

# U.S. SECRET FILES AN ISSUE IN YEMEN

## Americans Refuse to Allow Them to Be Examined

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WASHINGTON, May 11 —

Authorities in Yemen have been preventing American diplomats there from retrieving classified documents from the damaged American aid mission headquarters, United States officials reported today.

The headquarters of the aid mission in Taiz was sacked by a mob on April 25. Three days later the United States announced it was ending its aid program and withdrawing all aid personnel from Yemen.

Two American employes of the Agency for International Development, are being held by Yemeni authorities on charges of sabotage. All other Americans except for a handful of diplomats have been evacuated.

United States officials said the American diplomats had not been permitted to enter the A.I.D. mission without armed Yemeni escorts and had not yet entered the building's vault room, where classified documents are kept. The vault room was spared in the mob attack.

In what Washington considers a breach of diplomatic etiquette, Yemeni authorities have blocked efforts of American diplomats to obtain the classified documents from the vault and ship them out of the country.

Officials said that the Yemeni authorities had insisted on their right to review each document before permitting it to be removed from Yemen. The United States refuses to submit to such a review.

In an effort to break the diplomatic stalemate, which has brought United States-Yemeni relations near the breaking point, Washington is sending a special two-man team from its embassy in Cairo to confer with Yemeni authorities.

Officials here are hopeful that the team, which will apparently be carrying a message from the United Arab Republic's Government urging resolution of the dispute, can arrange for the release of the two aid employes now in a Yemeni prison and for the return of American property.

The United Arab Republic, with nearly 40,000 troops in Yemen, is the principal supporter and advisor of the Yemeni regime. American officials suspect Egyptian involvement in what they describe as a "staged incident" that led to the present crisis.

The mob attack on the aid mission, the subsequent arrest of seven aid officials and the ouster of several others was the outgrowth of an explosion in what was said to be an ammunition dump between an American residential area and an Egyptian Army encampment 500 yards away.

Yemeni authorities have accused two aid employes, Stephen Liapis and Harold Hartman, of having fired a bazooka at the ammunition dump on the night of April 24. The State Department has vigorously denied the charge.

Government officials say that, contrary to established diplomatic procedures, the United States Embassy in Yemen has long had problems trying to transport classified documents in and out of the country in sealed diplomatic pouches.

### Yemen Holds U.S. Property

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ASMARA, Ethiopia, May 11—

Yemen has seized about \$1-million worth of property belonging to the United States Government, American officials disclosed today.

Their report was the first authoritative estimate of the value of vehicles, cranes, furniture and other equipment that the Yemeni Government, which is controlled by the United Arab Republic, took over and put under guard last month.

The seizure followed the expulsion of the United States aid mission and the arrest of two of its members for allegedly trying to blow up the city of Taiz. The property was used by the mission, whose staff has subsequently been quartered temporarily in Asmara, across the Red Sea from Yemen.

The incident is expected to complicate negotiations now going on between the Yemeni and United Arab Republic Governments and the United States, which is seeking to obtain the release of the two officials, Steven Liapis and Harold Hartman. The Yemeni regime plans to put the two on trial with great fanfare and publicity.

Yemeni and Egyptian sentries and officials have denied American diplomats access to the property, most of it in Taiz, as well as to other facilities directly associated with specific aid projects, which the United States agrees belong to Yemen.

Referring to both the United States property and to project facilities, Yemen's President, Abdullah al-Salal, said in a recent interview: "You know it had been agreed between the U.S.A. and the Yemeni Government that all these things belong to the Yemeni Republic."

He seemed unaware of the distinction, emphasized by United States officials, between the two categories of property. The United States equipment held by the Yemenis includes two-dozen vehicles worth a total of \$65,000, cranes at the port of Mocha, furniture for approximately 40 households, warehouses, workshops and office furnishings.

In addition, the Yemenis have seized an Aero Commander airplane and spare parts and tools for its maintenance. This equipment, worth a total of about \$100,000, is owned by a Florida company working under contract to the agency for International Development. The Yemenis were apparently unaware that the plane was not owned by the United States Government.