

No. 1524

780.022/7-553: Telegram

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

SECRET

JIDDA, July 5, 1953—2 p. m.

3. British Ambassador yesterday gave Saudi Foreign Office account of Nuwai incident which essentially same as given Consul General Bishop by British officials at Bahrein. Only new fact of significance was that two-inch mortars used (which, in conjunction with overflight by observation plane, might have given rise to reported aerial bombardment although Saudis remain adamant that bombs used). British also expressed surprise matter should have been taken up with third party before facts more accurately established.

In subsequent conversations with Ambassador, I explored possibility of compromise between British position of insisting on complete mutual withdrawal to be followed by arbitration and Saudi position of insisting on return to standstill accompanied by reduction of forces to parity and then initiation arbitration. Ambassador made clear he was discussing personally and without commitment but it was obvious that, although he felt Saudi appeal to President was unwarranted, he could see possibility it might afford an opportunity for us to put forward certain suggestions which might get matter off dead center.

At conclusion of discussions I made following personal and tentative suggestions:

(1) There should be continued and strong emphasis on arbitration. I told Ambassador I had been considerably encouraged by apparent recent change in Saudi attitude in this regard since, whereas Saudis had at first professed to regard arbitration as British device which they had only accepted under compulsion, they now seem to regard it as desirable means of settlement.

(2) New standstill would be reached where Turki would remain and blockade lifted but under strictures against suborning activities and British forces would remain but under conditions where their presence would not constitute intimidating influence on population (see Embtel 945 of June 24²).

¹ Repeated to London and Dhahran.

² Not printed. The Embassy suggested that the British relax the blockade to permit Turki to remain in Buraimi, in return for his promise not to use his freedom of action to change the existing situation before the arrival of the arbitral body; and that the Saudis, in return, agree to allow British forces to remain for the time being, on the understanding they would not be used for intimidation. (780.022/6-2453)