

TOP SECRET

ADEN AND THE FEDERATION

Ministerial Meeting held at No. 10 Downing Street at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 25, 1964.

Present:

The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, Secretary of State for Defence, Colonial Secretary, Sir Bernard Burrows, Sir Burke Trend, Sir D. White and Mr. J.O. Wright.

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At the invitation of the Prime Minister, Sir Bernard Burrows explained the situation as set out in the memorandum of the Joint Action Committee - "Annex A".

The Prime Minister said he had two points to make on the memorandum. The first was what had been done before had been done against the very different background of civil war in the Yemen; there was now cease-fire. Secondly, previous operations had been conducted on the political decision of the previous administration: it was now the intention of the present Government to gradually shift the weight of its support from the rulers of the Federation to the more democratic institutions of Aden itself.

The Foreign Secretary explained that he was in the middle of talks with the Egyptian Ambassador, talks which were designed to improve Anglo-Egyptian relations. However, even if there were an improvement in these relations, and a settlement within the Yemen itself, it did not follow that there would be any great improvement in the situation on the Yemeni Federation border. Unless, therefore, we

intended to abandon the Federation, we had no option but to protect it and he for his part could see no better or cheaper way than by accepting the recommendations in paragraph 10 of the Joint Action Committee.

The Secretary of State for Defence said that so long as there was trouble on the border it was only common prudence to keep the existing organisation in existence.

The Colonial Secretary agreed with the Foreign Secretary's assessment of the situation. He thought, however, that it would be right to avoid major activity and he was doubtful about some of the advice coming from the Federation. He was also doubtful on how far the loyalty of the rulers could be depended upon, even if they continued to receive subsidies. He wanted to avoid choosing between them and Aden. But if there had to be a choice his would be for Aden.

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Ministers agreed the recommendations in paragraph 10 of Annex A of the memorandum by the Joint Action Committee.

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PRIME MINISTER

You have agreed that the attached memoranda should be considered at a meeting of yourself, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Colonial Secretary before the Colonial Secretary leaves for Aden. A meeting has accordingly been arranged for 11.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 25th November at No. 10.

The memoranda discuss:-

- (a) the prolongation of authority for special operations (RANGOUR II) in the South Arabian Federation (Annex A), on which you have asked to know, in particular, the Foreign Secretary's assessment of the impact of these operations on the possibility of improving our relations with Nasser;
- (b) special political activities in British Guiana (Annex B).

I am sending copies of this minute and its enclosure to the Ministers who will be attending the meeting; and to Sir Bernard Burrows and 'C', who should also be present.

BURKE TREND

23rd November, 1964

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MEMORANDUM BY THE JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

So long as we reckon to maintain our military position in Aden we depend on the goodwill both of the population of Aden itself and of the Rulers of the Federation. To maintain our position it is essential that subversion should be dealt with and the authority of the Federal Rulers upheld. At the worst this involves long continued and expensive military operations such as those recently completed in the Radfan. It is however far better that we should scotch subversion at an early stage if we can. This avoids the necessity for politically tiresome and expensive military operations and is in general far more efficient. Moreover the whole equilibrium breaks down if the initiative for subversion and violence rests entirely with the opposition across the frontier.

2. The area on either side of the frontier between the Aden Federation and the Yemen is in general one of turbulence. This has been increased since the Egyptian intervention in the Yemen by Egyptian inspired subversion which is organised from three main bases close to the frontier. Egyptian intelligence officers are known to be organising and controlling this subversion and amongst other things have been infiltrating into the Federation caravans of trained dissidents with arms and other military supplies.

3. Consequently we have for some time carried out a policy of issuing money and

organising small scale retaliatory operations carried out by Arab parties or individuals recruited with the help of local Sheikhs. These operations are known under the codeword of RANCOUR II. None of the foregoing has any direct connection with the Royalists versus Republican struggle in the Yemen but has merely been part of an economical system

for protecting the frontier of the Federation for whose defence we are responsible.

4. The High Commissioner has recently reported on the remarkable effect of RANCOUR II on the morale in the Federation by this demonstration of our ability to hit back at the dissidents and at their bases across the frontier. The immediate impact has of course been felt in the frontier areas, but, thanks largely to RANCOUR II, there has throughout the Federation been a toughening of determination on the part of the Rulers and Ministers to deal with subversion within their borders.

5. The policy has come up for review at present because the resources of money and arms previously authorised are running out. The longer-term policy of RANCOUR II type operations will be influenced by three political developments whose outcome is not yet certain:-

- (a) The possibility of general conversations with the U.A.R. in an effort to explore the possibility of rapprochement.
- (b) The attempt being made to bring to an end the civil war in the Yemen and to reach agreement between representatives of the two sections, who are meeting in the Yemen on 23 November to set up a new compromise system of Government which might possibly lead to the withdrawal of some Egyptian troops.
- (c) Future U.K. policy with regard to the Federation of South Arabia which will no doubt be further discussed after the Colonial Secretary's visit to Aden.

The recommendations in this paper deal with the present period before any of these issues have been clarified sufficiently to produce a decisive influence on the future of RANCOUR-type operations on the Federation frontier. The immediate local effects of the cease-fire which has been announced in the Yemen but which is by no means wholly effective there are described in the following paragraphs.

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6. Following the announcement of 6 November of the possibility of a cease-fire in the Yemen, with the concomitant possibility of withdrawal or reduction of the U.A.R. armed forces it was agreed inter-departmentally to suspend the operations for the time being except that small-scale retaliation was authorised in the respect of attacks on Federation territory, of which two have already taken place. In assessing the likely course of events following U.A.R./Saudi talks on a settlement in the Yemen the J.I.C. reached the following conclusion\* -

"It is difficult, as yet, to assess the effect of this cease-fire on subversive activities against the Federation of South Arabia. The ability of the Egyptians to continue their operation depends on retaining Yemeni support for keeping in southern Yemeni towns the small intelligence staffs responsible for controlling these operations together with associated training schools and arms supply routes. Egyptian unpopularity among the Shafeis would make this more difficult but the removal of the bulk of the Egyptian forces from the Yemen would not necessarily affect the scale of Egyptian inspired subversion in South Arabia."

7. The capability to mount operations of this kind cannot be produced at short notice, and if there is likely to be a requirement for their continuation, then it is necessary to preserve the organisation at least on a basis of care and maintenance. Continued financial support and something more than a token continuation of warlike stores are necessary if the local leaders \_\_\_\_\_ are to be kept in a state of willingness to resume activities should the situation so demand. Further, any indication that the organisation was to be dismantled would have a most serious effect on the whole of Federal Ministers and Rulers, who would

\* J.I.C./898/64

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**E R.** see in this a wavering in H.M.G.'s determination to protect the Federation against external attack and subversion. There is no guarantee that withdrawal or reduction of U.A.R. armed forces will in themselves reduce the likelihood of subversion against the Federation from Yemeni territory, although it is possible that the withdrawal from their present frontier bases of Egyptian intelligence officers (which, it is anticipated, intelligence sources would report) might indicate a U.A.R. intention to reduce or discontinue subversion.

8. It is the opinion of the Joint Action Committee that, however events may develop following the initiation of cease-fire talks, it is in our long-term interests for the defence of the Federation of South Arabia to ensure that resources currently available in the RANCOUR operation continue to be maintained in case they are required and that such maintenance is a minimum political pledge not only to the sheikhs who collaborate in the operations but to Federal Ministers and Rulers on whose continued goodwill the whole Federal structure depends.

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9. The J.A.C. consider that, in the light of the political considerations mentioned in paragraphs 5 and 6 above, active RANCOUR operations should not be resumed so long as the U.A.R. and their friends remain inactive against the Federation.

Should Egyptians or Yemenis however resume their attacks and armed invasions, the J.A.C. considers that it is important that retaliatory RANCOUR action should be permitted on a similar scale.

10. The Joint Action Committee recommends that Ministers -
- (a) Agree that, on the authority of the High Commissioner, RANCOUR resources may be used to retaliate in similar degree and in the same area to any Egyptian or Yemeni inspired subversive attacks or incursions against the security of the Federation of South Arabia.
  - (b) Agree that the High Commissioner in Aden shall report to London for inter-departmental clearance any plan for re-starting operations through RANCOUR II which he considers necessary in defence of the Federation in the event of Egyptian/Yemeni inspired subversion escalating beyond the accustomed level.

(c)

PARA 10c Deleted & APPENDIX AT  
PAGE 6 EXTRACTED AND

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