Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter on his Foreign Policy Goals (1911)

Abstract

Germany used a diplomatic dispute with France over the status of Morocco to force concessions from France in the Congo. German diplomats such as Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter, who was foreign minister at the time, believed that Germany could achieve African colonies in exchange for relenting in Morocco. The Germans got their African territory, but this crisis exacerbated tensions between Germany and England.

Source

The French understand that they must grant us compensation in the colonial realm. They want to keep this to a minimum, and the government will be bolstered in this by its fear of both parliament and the public sentiment generated by the Colonial Party. The French will only agree to an acceptable offer if they are firmly convinced that we are otherwise resolved to take extreme action. If we do not demonstrate this, then we will not receive, in return for our withdrawal from Morocco, the kind of compensation that a statesman could justify to the German people. This, in any case, is my conviction. We must gain all of the French Congo –it is our last opportunity to get a worthwhile piece of land in Africa without a fight. Regions in the Congo that have rubber and ivory, as nice as they may be, are of no use to us. We must go right up to the Belgian Congo so that, if it is divided up, we will take part in the partitioning. If this entity continues to exist, we will have access through it to our territories in East Africa. Any other solution would be a defeat to us, which we must be firmly resolved to avert. […]

If this, my deepest conviction, does not meet with the approval of Your Excellency or receive the highest authorization – as I fear it won't based on His Majesty's statements to Treutler –, I must obediently ask Your Excellency to appoint another officer to negotiate with the French and to have His Majesty relieve me of my current post.

Source: Ernst Jäckh, ed., *Kiderlen-Wächter, der Staatsmann und Mensch: Briefwechsel und Nachlaß*. 2 volumes. Berlin and Leipzig, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 128ff; reprinted in Willibald Gutsche, *Herrschaftsmethoden des deutschen Imperialismus 1897/8 bis 1917*. East Berlin, 1977, p. 145.

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