

وثيقة رقم (10411/1) المؤرخة في 30 يناير 1953

من : رئيس المفوضية البريطانية في تعز

الى : وزير الخارجية البريطاني السير انطوني ايدن

ملخص الوثيقة :

✧ تضايق الحكومة البريطانية من المقالات المعادية لها الصادرة عن صحيفة " سباء " في تعز والممولة من قبل الامام احمد، حيث تعتبر هذه المقالات مخالفة لاتفاقية " موداس فيفني " الموقعة في العام 1951 بين الحكومة البريطانية والمملكة المتوكلية.

✧ عدم تمكن الحكومة البريطانية من اقناع الحكومة اليمنية بالكف عن هذه المقالات كون بعض الصحف الصادرة في عدن (صحيفة الفضول وفتاة الجزيرة) تهاجم النظام الملكي في الشمال وبالأخص الامام احمد شخصياً.

✧ اتهام رئيس المفوضية البريطانية في تعز لصحيفة الفضول في عدن بانتقاد ومهاجمة السياسة البريطانية في عدن وحكومة عدن ومهاجمة النظام الامامي في شمال اليمن.

✧ شكوى وأنزعاج الامام احمد ملك اليمن من المقالات اللاذعة الصادرة عن صحيفة الفضول وصحيفة فتاة الجزيرة واعتقاده بان الحكومة البريطانية تقف وراء هذه الصحف .

✧ سعي رئيس المفوضية البريطانية في تعز لدى الحاكم البريطاني في عدن بالتدخل لفرض إجراءات عقابية بحق صحيفة الفضول التي لا تكف عن مهاجمة النظام الامامي في الشمال مما يسبب حرج للحكومة البريطانية الساعية لتقوية علاقاتها بالامام، وكون رئيس تحريرها من مؤيدي ومنظمي انقلاب 1948 في الشمال.

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Despatch No. 4
(10411/1)

Confidential.

British Legation,
Taiz, Yemen.
30th. January 1953.

EM 1671/3

EM 1671/11

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my telegram No. 85 of 10th. October last about the anti-British articles in the newspaper Al Saba, and to state that I very much regret that I have not sent a further report before this date.

2. Among my reasons for not doing so were a desire to see whether, over a rather longer period, the editor of the newspaper Al Saba, which appears somewhat irregularly every two weeks, would be allowed to continue to publish articles contravening the terms of Article VIII of the modus vivendi agreement, and whether the Imam's supervision or censorship of this newspaper would continue to be as strict as it was after the case dealt with in correspondence ending with Mr. Cranston's letter No. EM 1671/4 of 1st. August last to me. I also wished to see whether, as a result of telegram No. 757 Saving of 25th. August last from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor of Aden there would be any diminution in the number of anti-Yemeni articles in the two newspapers Al Fadhood and Patat al Jazirah which are published in Aden and which the Imam erroneously feels are encouraged by the Aden Government to publish articles which, in his opinion, contravene the terms of Article VIII.

/ 3. As a result of

Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M. C., M. P.
H. M. Principal Secretary of State
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3. As a result of my studies I have to report, with regret, that the newspapers Al Saba on the one hand and Al Fadhool on the other have continued to criticise and attack as viciously as ever the policies of Her Majesty's Government (and particularly the Aden Government) and the Yemeni Government respectively. The articles in the newspaper Fatat al Jazirah, however, have been less noticeably critical of the Yemeni Government. But, while I have to admit my complete failure to persuade the Yemeni Government to take steps to prevent the editor of the newspaper Al Saba publishing articles contravening the terms of Article VIII, I must also state, with very great respect, that my task has not been made any easier by the visit, in the first half of November last, of His Excellency the Governor of Aden to the printing house used jointly by the newspapers Al Fadhool and Fatat al Jazirah, whose editors he met there. His Excellency's visit has "confirmed" the Imam's erroneous view that these two newspapers are not only supported by the Aden Government but are also encouraged to publish articles which, in his view, contravene the terms of Article VIII.

4. In short, therefore, the situation is that each issue of Al Saba has carried articles which can be regarded as contraventions of Article VIII. The other two Yemeni newspapers, Al Nasr which is published in Taiz, and Al Imam which is published in San'a, have not carried such articles often enough to warrant consideration. But from the Yemeni Government's point of view Al Fadhool has been as guilty as ever. They cannot, however, complain, as before, about the newspaper Al Salam, which used to be published in Cardiff, because it has ceased publication. Nor can they properly complain about Fatat al Jazirah, for this newspaper has not recently carried any articles which contravene the terms of Article VIII. But, in spite of this apparent reduction in the number of guilty newspapers, the problem is, generally speaking, the same today as it was immediately after the signing of the modus vivendi agreement / in 1961.

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in 1951. Each party to that agreement can still, as they could before the signing of the agreement, point to articles of an unduly critical nature published in newspapers in the territory of the other, in spite of the fact that Article VIII of the agreement created an obligation, which never really existed before, to prevent editors publishing such articles.

5. It is this obligation on which I have laid emphasis in my approaches to the Yemeni Government. I have not complained of the general tone of any particular newspaper, but of the publication of particular articles which would never have been published if the Yemeni Government had fulfilled the obligation placed upon them by the terms of Article VIII of the agreement. I have invoked this Article as the basis for my complaints and for the requests which have always accompanied them, that the Yemeni Government should take action to ensure that the editor of the newspaper in which the offending article has appeared should not be able to publish another such article. Only on one occasion, the first, has such action been taken. On every subsequent occasion Qadhi al Amri, the Deputy Foreign Minister, to whom my approaches have been made, has prevaricated to the extent of claiming that, in spite of the modus vivendi agreement, Her Majesty's Government have never taken any action to alter the tone of anti-Yemeni newspapers published in territory under their control.

6. This may, to some extent, be true. For I cannot recall hearing of action being taken against, or advice being given to, the editor of Al Salam, which was published in Cardiff but which ceased publication some time ago. Nor, as I have said above, does there appear to be any change in the tone of Al Fadhoool, which is edited by a Yemeni who supported or organised the coup d'état in San'a in 1948. But the fact that Her Majesty's Government do not seem to have been able to alter the tone of Al Fadhoool does not, by itself, justify the Yemeni Government's failure to carry out the terms of Article VIII. They cannot / properly

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properly claim that because they consider that Her Majesty's Government have failed to fulfil their undertakings they are excused from doing so themselves. There is, nevertheless, a certain weakening of the strength of our case, when we make complaints to them, if they can point to articles which in their view contravene the terms of Article VIII, the basis of our complaints.

7. At the same time, it is clear that we on our side have a rather more limited scope for action in this sphere. It is not easy for Her Majesty's Government to control the press, and this has been pointed out to the Yemeni Government on many occasions. However, they do not, and will not, see this particular aspect of the matter in its true light. They have taken note of action taken by the Aden Government in the fairly recent past to suspend the publication of one or two newspapers in Aden, and are therefore prone to argue that if such action can be taken in one case, why can it not be taken in another? The interpretation of the law under which the Aden Government have acted, and the very law itself, are quite beyond the comprehension of all Yemeni officials.

8. But they, on their side, are bound by no such laws. The wish of the Imam is law. It is therefore possible for him to do as he pleases in these matters, as in any other matters. And the fact remains, though it is always denied by the Yemeni Government, that the Imam's approval is definitely still needed before the newspapers Al Saba and Al Nasr, which are both published in Taiz, can be printed on the Government printing press. It is quite clear, therefore, that the Yemeni Government, unlike Her Majesty's Government, are perfectly able to prevent the publication of the sort of articles which contravene the terms of Article VIII. That they do not do so is clear proof of their lack of desire to fulfil the obligations placed upon them by that agreement.

9. This being so, I feel that it is right to consider whether or not a new course of action should be adopted. It is evident that the continuation of the present policy of lodging a complaint whenever an article warranting it appears in a

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Yemeni newspaper is not achieving anything. Indeed, I think that it may possibly be rather harmful to our position, for the Imam and his officials are not beyond delighting in occasions where our complaints show that we feel aggrieved at their actions. It is quite possible, also, that each complaint will lead the Imam to encourage the editor of Al Saba, for example, to continue to publish articles which may cause us to complain, for by so doing he may believe that he is hurting or annoying Her Majesty's Government. And such a belief is not altogether unfounded.

10. I feel, therefore, that there may be something to be said for ignoring altogether the newspaper Al Saba, and the other two Yemeni newspapers, Al Nasr and Al Iman. Any damage that may be done by articles in these newspapers is not, I think, very serious. Their circulation is not really large and their views do not command much respect. But if they are ignored, then it follows that we are not concerned to hold the Yemeni Government to the obligations which they have accepted by signing the modus vivendi agreement. I am not altogether sure that this would be a wise thing to do.

11. However, it would be unrealistic to suppose that in the present circumstances we can persuade the Yemeni Government to fulfil these obligations. Certainly the present course of action will not do so in the foreseeable future. And a stronger policy, entailing for example the presentation of a formal note complaining of the Yemeni Government's failure to fulfil the terms of Article VIII, or entailing sanctions of some sort, is no more likely to be successful. A note would be answered in the same vein, with complaints about Her Majesty's Government's failure to curb the criticism of Al Fadhood, and sanctions would, I think, either be ignored or be followed by similar action by the Yemeni Government.

12. I feel, therefore, that on balance the best course to follow is to ignore these Yemeni newspapers. In this way the problem of how to ensure that the terms of Article VIII are enforced will

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cease to be a live issue. I admit that in making such a suggestion I am detracting from the value of the modus vivendi agreement, and perhaps I am taking too unfavourable a view of our ability to persuade the Yemeni Government to respect our point of view. But I feel that so long as the Yemeni Government refuse to abide strictly by the terms of the most important Articles of this agreement, those dealing with the Yemeni-Aden frontier and with the status of this Legation, there is no real value to be obtained from trying to enforce Article VIII.

13. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Head of the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have the honour to be, with the highest considerations,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(M. B. Jacomb)