No. 1536

780.022/10-1353: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Penfield) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET LONDON, October 13, 1953—10 a. m.

1580. Foreign Office has just informed us that some weeks ago Hafiz Wahba, Saudi Ambassador here, told Foreign Office he proceeding Jidda see King in effort work out settlement Buraimi dispute. Subsequently Hafiz returned London with terms which he maintained had King's approval. Terms were discussed at length in series meetings in Foreign Office for which Pelham and Burrows were brought here (Embtel 1334, September 28 [2]). As results these talks, Foreign Office gave Hafiz statement of its understanding of his proposals with request he clear it with King.

Yesterday Hafiz informed Foreign Office its statement accepted by King and Hafiz proceeding Jidda this week open negotiations with British in which Foreign Office anticipates Pelham now on leave Cyprus and Burrows will be instructed participate.

Terms of proposed agreement are: (a) Saudis to withdraw Turki and his forces from Buraimi oasis with corresponding withdrawal British forces from oasis; (b) each side to maintain in oasis police force comprising not more than 12 persons; and (c) each to refrain from further aggravating situation.

Talks in Jidda would first cover above agreement and then arbitration agreement regarding which Foreign Office anticipates no particular difficulty.

Foregoing embodied in messages from Eden to Secretary which is before Eden for signature and expected go forward within next 24 hours. Foreign Office apologized for not informing us of proposals sooner, but stressed Hafiz had insisted on complete secrecy.

In commenting on above, Foreign Office official pointed out: (1) It difficult believe Hafiz actually has obtained King's approval of above proposals which however Foreign Office would welcome; and, (2) approval of Sultan Muscat must be obtained. Burrows now consulting Sultan.

PENFIELD

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[1] Repeated to Jidda and Dhahran.

[2] Not printed. The Embassy informed the Department of State that a reply to Secretary Dulles' letter of Aug. 28 had been delayed because of disagreement between the Foreign Office and officers in the field on the answer. As a result Burrows and Pelham were returning to London for a discussion on the Buraimi question. (780.022/9-2853)