

## No. 1518

S/P-NSC files, lot 61 D 167, NE (NSC 156)

*Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Chairman of the National Security Council Planning Board (Cutler)*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

WASHINGTON, June 24, 1953.

Subject: Buraimi Dispute: Developments Since June 1.

The Saudi Arabian Government, having agreed to British proposals that this border dispute be submitted to impartial arbitration, has for some weeks past been negotiating with the British on the local situation in Buraimi and certain procedure matters. At the present time, the Saudis have a governor and about 40 armed men in the area and the British approximately 250 Trucial levies supported by a number of RAF armored vehicles and several jet fighters. Since April British forces have been used to restrict the movement of Turki and his men and certain supplies in this disputed area.

Following instructions from the Secretary, our Ambassador in London raised the Buraimi matter with Mr. Churchill on May 22<sup>2</sup> in accordance with instructions that the British be urged to moderate their position on remaining points of disagreement and to meet the Saudis half way.

In the meantime, the British replied to King Ibn Saud regarding the principal unsolved point at issue, viz., the relative local position of the two parties in the area. The British proposed mutual withdrawal and immediate implementation of arbitration. On June 12 the Department expressed the view that this proposal appeared reasonable as a means of establishing equality and authorized our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia to express this view if approached by the Saudis concerning it.<sup>3</sup>

The Saudis rejected this proposal claiming that such withdrawal would jeopardize Saudi prestige and create a vacuum producing confusion and disorder. Their counterproposals included the following principal points:

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was drafted by Fritzman.

<sup>2</sup> Ambassador Aldrich reported on the meeting in telegram 6236 from London, May 22. (Conference files, lot 59 D 95, CF 156)

<sup>3</sup> On June 11 a member of the British Embassy delivered to the Department of State a copy of a letter from Churchill to King Ibn Saud, delivered by Pelham on June 7, proposing mutual withdrawal. (780.022/6-1153) Telegram 674 to Jidda, June 12, transmitted the text of Churchill's letter and advised the Embassy that the Department considered the proposal reasonable, and authorized the Embassy to so inform the Saudis. (780.022/6-1253)