

Saudi proposal tripartite comm¹ made in face already expressed US coolness idea (Deptel 219, Lon 2758, Dhahran 107²) begins suggest calculated effort avoid direct negots re Buraimi.

Saudi suggestion fact-finding groups connection resumption Dammam talks may well mean talks will not begin till after groups have done work, which cld be months. Delay cld be used as ammunition by Saudis for arguing since talks Dammam cannot start only way settle Buraimi dispute and ease tension immed is by means tripartite comm to Buraimi. FYI Dept desires avoid participation any fact-finding or tripartite groups or for that matter any substantive involve settlement boundary disputes.

On Oct 30 Brit approached Dept³ to solicit support proposal Buraimi dispute be submitted arbitration (Lon 2452). Dept to reply next few days. . . .

Dept favors arbitration Buraimi dispute if seems clear direct negots wld not be fruitful or not desired by Saudis. UK regards direct talks as useless. Dept inquiring ur views entire picture as outlined this tel replying to UK.

Emb Jidda authorized own discretion tell SAG Dept appreciates confidence shown in asking US participate tripartite comm but USG prefers not take part since still believes direct negots shld be given trial.

BRUCE

¹ Document 1487.

² Two members of the British Embassy called at the Department of State on Oct. 30 to ask the United States to support the idea of arbitration, since the idea of direct talks seemed to be useless. The Foreign Office considered the Saudis had used unfair means to establish their influence on Buraimi and areas the British felt belonged to Muscat, and suggested that a plebiscite conducted among people who had been bribed would be unfair. (Memorandum of conversation, Oct. 30; 641.86A/10-3052)

No. 1490

786.022/11-452: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Saudi Arabia (Hare) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET PRIORITY

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338. Following is estimate Buraimi and boundary situs requested Deptel 272 Nov 1:²

¹ Transmitted in two sections; repeated to London and Dhahran.

² *Supra*.