

This PDF was generated on 18/01/2022 from online resources of  
the **Qatar Digital Library**

The online record can be viewed at:

[http://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100000000833.0x000099](http://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000000833.0x000099)

It contains extra information, high resolution zoomable views and transcriptions.

## **'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts'**

<b>Holding Institution</b>	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
<b>Reference</b>	IOR/L/PS/18/B45
<b>Date(s)</b>	14 May 1887 (CE, Gregorian)
<b>Written in</b>	English in Latin
<b>Extent and Format</b>	1 file (4 folios)
<b>Copyright for document</b>	<a href="#">Unknown</a>



### **About this record**

The file consists of a memorandum by Edmund Neel, Assistant Secretary Political and Secret Department, India Office, it describes proposals made to the French Government for restricting the trade in arms on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coast, and subsequent arrangements to effect them between the Political Resident and the French Consul at Aden.

The file includes a series of extracts from letters by the Political Resident at Aden, discussing draft regulations prohibiting the export of arms into Obokh and adjoining French territory for recommendation to the French Government, and deals with the confusion as to whether to restrict or suppress the arms trade entirely. It includes a 'Draft Convention' and 'Draft Order in Council' from 1887.

'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [78r] (1/8)

Secret.

Restrictions on trade in arms, &c.

Home; 364, 403.

\* S. C., Part II., p. 35—39.

† Letters from Aden, 22nd and 23rd February 1886.

Restrictions on the trade in Arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts.

It has been mentioned in a previous Memorandum\* that proposals were made to the French Government in 1885 for restricting the trade in arms on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts, and that, pending the conclusion of a Convention to this effect, an arrangement had been made on the 15th December 1884 between the Resident at Aden (General Blair) and the French Consul at that port, under which all arms and ammunition for Obokh would be passed by the authorities which were covered by the special permission of the representative of France at Aden in each case, and that consignments of arms, &c., awaiting transhipment might be deposited in the Customs warehouse as heretofore.

On the 19th February 1886† the Resident (Brigadier-General Hogg) forwarded to the French Consul at Aden a list of the actual number and description of consignments of arms, ammunition, military stores, &c., transhipped at Aden for Obokh from 14th February 1885 to 1st February 1886, showing that a large import of arms and ammunition was carried on by foreigners who used Aden as a port of transhipment for the opposite African coast, and invited his co-operation in checking the indiscriminate import of arms into Africa *via* Obokh, adding that he believed that the attainment of this result had the sympathy of the French local authorities on the coast. The Resident further said that, although the above-mentioned arms, &c., were intended for Shoa, still there was no security that after leaving French territory a portion might not have fallen into the hands of the Dankalis and Somalis. At any rate it was known that the possession of firearms by the natives on the African coast had certainly become more common. Another matter was that were any kafilas consisting of cases of arms, &c., overpowered *en route* to Shoa by the intervening tribes, the consequences would be very serious as well to the Government of the Republic as that of Her Majesty.

M. de Gaspary (22nd February 1886) entirely agreed with Brigadier-General Hogg that the wholesale importation of arms would seriously impair the interests of both France and England on the Somali Coast, and undertook to urge on his Government that the introduction of arms, &c., into Obokh, or the adjoining French territory, should be formally prohibited. In the meantime the Resident begged M. de Gaspary to intimate to all

15607. I. 1201.

A



'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [78v] (2/8)

2

French subjects at Aden concerned in this traffic that the transshipment of arms, ammunition, &c., would, in future, be prohibited.

In forwarding the correspondence to the Foreign Office on the 18th March 1886, Lord Kimberley stated that he entirely concurred in the opinions expressed by the Resident at Aden that the time had now arrived for a reconsideration of the matter, in view to some arrangement being entered into with the French Government for the restriction of the trade of arms on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts.

Lord Lyons was accordingly instructed (30th March) to draw the attention of the French Government to this correspondence, and to ascertain whether they were prepared to entertain the proposal made to them in 1885. On the 26th May Lord Lyons transmitted copy of a Note in which M. de Freycinet stated that he concurred in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government as to the danger of an unrestricted trade in arms in that part of the world, and asked to be made acquainted with the regulations on the subject, the establishment of which would be deemed advisable by the British authorities. M. de Freycinet added that measures had already been taken to prohibit the introduction into the interior of a certain quantity of arms and ammunition landed at Obokh, or in its neighbourhood. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs thereupon inquired of the Secretary of State for India as to the nature of the regulations which should be recommended to the French Government as proper to be adopted by the French and British local authorities. Lord Rosebery added that whenever an agreement was arrived at with the French Government, he would propose to invite the Italian Government to join in it, and give similar instructions to their authorities on the coast.

The Resident at Aden was (4th June) in consequence requested to submit, for the consideration of the Earl of Kimberley, a draft of the regulations which might be recommended to the French Government with this object.

In reply, Brigadier-General Hogg wrote as follows on the 28th June 1886:—\*

"2. At Aden, the import, export, and transshipment of arms and ammunition are regulated by the provisions of the Indian Arms Act XI. of 1878.

"3. Importation for trade purposes is strictly limited to a moderate and carefully watched traffic in lead and sulphur for export into Arabia. Such small quantities of ammunition as are required for sporting purposes are not objected to. No arms are allowed entry if intended for local sale.

"4. Export and transshipment are permitted (in accordance with the instructions of the Government of India) when the Resident considers that no detriment will be caused to British interests, and are prohibited when any friendly Power invites co-operation in checking the traffic between Aden and ports which that Government desires to close to the entry of arms and ammunition.

"5. The import of arms and ammunition, or other warlike stores, is entirely prohibited at Berbera and Zaila. The trade is not attempted at any other of the British protected ports.

Home : 685 of 1886.

\* Letter from Aden, dated 28th June 1886.

† Letter, No. 2341 P., dated 24th August 1875.

'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [79r] (3/8)

3

"6. Licenses to export or tranship to Obokh or other portions of the African coast under French control have been hitherto granted at the request of the Consul. No applications have been received for permission to tranship or export to Assab, or other Italian settlements, except Massowah, where one large consignment of ammunition went last year.

"7. The object in view is, as I understand, to entirely put a stop to the traffic in arms and ammunition on the African coast. To accomplish this purpose, a convention might be entered into by the Governments concerned, binding themselves to altogether prohibit the import, export, and transhipment, *for trade purposes*, of arms and ammunition and warlike stores. The framing of the local regulations necessary to give effect to this arrangement should be left to each Power."

It is thus seen that the Political Resident, apprehending that the object proposed was to stop entirely the traffic in arms and ammunition on the African coast, suggested that a convention might be entered into by the Governments concerned, binding themselves to altogether prohibit the import, export, and transhipment, for trade purposes, of arms, ammunition, and warlike stores, and that the framing of the local regulations necessary to give effect to this arrangement should be left to each Power.

The original proposal, however, as has already been stated, was to restrict, not to suppress this trade entirely, and the attention of the Government of India was drawn to the matter,\* with a request that, as Brigadier-General Hogg's reply was not sufficiently definite for the object in view, a draft of the local regulations which it might be desirable to lay down for the regulation, and not the entire restriction, of the arms traffic should be submitted. The Resident was in consequence instructed by the Government of Bombay to submit a draft of such local regulations as they might consider suitable for the purpose. Brigadier-General Hogg,† however, rejoined that—

"It is the object of this Residency to entirely prohibit the trade in arms. Weapons and ammunition in the hands of persons connected with scientific missions, or Government expeditions, or European traders and travellers for their personal defence, when entering Africa by any port situated between Massowah and the territories of the Sultan of Zanzibar, ought to be passed under certain special restrictions.

"2. For the above purpose the various Powers interested might come to an understanding that no arms, ammunition, or warlike stores shall be transhipped at, or exported from, Aden to any part of the coast line above defined, except with the joint consent of the British authorities and the Consular Officer at Aden, of the Power within whose protectorate the place of import lies.

"Secondly. The import of arms, ammunition, or warlike stores to be absolutely prohibited over the whole of the above coast line, except for any of the purposes mentioned in para. 1, and then only when protected by a license from the Consular authority at Aden of the Government concerned.

"Thirdly. That copies of all licenses granted, by whomsoever issued, be supplied to each of the Powers joining the Convention.

"3. It is for the mutual benefit of England, France, Italy, and Germany that north-east Africa shall be kept as long as possible free from all evils consequent on the introduction of firearms, and I do not believe that this can be accomplished if any countenance be given to the traffic in muskets and gunpowder, however safeguarded by preventive regulations. The importance of this matter is as well known and understood by the local officials of all the Powers mentioned as by the British authorities at Aden."

However, on the 22nd January 1887,‡ in compliance with a telegraphic instruction from the

\* Demi-Official: Sir O. T. Barne to Mr. Durand, 10th September 1886.

† Letter from Aden, 16th November 1886.

‡ Letter from Aden, dated 24th January 1887.



'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [79v] (4/8)

4

Government of India to send a precise draft of proposed regulations for controlling the traffic in arms as distinguished from its entire restriction, the Resident submitted to the Government of Bombay the following draft regulations, adding that it was very desirable that the adhesion of Germany and Italy should be obtained in respect to the coast line under the respective protection of those Powers.

General Hogg did not think this Convention could have any value unless there was a further agreement or understanding that the issue of licenses for the transshipment or import of arms, ammunition, and military stores for trade purposes was opposed to the policy of both Powers. To embody such a stipulation in the draft Convention would not, however, be in accordance with the wishes of the Government of India who referred to traffic as distinguished from entire restriction.

The draft Convention was to the following effect :—

Draft Convention.

Convention between the British and French Governments for controlling the trade in Arms, Ammunition, and Military Stores on the North-East African Coast, under the respective protection of the said Powers.

The British and French Governments, being mutually actuated by a desire to co-operate for the effective control of the traffic in arms, ammunition, and military stores within the limits of their respective protectorates on the North-East African coast, have resolved to conclude a Convention for the purpose of attaining this object, and with this view have named as their plenipotentiaries, that is to say,

ARTICLE I.

In this Convention arms includes firearms, bayonets, swords, daggers, spears, spear heads, and bows and arrows, also cannon, and parts of arms and machinery for manufacturing arms.

Ammunition includes all parts of ammunition and all machinery for manufacturing ammunition.

Military stores means sulphur and lead.

ARTICLE II.

Both Powers engage to prohibit the importation and transshipment of arms, ammunition, and military stores within their respective protectorates on the North-East African coast for trade purposes, except under licenses as hereafter appearing, and in the manner and to the extent permitted by such license.

ARTICLE III.

A license for the importation of arms, ammunition, and military stores into ports and places on the North-East African coast under British protection shall be issued by the Political Agent for

'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [80r] (5/8)

76  
80  
5

the Somali Coast, stationed at Aden, who shall forward a copy of such license to the French Consul at Aden for information.

ARTICLE IV.

A license for the importation of arms, ammunition, and military stores into ports and places on the North-East African coast under the protection of the French Government shall be issued by the French Consul at Aden, who shall forward a copy of such license to the Political Agent, Somali Coast, stationed at Aden, for information.

ARTICLE V.

Ammunition and military stores brought into Aden, or into ports and places under British protection on the North-East African coast, for transshipment to ports and places under the protection of the French Government on the North-East African coast, shall not be permitted to be transhipped at Aden, or at the aforesaid ports and places under British protection, except under a license from the local authority; such license shall only be issued on the production of a license from the French Consul at Aden, authorizing the import of such arms, ammunition, and military stores into the ports and places on the North-East African coast under French protection.

ARTICLE VI.

Arms, ammunition, and military stores brought into ports and places under the protection of the French Government on the North-East African coast for transshipment to ports and places under British protection on such coast shall not be permitted to be transhipped, except under a license from the French local authority; such license shall only be issued on the production of a license from the Political Agent, Somali Coast, stationed at Aden, authorizing the importation of such arms, ammunition, and military stores into the ports and places on the North-East African coast under British protection.

ARTICLE VII.

Both Powers mutually agree to punish in the manner provided by their respective laws any person or persons within their respective jurisdiction importing or transshipping arms, ammunition, and military stores without a license, or otherwise infringing the terms of any license issued as aforesaid, and further undertake to confiscate any arms, ammunition, and military stores in respect to which any violation of this Convention has been committed.

15607.

B



'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c.;, on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [80v] (6/8)

6

ARTICLE VIII.

Both Powers mutually engage to take the necessary measures, and to issue the necessary orders, for giving effect to the present Convention.

ARTICLE IX.

This Convention should be ratified, and the ratification shall be exchanged at, as soon as possible.

The present Convention shall come into operation one month after the date of its signature.

In witness whereof the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the same, and have affixed thereto the seals of their arms.

Dated at this day of 1887.

No steps were taken in the matter pending the receipt of the views of the Government of India which were communicated in the following Note from the Under Secretary in the Foreign Department:—

"I send you a draft embodying the regulations which we would recommend should be adopted for the control of the arms trade on the Somali Coast. It has been framed after reference to the Government of Bombay and the Resident at Aden, and we believe meets the requirements of the case. The draft takes the form of an Order of Her Majesty in Council applicable to the African coast. We are advised that this is the only manner in which the regulations can be made equally operative in the tracts under the British Protectorate. So far as Aden is concerned the Indian Arms Act is sufficient. If we are, however, to have effective control over the traffic on the African and Arabian coasts, it is indispensable that Her Majesty's Government should have an agreement with the French and possibly the Italian, and German Governments, to accept and enforce the measures now proposed so far as they concern the territories in that quarter which are under their protection. The draft assumes that the necessary steps will be taken to this end. General Hogg, in his letter of 22nd January 1887, suggests a convention with those Powers. But the object in view may probably be attained by less formal means. This, however, is a matter for Her Majesty's Government."

The draft Order in Council is drawn up in the following terms:—

DRAFT ORDER IN COUNCIL.

I. In this Order "arms" includes fire-arms, bayonets, swords, daggers, spears, spear-heads, bows, arrows, cannon, parts of arms, and machinery for the manufacture of arms.

"Ammunition" includes all parts of ammunition and all machinery for manufacturing ammunition. "Military stores" includes sulphur and lead.

II. The importation and transhipment of arms, ammunition, and military stores within the British Protectorate on the North-East coast of Africa for trade purposes is hereby prohibited except under license as herein-after appearing, and in the manner and to the extent permitted by such license.

Demi-official; Mr. Forbes to Sir E. Bradford, 16th April 1887.

Draft Order in Council.

'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali Coasts' [81r] (7/8)

7

III. Licenses for the importation of arms, ammunition, and military stores into ports and places within the British Protectorate on the North-East coast of Africa may be issued by the Political Agent for the Somali Coast stationed at Aden.

IV. Arms, ammunition, and military stores brought into any of the ports or places above mentioned for transhipment to ports or places on the North-East coast under the protection of the French (German or Italian) Government shall not be permitted to be transhipped at the ports and places aforesaid except under license granted by the Political Agent for the Somali Coast stationed at Aden. Such license shall be granted by him only on the production of a permit from the French (German or Italian) Consul at Aden authorizing the applicant to import such arms, ammunition, or military stores into ports or places on the North-East coast of Africa under the protection of the French (German or Italian) Governments respectively.

V. Any person infringing any of the provisions of the Order shall be triable in the Court of the Political Agent for the Somali Coast stationed at Aden, and shall be punished with imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

VI. Any arms, ammunition, or military stores imported or transhipped in contravention of the provisions of this Order shall be liable to confiscation.

E. N.

Political and Secret Department,  
India Office,  
14th May 1887.



'Restrictions on the trade in arms, &c., on the Red Sea and on the Somali  
Coasts' [81v] (8/8)

