose to the suppression of the Slave Trade and to the legitimate commerce of Christian peoples with the natives of Africa, the Imperial Government propose to Her Majesty's Government to blockade, in common with, and with the consent of, the Sultan of Zanzibar, the coasts of East Africa forming part of the territory of that Sovereign, in order to suppress the exportation of slaves and the importation of arms and munitions of war. The details for carrying out this blockade shall be arranged in concert between the German and English Admirals at Zanzibar.

In order to make the blockade effective against the Slave Trade, it will be necessary that the vessels of war of both nations should visit and, in case of need, arrest any suspected vessel under whatever flag she may be sailing.

The Government of His Majesty the Emperor are ready in common with that of Her Majesty the Queen to take the requisite steps with other Powers in this sense.

As the Traffic in Slaves and arms and the hostility of the slave-merchants extend to the Portuguese coast-line adjoining Zanzibar, it will be useful and desirable to obtain the co-operation of Portugal and her consent to the extension of the blockade to the portion of the coast belonging to that Power.

In begging the Marquis of Salisbury to be so good as to inform him, as soon as possible, whether Her Majesty's Government agree to the proposal which he has the honour to submit to it, the Undersigned takes, &c.

(Signed) v. HATZFELDT.

No. 3.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to Count Hatzfeldt.*

M. l'Ambassadeur,

*Foreign Office, November 5, 1888.*

IN view of the increasing prevalence of the Slave Trade on the East Coast of Africa, and of the disturbances and impediments to legitimate trade which it produces, Her Majesty's Government accede to the proposal of the Imperial Government to establish, with the assent of the Sultan of Zanzibar, on the shores of His Highness' continental dominions, a blockade against the importation of munitions of war and the exportation of slaves.

The programme for the execution of the blockade is to be settled by the English and German Admirals in concert, and the blockade shall continue until either Power gives notice of the intention to discontinue it.

That the blockade may be effective for the above-mentioned purposes, it is essential that the ships of war of the two Powers should have, within the

area of the blockade, the right of visiting and, in case of need, detaining any suspected ship, under whatever flag she may be sailing. The Government of Her Majesty will associate itself with the Government of the Emperor in urging upon other Powers to agree to the arrangements necessary for this purpose.

As the Slave Trade, and the preparations of the traders who conduct it, extend to the neighbouring Portuguese dominions, it would be advantageous and desirable to obtain the co-operation of Portugal, and the consent of that Power to the extension of the blockade to the Portuguese coast.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 4.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, November 5, 1888.*

I INCLOSE to your Excellency a copy of a note which I have received from Count Hatzfeldt, and the note which I have addressed to him in reply.

The lamentable events which have taken place upon the East Coast of Africa have been attributed by the German Government to the increasing strength and audacity which has been displayed in recent years by the Arabs who carry on the Slave Trade. In their view, it is the apprehension of the effects which German colonization may have upon the exportation of slaves that has induced them to undertake a resistance which has terminated so calamitously for the German Company; and they are of opinion that the most effective way of punishing the authors of the attack upon the German merchants, and of depriving them of strength for similar enterprises in the future, will be to destroy the Slave Trade, which is the object for which their organization exists, and the industry from which their resources are drawn.

It is possible that too large a share in the rising of the coast tribes against the German Company is attributed to the slave traders. Much of it is, no doubt, due to the errors which have been committed by the German Company themselves. Their experience of Oriental habits and character has been insufficient, and in the measures they have taken they have allowed too little for the difference between the conditions to which they are accustomed in Europe and those with which they have had to deal on the African coast. But though much may be said, and said with justice, of the evil results of their precipitate action, and of their disregard of native character and religious customs, I am disposed to think that there is considerable foundation for the belief that the apprehensions and the resentment of the slave traders have been a potent cause of the disturbances which have taken place. There can be little doubt that the efforts which have been made to expel Europeans from Lake Nyassa on the south, and from Suakin in the north, at this time, have been due to the action of the slave-trading Arabs. The testimony of Mr. Cameron and of Cardinal Lavigerie combine to establish the fact, that there has been a formidable increase in the activity of this hateful Traffic during the last few years. There can be no doubt that it has been attended with cruelty and desolation far in excess of any that we have ground for believing that it produced in former times; and there is no other cause to which we can attribute this deplorable phenomenon except the increased destructiveness of the fire-arms which commerce has been able in recent times to place in the hands of the Arab adventurers who conduct these exterminating raids. At the same time, the extension during the same period of French influence in Madagascar and the Comoro Islands has added another element to the causes by which the Slave Trade has been stimulated. The French are as anxious as any other Christian nation to destroy this Traffic, but the naval force by which they are represented in those seas is very small; and they have always refused to give to other nations that right of arresting and searching suspicious vessels which is essential to prevent the French flag from being used for the purpose of covering it. Our cruizers therefore have been obliged to look on while Arab dhows, flying the French flag, and evidently carrying slaves, have passed

outwards under their guns with impunity. Under the influence of these causes, there is no doubt whatever that the Slave Trade, both by land and sea, has recently undergone a considerable revival; and I think it probable that that circumstance has borne its share in the disturbances which have been so fatal to the German Company.

The German Government appear inclined to confine their action to the prevention of the importation of arms by which the slave raids are rendered possible, and the exportation of slaves, which provides the principal motive for them. It is impossible, however, that they should conduct this operation upon the coast of Zanzibar, which is subject to German influence, without the co-operation of Her Majesty's Government; for unless a similar policy is pursued upon that portion of the coast which is subject to British influence, the only result of the German action might be to transfer to the British ports the importation of arms and the exportation of slaves. They therefore have applied to Her Majesty's Government for their co-operation. The request is too much in harmony with the policy which Great Britain has uniformly pursued to be refused by us. Even if there were no special motive for acceding to it, we should welcome the assistance of a powerful nation like that of Germany in the enterprise which this country has pursued through good and evil report, and at the cost of great sacrifices, for three-quarters of a century.

But there has been, in the present instance, a special reason which has weighed heavily with Her Majesty's Government in inducing them to comply with the wishes of the German Government in this matter. It has been possible, in view of the present exigences, to remove for the first time the most formidable obstacle which exists to the suppression of the present Slave Trade, namely, the refusal of France to agree to a mutual right of search. The French Government, though unwilling to grant the right of search on all occasions and in all cases, has consented that it shall be looked upon as one of the incidents of a blockade.

There is no question but that the rights which arise under this state of things confer a facility in conducting the operations against the Slave Trade which this country has never possessed before. It furnishes, therefore, an additional reason for taking advantage of the co-operation offered by Germany, and gives fair ground of expectation that the measures now contemplated may result in closing the last outlet at the command of this detestable trade.

The blockade will be strictly limited to the two objects I have named. It will be conducted by the British and German naval forces in co-operation, and the necessary arrangements in detail will be left to be settled by the two Admirals on the spot. It is of course to be carried on with the assent, and by the authority of, His Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar, whose sanction has already been obtained; and the restoration of his legitimate authority is not the least among the advantages which it is hoped this measure may bring about.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

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mand of Her Majesty. November 1888.*

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