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*The Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom (Salisbury) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

LONDON, July 27, 1953.

MY DEAR FOSTER: I have been giving very careful thought to the views which President Eisenhower and you expressed to me in Washington on the subject of our frontier dispute with Saudi Arabia: and I have now had an opportunity of reporting your views personally to my Cabinet colleagues and of discussing them fully, with every desire to help.

In reaching our conclusions we have been influenced by the following considerations. In our view, Turki has no right to be in Hamasa; the village is one of those belonging to the Sultan of Muscat, who, with the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, objected most strongly to Turki's incursion into the Buraimi Oasis. Ibn Saud should not in the first place have made a forward move for which there is absolutely no legal justification. In view of the obligations which he now puts upon you by virtue of President Truman's letter of October 1950, I do not understand how he ever contemplated such a step without seeking your advice and support. I have little doubt in my own mind that he deliberately meant to face us both with a *fait accompli*. It was a carefully calculated bluff, to which we could not submit without the most serious repercussions on the local rulers, whose legitimate rights we are by treaty bound to support.

We had indeed every right to remove Turki many months ago. But as you know, in the interests of us all, we restrained the Sultan of Muscat from using force against him, and in the Buraimi Standstill Agreement we acquiesced in his remaining in the Oasis temporarily until, as we hoped, and agreement was reached in regard to arbitration. I can assure you that in both these actions we were to a large measure influenced by the wish to spare you embarrassment. As a result of these decisions and because of Turki's subsequent improper activities, we have allowed our own and our friends' interests to suffer in no small measure. For there can be no doubt that Turki is doing his best, not without success, to disrupt the pattern of tribal allegiance in this area, by the simple process of bribery: nor, I am afraid, would a neutral commission have any chance of checking this process. In these circumstances, we feel most strongly that to allow Turki to remain in Hamasa during the arbitration, with no check on his activities except the supervision of a neutral commission, will have a disastrous effect