



OFFICE OF THE
HISTORIAN

FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1964–1968, VOLUME XXI, NEAR EAST REGION; ARABIAN PENINSULA

441. Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Posts¹

Washington, April 28, 1967, 6:07 p.m.

184507. 1. Following is background current crisis US-Yemen relations for addressee's information and use with diplomatic colleagues and host government officials as appropriate.
2. Mob violence April 26 against US Embassy Branch Office and AID compound Taiz apparently sparked by shooting and explosions of undetermined origin evening April 25. Yemeni and UAR security authorities entered AID "campsite" compound shortly thereafter and took into custody for questioning seven American AID employees including AID Director. Director and four others were subsequently released. Gradually became clear local UAR and Yemen authorities were alleging that two remaining personnel, Stephen Liapis and Harold Hartman, were responsible for a bazooka attack on ammunition dump Taiz in which a UAR soldier and a Yemeni were reportedly killed.
3. Mob shouting "No Americans after today" paraded through streets Taiz morning April 26. Crowd estimated at 3000 and carrying coffin gathered in front of compound and broke in, overturning vehicles and destroying furniture, plumbing and other official and personal effects. Although UAR military camera man was reportedly with mob, appears adequate Yemeni security contingent may not have been provided until after considerable destruction [Page 828] accomplished. Yemeni security forces were subsequently stationed in front of compound. Demonstration renewed April 27, but compound not subsequently attacked.
4. On learning of demonstration and arrests, Department summoned Yemeni Ambassador Washington to protest incident, request official apology, YARG agreement in principle make full repayment for damage, and ask immediate release detained American official personnel. Charge Sanaa was instructed make parallel démarche. Representations were also made in Cairo and to UAR Ambassador Washington to request UARG assistance in securing release detained American personnel.
5. Despite initial hope more moderate elements might be willing to give us forthcoming response, we now forced conclude that Taiz riots and detentions AID personnel probably instigated by local UAR officials with support pro-UARYARG elements, notably Minister Interior Ahnumi. Following facts point in this direction: (a) Equivocal initial response made by Vice Premier Juzaylan to Sanaa Charge's first representation; (b) the ridiculous charges of "murder" and attempt to "blow up all of Taiz" brought against Liapis and Hartman, who are holders of U.S. official passports and considered by USG to have diplomatic status; (c) trumped-up Cairo press campaign including false report that USG gave YARG a "24-hour ultimatum"; (d) YARG unilateral termination US-Yemeni foreign assistance agreement. (We were first informed of this step by Sanaa radio broadcast, official notification having been given our Charge subsequently.)
6. As a result YARG actions, USAID Mission Yemen being withdrawn. Arrangements being made immediately evacuate all dependents and all except key Embassy personnel. As retaliatory measure for restrictions placed on our personnel Taiz, Department has confined Yemeni Ambassador here to Washington area until further notice, subject to Department approval for travel outside Washington. Future US-Yemen relations still uncertain, but we are making it clear that we expect immediate release two detained Americans.

Rusk

1. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POLUS-YEMEN. Confidential. Drafted by Korn; cleared by NEA Staff Assistant Michael A.G. Michaud, Country Director for Ethiopia, Somali Republic, and Sudan Matthew J. Loram, Bergus, and Robert H. Flenner (EUR/SOV); and approved by Brewer. Sent to Addis Ababa, Amman, Asmara, Bonn, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jidda, Kuwait, London, Moscow, Paris, Tehran, Tel Aviv, Rome, Aden, and Dhahran.↵

