

The Two Yemens

171. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the People's Republic of Southern Yemen¹

Washington, February 27, 1969, 1710Z.

30762. Subj: US-PRSY Relations.

1. PRSY UN Perm Rep Nu'man,² who currently in Washington as PRSYG observer at INTELSAT Conference, had frank but cordial talk with ARP Country Director Brewer February 26.

2. In analyzing causes existing coolness in USG-PRSYG relations, Ambassador Nu'man claimed USG failure offer substantial aid at time of independence and subsequent seizure of American arms with clasped hands insignia³ in possession of anti-PRSYG dissidents had led Aden to "natural" conclusion that USG distrusts PRSYG. He speculated this due to close US relationship with Saudis whom Nu'man alleged, somewhat vaguely, had privately conveyed threats to overthrow NLF regime, claiming USG support. Nu'man asserted PRSYG desired good relations with USG and hoped USG would reciprocate.

3. Recalling history of USG attempts to develop good relations with PRSYG, Brewer underlined our feeling it was PRSYG which had not reciprocated. He reviewed our position re non-interference PRSY internal affairs, regretting publicity anti-USG charges (e.g. re arms) without first seeking our explanation. Brewer noted USG seeks maintain friendly relations with Saudi Arabia as well as PRSYG but we not responsible for foreign policy of either.

4. Nu'man reiterated SAG responsible poor state Saudi-PRSY contacts. Brewer demurred, noting SAG had good reasons be concerned over hostile attitude PRSYG leaders. President al-Shaabi's February 11 speech laying claim on behalf of greater Yemen to Jizan and Najran hardly likely provide reassurance.⁴ We hoped neighborly relations

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL SYEMEN-US. Confidential. Drafted by Brewer and Wrampelmeier and approved by Brewer. It was repeated to Jidda, Addis Ababa, London, and USUN.

² Isma'il Sa'id Nu'man.

³ The "clasped hands" insignia was stamped on boxes of U.S. AID material.

⁴ Telegram 128 from Aden, February 12, relayed President Qahtan al-Shaabi's February 11 speech. Al-Shaabi blasted American imperialism, identified an ongoing U.S.-Saudi-Iranian anti-PRSY campaign, pledged support for those who fought against Israel, and stated a desire for unity with North Yemen, including claims to Jizan and to Najran, Kuria, and Muria Islands (currently held by Saudi Arabia). (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 15-1 SYEMEN)

could in due course be established. For our part, budgetary stringencies limited our ability assist PRSYG but this represented no political decision or reflection our attitude towards new government. On contrary, USG continues hope for good relations with PRSYG. We welcomed PRSYG representative's call and hoped this forecast more frequent contacts.

5. Ambassador Nu'man now scheduled see Asst Sec Sisco afternoon March 3.⁵

Richardson

⁵ Nu'man and Sisco's discussion focused on domestic PRSY needs and future development. Nu'man stated that his discussion with Brewer covered the main bilateral problems. (Memorandum of conversation, March 3; *ibid.*, POL US-YEMEN)

172. Intelligence Note From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Hughes) to Secretary of State Rogers¹

492

Washington, June 25, 1969.

SUBJECT

Southern Yemen: Extreme Leftists Seize the Reins

Leftist extremists ousted President Qahtan al-Shaabi and Premier Faisal al-Shaabi in a bloodless coup June 22, using the General Command of the ruling National Liberation Front (NLF) as their vehicle. The new regime, headed by a five-man Presidential Council,² is dominated by the extreme left segment of the radical NLF. Moderate army leaders, who would be expected to oppose the new regime, have been unable to mount effective resistance because the army is split over whether to support the new leadership, but the regime's narrow base may hold the seeds of future trouble. In foreign policy, the new government will probably seek to move closer to the Soviet Union and will have even worse relations with neighboring states than its predecessor.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 23–9 SYEMEN. Secret; No Foreign Dissem; Controlled Dissem.

² See telegram 103042 to Addis Ababa, June 23. (*Ibid.*, POL 12 SYEMEN)

Extreme Leftists Predominate. The new Presidential Council and cabinet are both dominated by extremists. Most of these extremists had been removed from positions of power at army insistence in the spring of 1968, and many went into exile. They were permitted to return in early 1969. Three of the five Presidential Council members—Chairman Salim Rubayya', Abdul Fattah Ismail, and Ali al-Bishi (Ali Antar)—are extremist leftists, and the other two—Premier Muhammad Ali Haytham and Defense Minister Muhammad Salih Awlaqi—are considered Arab nationalist opportunists. Six of the eleven Cabinet members are extreme leftists. Two or three members of the new leadership are reportedly Communists, and the extreme leftists as a group have a Castro-like flavor.

Abdul Fattah Ismail, leader of the NLF extremist faction and perhaps the most intellectual member of the new regime, is probably the organizing genius behind the coup. He will probably function as a de facto party secretary-general to spark the organizational effort that will be needed to keep the regime alive. He is likely to control the situation from behind the scenes, and if the extremist regime lasts, he may eventually emerge as the overt leader.

Regime has Narrow Base. The NLF regime in Aden has always represented only a small minority of the country's 1,300,000 inhabitants, and the seizure of power by the extreme left has produced a regime with an even narrower base of support. The new regime is strongest among party intellectuals, labor unions, NLF youth, and the NLF commandos (ex-terrorists and ex-guerrillas from preindependence days). It can be expected also to draw support from the Chinese-style People's Guards, a paramilitary force which was disbanded in 1968 at army insistence but re-created in May 1969 to help put down tribal dissidence. The new regime is weakest in the army, the small educated class, business groups, and the more conservative residents of the hinterland.

Army Split Appears to Assure Survival in Short Run. The army, so far a relatively moderate political force, is divided between opponents and supporters of the new regime. Moderate army leaders, who might have attempted a counter-coup, appear to have been neutralized as a result of their own disorganization, the division in army ranks, the reported detention of some senior officers, and the absence of major units upcountry. The new government appears to control most military and police forces in the Aden area, and its short term survival prospects are good.

Friction with Neighboring States to Rise. The new regime would probably like to increase Southern Yemeni efforts to export revolution to other countries in the Arabian Peninsula, despite its limited capabilities. This desire will heighten tension between Southern Yemen and the Yemeni Arab Republic (YAR), Saudi Arabia, Muscat and Oman, and the Persian Gulf shajhdoms. Saudi Arabia and the YAR have not yet reacted to the coup in Aden; because of their fear of NLF revolutionary efforts, Saudi

Arabia and the YAR may separately support a major effort by anti-NLF elements to overthrow the new Southern Yemeni regime.

Regime Will Cozy up to Soviets. The new regime will probably seek to move closer to the Soviet Union. Earlier this spring, Abdul Fattah Ismail reportedly hoped to have the NLF announce its membership in the Socialist Bloc led by the Soviet Union; and a statement by the NLF General Command immediately after the coup said that “relations with the friendly socialist states, and the Soviet Union in particular, are to be bolstered.” The Soviets, desirous of maintaining their position in Southern Yemen, will allow themselves to be embraced by the new regime but will avoid supporting Southern Yemeni efforts to stir up trouble in nearby Arab states. They also may be reluctant to increase their economic and military assistance beyond the moderate levels already projected.

173. Telegram From Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State¹

New York, October 1, 1969, 2308Z.

Secto 98/3349. Secretary’s Bilateral with Yemen FonMin 1 October. Following summary based on uncleared memcon, Noform and FYI only subject to revision upon review:

1. *Summary:* In relaxed, amiable conversation, Yemen FonMin Barakat told Secretary how peaceful Yemen now was, how relations with neighbors have improved and Yemen wished normalize relations with developed countries, especially US. Secretary said US not now in position change policy on recognition, but that it was under active consideration. He urged maintenance of active informal contacts, assured Barakat we would watch situation carefully.

2. Barakat made general presentation along lines his UNGA speech, noting country now completely quiet with last resistance to Republican govt cleared out, all tribes have sworn allegiance, democratic govt installed and at work on new constitution. He said relations with neighbors now good, neighbors to south no longer introducing subversive elements. Yemen wishes good relations with all countries, especially developed countries.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1245, Saunders Files, Yemen. Confidential. It was repeated to Jidda and Aden.

3. Barakat explained break in relations with US occurred under former govt that did not represent will Yemeni people. Urged US look at recognition Yemen as special case not tied to general ME situation. Regretted that due conditions beyond control present govt, entire US Mission had been withdrawn.

4. Secretary said US not now in position change our recognition policy but that we have the situation under active study. He urged continuation of contacts in New York and assured Barakat we would watch developments.

Rogers

174. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, October 24, 1969.

SUBJECT

South Yemen Breaks Relations with the USG

The Government of the Peoples Republic of Southern Yemen (PRSYG) informed our Chargé in Aden today that PRSY was severing relations with the United States.² The Foreign Minister cited alleged U.S. material help "to people working against the Arabs and PRSYG," as well as the presence of Americans in the Israeli armed forces, as reasons for this sudden step.³ He added that there was a question of how long the PRSYG could guarantee the safety of American personnel in Aden and requested that all be withdrawn within forty-eight hours.

We are complying with the PRSYG request. Our Chargé, who was given twenty-four hours to leave, will be departing commercially on

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1245, Saunders Files, South Yemen. Confidential. A typed notation on the memorandum states: "Used in October 29, 1969 President Briefing for Oct. 30 Kissinger to President memo." The October 30 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon repeated material contained in Rogers's memorandum. (Ibid., Box 12, President's Daily Briefing Files, October 29-31, 1969)

² As reported in telegram 779 from Aden, October 24. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 1245, Saunders Files, South Yemen.)

³ According to telegram 655 from Aden, September 8, the government was then split on maintaining relations with the United States over the issue of U.S. sale of Phantoms to Israel. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL SYEMEN-US)

October 25. The remaining staff of 34 Americans, including dependents, is scheduled to go to Asmara by chartered Ethiopian aircraft on October 26. The U.K. has agreed to serve as protecting power and is so notifying the PRSYG.

Our relations with this extremist Arab regime have long been strained, but there seem three reasons for its sudden action: (1) the PRSYG continues to imagine that we are assisting Saudi Arabia in supporting efforts on the part of PRSY exiles to foment trouble within Southern Yemen; (2) Southern Yemenis reacted strongly to increasing tensions on the Arab/Israeli issues, notably allegations of American citizen service in Israeli armed forces; and (3) beset by domestic problems reflected in one coup already this year, Southern Yemeni radicals may well fear that public opinion in Aden could get out of hand unless some dramatic step were taken. In this connection, there was rioting in Aden immediately prior to the PRSY action.

Our interests in PRSY have been marginal. It is not represented in the United States, other than at the UN. This action will, however, make it more difficult for us to keep track of the growing Soviet presence⁴ in the strategic port of Aden and brings to eight the number of Arab countries who have broken relations with us since May, 1967. Relations are unlikely to be resumed until other Arab countries show the way or there is some change in the composition and orientation of the PRSYG itself.

WPR

⁴ As reported in telegrams 424 from Moscow, January 30, and 23100 to Aden, February 13, PRSY President Al-Shaabi visited Moscow January 28. (Ibid.) Airgram A-52 from Aden, March 18, reported continuing pro-Soviet public statements by government officials. (Ibid., POL 2 SYEMEN). According to airgram A-58 from Aden, April 1, the Soviets agreed to train South Yemeni aviation cadets. (Ibid., DEF 19-6 SYEMEN) Aden was also part of general U.S. concerns over Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean. See Documents 2 and 13.

175. **Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco) to Secretary of State Rogers¹**

Washington, November 28, 1969.

SUBJECT

Saudi-Southern Yemen Border Fighting—Information Memorandum

Peoples Republic of Southern Yemen (PRSY) forces have engaged Saudi border guards at a remote location (al-Wuday'ah) east of Yemen in the undemarcated frontier area between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen on the edge of the Empty Quarter. Our information indicates that the PRSY 30 Brigade attacked and occupied the Saudi post, causing a number of Saudi casualties. The Saudis are now flying reinforcements to the area. The Foreign Ministry has informed our Embassy in Jidda that Saudi Arabia will, of course, have to retaliate.²

PRSYG Cabinet members and public media are having a field day. They are alleging that Saudi Arabia has committed aggression, that "American imperialism and intelligence backed the Saudi strike," that the attack was instigated by "oil companies operating inside Saudi Arabia," and that Saudi aircraft are being flown by "mercenaries" since Saudi pilots have themselves been jailed by their own government because of suspected dissident activities. The PRSYG has called the incident to the attention of the Arab League and the UN.³ The Saudi radio said on November 26 that PRSY troops had attacked without provocation and that Saudi forces had counter-attacked.

While this is likely to be a war of words rather than a major military confrontation,⁴ it will pose additional embarrassment to Saudi Arabia at a time when that government is increasingly regarded in Arab circles as domestically unpopular and identified with the United States. If asked by the press, we plan to limit our comments to the statement that we have seen reports of the incident, including the Saudi statement that PRSY forces attacked without provocation.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 32-1 SAUD-SYEMEN. Confidential. Drafted by Brewer and cleared by Davies. A copy was sent to INR/RNA, IO/UNP, U, J, and C.

² As reported in telegram 3902 from Jidda, November 27. (Ibid.)

³ Apparently PRSY lodged a complaint before the UN, but the complaint did not result in any resolutions.

⁴ A fuller account of the Wadia incident is in airgram A-365 from Jidda, December 29. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 32-1 SAUD-SYEMEN) See also Document 176.

176. Intelligence Note From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Cline) to Secretary of State Rogers¹

847

Washington, December 4, 1969.

SUBJECT

Saudi Arabia–Southern Yemen: Conflict in the Sands

The border war between Saudi Arabia and the People's Republic of Southern Yemen (PRSY) continues, and both states are endeavoring to move reinforcements to the front. The affair began on November 26, when Southern Yemeni forces seized a Saudi outpost. The attack appears primarily designed to strengthen the PRSY regime's domestic position by turning attention toward the "external threat" posed by imperialism and its "stooge," Saudi Arabia. Despite the incident, Saudi King Faisal still plans to attend the Arab Summit meeting beginning December 20, and he will probably use the incident as ammunition against the radical Arab states. Allegations that both sides are using mercenary pilots are unproven, but Saudi Arabia has a few British contract pilots available, and Soviet pilots are training the PRSY Air Force.

The Wudai'a Incident. A sizeable Southern Yemeni force crossed the undemarcated border into Saudi Arabia on November 26 and seized the Saudi border post at Wudai'a (see map),² killing several of the 26-man Frontier Force garrison and capturing the remainder. Saudi Arabia hastily deployed ground units toward the area, reinforcing the Saudi army garrison at Sharawra, some 30 miles north of Wudai'a. F-86 fighters, temporarily based on Khamis Mushait, are supporting the Saudi effort. Both sides have used aircraft to attack ground forces starting November 29, but there has apparently been no air-to-air combat. Saudi forces pushed the Southern Yemenis out of Wudai'a on November 30, and the Saudis claim to have reoccupied that locality. Each side asserts that it has inflicted heavy damage on the other's forces. Southern Yemen also claims to have shot down four Saudi planes; this claim appears false, but there is an unconfirmed report of two Saudi helicopters being downed. Fighting continues, and Saudi Arabia will probably be the victor when it succeeds in bringing its superior military strength to bear on this remote area.

Wudai'a is Saudi Territory. Wudai'a has been outside the territory of Southern Yemen and its predecessor states since the boundary of the Aden Protectorate was first agreed on in the Anglo-Turkish Convention

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 32–1 SAUD–SYEMEN. Secret; No Foreign Dissem; Controlled Dissem.

² Attached but not printed.

of 1914. Saudi Arabia has for decades claimed that its border was considerably farther *south* than the 1914 line. The British successfully rebuffed Saudi efforts to give effect to their claim in the 1950's, and the line recognized by the British became the *de facto* border. This line is indicated on maps published by PRSY in 1968, with the Wudai'a area shown as Saudi territory. The nearby boundary between Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Arab Republic has never been delimited, but the Yemen Arab Republic and its predecessor, the Yemeni Kingdom, have not tried to occupy the Wudai'a area.

Why Did Southern Yemen Attack? Southern Yemeni motives are not clear. PRSY leaders apparently feel that the Wudai'a-Sharawra area ought to be part of Southern Yemen, for PRSY forces made an incursion into the area and blew up a Saudi marker at Sharawra a year ago. Southern Yemeni statements during the first few days after the attack simply alleged that the area was in Southern Yemen and lambasted the Saudis for having "attempted to occupy" it. On December 1, apparently shifting ground, Southern Yemeni President Rubayya' asserted that the area had historically been part of Southern Yemen, but that the British turned it over illegally to Saudi Arabia on the eve of PRSY independence in 1967.

Other factors apparently contributed to the decision to attack. The National Front (NF) regime in Southern Yemen is dominated by a small group with a narrow base, and signs of a split within the regime became apparent during the meeting of the NF General Command which began November 17. The regime needed a popular cause—a "rally-round the flag" issue—with which to galvanize support. With the anniversary of independence coming on November 30, what better step than to strike a blow at the forces of reaction and imperialism as personified by Saudi Arabia?

Possible Saudi Internal Repercussions. Besides their domestic reasons for attacking, PRSY's radical leaders may have hoped that a successful action would encourage rebellion inside Saudi Arabia by showing that the Saudi regime was weak. They may have felt that the widespread arrests of Saudis for dissident activity last summer proved that extensive discontent existed. (Perhaps 300 persons, including some 80 military and police officers, have been rounded up in Saudi Arabia during the past six months.)

A similar assessment actually played a major role in the nature of the Saudi response to the PRSY attack. Saudi officials felt that Saudi Arabia must act promptly, forcefully, and successfully. Otherwise, in their view, the Saudi regime would appear weak, which would encourage potential dissidents.

Saudis may use Incident at Arab Summit. On December 3, Saudi Arabia announced that King Faisal would attend the December 20 Arab summit meeting in Rabat, dispelling earlier reports that he might stay

away if the fighting continued. Since Faisal expects to be on the defensive at the meeting against radical Arab demands for increased financial contributions and for various anti-American measures, the Wudai'a incident gives him a much-needed opportunity to seize the offensive. Faisal can now claim that it is the Arab radicals who are sabotaging the common Arab effort against Israel by fomenting inter-Arab clashes. He can point out that the incident forced him to transfer troops away from northwestern Saudi Arabia, where they had been backstopping the Saudi troops in Jordan. The Saudis and their supporters in the Lebanese press are already beginning to attack the UAR in connection with the Wudai'a incident, and the UAR, which strongly favors holding the summit meeting, is embarrassed.

Propaganda Includes Allegations of Mercenary Involvement. Southern Yemen claims that it is responding to external conspiracies, declaring that the incident was an aggression planned by the US and carried out by its Saudi "stooges." Charges in support of this line include allegations that oil is the issue, and that "mercenary" pilots have been fighting with the Saudi forces since November 26 (when the Saudi Air Force was not yet in action). The implication in the mercenary issue has generally been that Americans were involved, although one report in the Aden press mentioned "Iranian pilots." (PRSY has not yet focused on the British and Pakistani advisors to the Saudi Air Force.) Saudi Arabia has privately asserted that Syrian pilots are flying Southern Yemeni planes, but has not charged that PRSY's Soviet advisors are involved.

But no Confirmation Mercenary Pilots in Combat Yet. The mutual allegations that mercenaries are participating in combat operations seem premature. Saudi Arabia is using F-86 aircraft for ground support because it has eight Saudi pilots to fly them. It has an additional seven qualified Saudi pilots for its Lightning aircraft, including three royal princes. There is no clear evidence that non-Saudi pilots are being used in combat, but the Saudis have asked the British Airworks Company (holder of the Lightning training contract) to provide three combat pilots for the Wudai'a operations. The British Government has replied that it opposed the employment of Airworks instructor pilots for combat, but that it had no objection to combat missions by British pilots who were already on direct Saudi contracts. The number of these pilots, who may have flown in combat, is not known. A Pakistani pilot ferried an F-86 to Khamis Mushait on November 30, but whether any of the Pakistani advisors is flying combat missions is unknown.

Southern Yemen has three Arab pilots for its MIG-17's—two Southem Yemenis and one Syrian expatriate. The Syrian is not believed to be connected with the present Syrian regime. The Soviet advisors with the PRSY Air Force do not appear to have engaged in combat, but they may have participated in other missions. Despite Saudi allegations, the USSR does not appear to have played any role in instigating the PRSY action,

although Soviet media belatedly supported the Southern Yemeni side of the dispute on December 2 and replayed an allegation that RAF aircraft based in Salalah in Muscat had conducted reconnaissance missions before the incidents on November 26.

177. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, December 19, 1969.

SUBJECT

U.S. Aid Program in Yemen

You have asked about the circumstances under which the US maintained its aid program in Yemen after the Republican coup of September 1962. The following is the sequence of events at that time:

—The US aid program began under the monarchy in 1959. Our aid people were involved in village water projects and road building.

—Between the coup in September 1962 and US recognition of the new regime in December, our aid people stayed on and went about their work. The UAR had sent troops to Yemen to back the new Republican regime, and the Saudis had sent help to the Royalists. During that period before recognition, the US was engaged in trying to establish conditions under which both sides could agree to withdraw. During that effort, it did not seem wise to cut ourselves off from the scene by pulling our people out.

—Between December 1962 and April 1963, Ambassador Bunker worked to achieve a disengagement agreement between the UAR and Saudi Arabia. Again, there was argument during that period for leaving our people in place.

—In the months after that agreement, the UAR and Saudis traded recriminations. The long and short of this extended story was that the UAR did not withdraw until after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, but Nasser and Faisal met twice to try to reach accommodation. As long as those efforts were going on it seemed wise not to cut ourselves off from Yemen, even though between July and December 1963 we had

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I. Secret. Sent for information. A handwritten notation by Kissinger reads: "The major point is that we slightly leaned towards Republicans."

US Air Force planes in Saudi Arabia to deter Egyptian air attacks on Saudi territory from Republican bases in Yemen.

One of the overriding reasons for U.S. involvement was to give King Faisal, who had just assumed power, time to get on his feet. This meant helping him withstand UAR pressure via the Yemeni Republic while recognizing that Nasser was the leading political force in the Arab world and Republican forces were here to stay in Yemen. The main argument while we were so deeply involved was to maintain a relationship with all parties involved, and that was the reasoning behind leaving our aid mission active in Yemen.

178. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, December 31, 1969.

SUBJECT

Improving Diplomatic Contacts with Yemen Arab Republic

The Yemen Arab Republic Government—which broke relations with the U.S. in June 1967—has approached us on the issue of resuming diplomatic relations. Secretary Rogers is now asking you (attached)² to approve the establishment of a U.S. Interests Section in the Italian Embassy in Yemen.

Background: Since breaking relations with the U.S., the Yemeni Government has periodically approached us to renew diplomatic relations. We have avoided this because of King Faisal's opposition.

However, the Yemeni Foreign Minister made overtures to Secretary Rogers in New York on October 1 to resume ties.³ Ambassador Eilts raised the issue with King Faisal on November 24; the King reiterated his opposition but said that a U.S. Interests Section at the Italian Embassy in Yemen would not be an embarrassment to him.⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I. Confidential. Sent for action.

² Not attached. A copy of this December 6 memorandum from Richardson to the President is *ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–YEMEN.

³ See Document 173.

⁴ As reported in telegram 1043 from Dhahran, November 24. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–YEMEN)

What this means is putting a couple of officers in the Italian Embassy to improve our knowledge of what is going on there. Since Southern Yemen broke relations with us on October 24,⁵ we have had no one in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. This would be consistent with our position of trying to broaden our ties with the Arabs without being very visible or committing us to any significant involvement.

Recommendation: That you approve the establishment of a U.S. Interests Section in the Italian Embassy in Yemen and authorize State to take the necessary steps to execute this.⁶

⁵ See Document 174.

⁶ Nixon approved the recommendation and wrote: "But *only* if Faisal has no objection." The opening of the Interests Section was postponed due to a Yemeni raid on Najran, Saudi Arabia. (Memorandum from Eliot to Kissinger, January 14, 1970; *ibid.*) The Interests Section opened in April 1970.

179. Telegram From the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State¹

Jidda, August 2, 1970, 1355Z.

2980. Subj: SAG/YAR Campaign Against PRSY. Ref: Sanaa 91.²

1. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] during recent SAG-YAR talks SAG expressed interest in supporting efforts to overthrow PRSY regime so long as flosy not involved in these efforts. Further informed that YAR delegation suggested weakening PRSY on economic front by gradually diverting all North Yemeni imports from Aden to Saudi ports and that SAG sufficiently interested in this proposal to offer Saudi subsidy to offset added transportation costs resulting from use of Saudi ports for this purpose.

2. Our information on activities former SAL Sultans and extent of Saudi support for them at moment sketchy. As addressees aware, SAG until early 1969 was actively supporting dissident activities centering on ex-Sultans and tribes loyal to them against PRSY regime. Since these undertakings aborted, our impression is that Saudis have been "keep-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL SAUD-YEMEN. Secret. It was repeated to Sanaa.

² Telegram 91 from Sanaa, July 31, passed on the rumors that Saudi Arabia was financing a new FLOSY operation, noting "Ironic indeed that FLOSY, once Nasser's weapon against UK in Aden, might serve Saudis against NLF." (*Ibid.*, POL 33 SYEMEN)

ing” some ex-Sultans but not giving them sufficient support to permit their playing active dissident political role. Situation could well have changed in last few days. Will seek to gather harder information.

3. *Comment:* SAG/PRSY hostility matter of public record and Saudis would no doubt welcome any opportunity to undermine present South Yemen regime. We agree, however, with U.S. Interests Section, Sanaa, that YAR would do well to tend to internal problems at this moment and further feel that SAG would be well advised to concentrate on more pressing and promising matters such as solidifying newly established relations with YAR.³ PRSY regime most likely to fall from own weight, or lack of it, and Saudi-North Yemeni activities against it could well prolong its survival and boomerang to harm SAG and YAR.

Stoltzfus

³ Saudi Arabia recognized the Yemen Arab Republic on July 23.

180. Memorandum From Harold Saunders of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, August 20, 1970.

SUBJECT

Message to King Faisal re Yemen

You will recall that I sent you a memo recommending that the President send a message to King Faisal commending the reconciliation of Saudi Arabia and Yemen which resulted in Saudi recognition of the YARG on July 23.² You returned it to me, asking whether Yemen is very left-wing, and, if that is the case, we should pick some other occasion for a Presidential letter. The following should clarify:

The present Yemeni republican regime is actually fairly moderate in Arab terms. From 1962—when a civil war resulted in the overthrow of

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 629, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. II. Confidential. Sent for action. All brackets are in the original. A handwritten notation by Kissinger, dated August 24, at the top of the memorandum, reads: “I still don’t think this is a good idea.”

² Memorandum from Saunders to Kissinger, July 27. (Ibid.)

the Imamate and the installation of radical republicans—until 1967, Yemen was a virtual UAR protectorate and Saudi Arabia militarily supported the royalists. That radical power structure was the one that broke relations with the U.S. in 1967 following the June war; however, at the same time, Nasser was forced to withdraw his troops, thus abandoning the regime. In November 1967 the extremists were overthrown by a more moderate—albeit republican—tribally-oriented group which has since remained in power. Despite intermittent royalist-republican fighting, King Faisal found himself dealing with a Yemeni government more of his own persuasion and less radical in ideology than in the pre-1967 YARG.

With Faisal's approval (and the President's), earlier this year the U.S. established an Interests Section in care of the Italian Embassy in Yemen.³ In March at the Jidda Islamic Summit, the Saudis and Yemenis worked out a compromise arrangement whereby a royalist faction was included in the republican government and King Faisal was apparently satisfied that the YARG was properly oriented in the direction of Islamic principles.⁴ Saudi recognition followed on July 23 and the governments are now engaged in discussions to increase ties, giving special priority to Yemen's urgent economic needs. [The Yemenis receive some economic aid from the Soviets and Chinese Communists.] The YARG has also expressed interest in increasing its ties with the West; the French have extended recognition.

From King Faisal's view, this could be considered an act of statesmanship on his part to come to terms with the republicans after eight years of Saudi-Yemeni warfare. Given his familiar and persistent theme of radical encirclement, no doubt his greater concern at the moment is with the extremists regime in South Yemen. Closer Saudi-YARG relations could be viewed as one—although small—step towards increasing the chances for stability in the Arabian peninsula.

Recommendation: That you seek the President's approval via the attached memo of a brief message to King Faisal. [Text cleared by Mr. Keogh.]⁵

³ See Document 178.

⁴ Discussed in the April 2 Intelligence Note RNAN-13, "Saudi Arabia-Yemen-Islamic States: Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference and a Yemeni Sub Plot." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 13-6)

⁵ Attached but not printed. There is no indication that the letter was sent. A handwritten note at the bottom of the first page of the memorandum indicates that the Department of State was notified on August 31 that Kissinger did not concur in the recommendation.

181. Letter From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco) to the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (Thacher)¹

Washington, December 10, 1970.

Dear Nick,

As you are aware, Sayyid Umar Saqqaf expressed his concern to me in New York on October 21 about the radical regimes in Syria, Iraq, and Southern Yemen.² Indicating that he was speaking without instructions, Saqqaf wondered if the USG and Saudi Arabia could exchange views on developments in those countries. During our subsequent luncheon in the Department on October 26, I offered to provide Sayyid Umar through you with our current assessment of the political situation in the three countries. These assessments, prepared by INR, have now been completed and are enclosed.³ Their preparation took longer than I had hoped since it was necessary to wait for the dust to settle a bit in Damascus and Baghdad after the respective power shifts within these two regimes.

You may at your discretion review these assessments with Saqqaf on the understanding that they will be closely held within the Saudi Government and not conveyed to representatives of any other government. At the same time, you may wish to seek Saqqaf's own assessment of how recent developments in Syria and Iraq are likely to influence those two governments' relations with Saudi Arabia.

In sharing these assessments with Saqqaf, you should not give him any grounds to suspect that the USG is prepared to go beyond such exchanges to an exchange of views (which he seemed to be suggesting to me) on "doing something" about the radical regimes in these countries. In fact, when reviewing the situation in Southern Yemen, I hope you can especially stress our assessment that the National Front regime

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 3 UAE. Secret; Limdis. Drafted by Wrampelmeier and cleared in NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/ARN, and INR/RNA.

² As reported in telegram 2645 from USUN, October 22. (Ibid., POL 15–1 SAUD)

³ All are attached but not printed. One of the reports, undated, entitled "People's Democratic Republic of Yemen," argued four points: (1) the Marxist PDRY Government followed a pro-Moscow line; (2) Soviet military and civilian advisers and technicians played a major role; (3) the USSR had the use of Aden port and Socotra Island but was not building a major base on the latter; and (4) the Soviets were unwilling to "increase their aid or their military presence in South Yemen under present circumstances." The report looked briefly at East German and Chinese activities. It concluded that the PDRY was unpopular but well entrenched.

in Aden, despite its unpopularity, seems very firmly in control of Aden and most of the hinterland as well. As recent reporting from USINT Sanaa (see specifically Sanaa cable 308)⁴ has pointed out, indigenous revolts within PDRY frontiers are likely to be a more serious threat to National Front control than poorly coordinated incursions by motley exile bands across the frontier.

At the same time, if SAG officials are seriously concerned about the possibility of new PDRY attacks in the south (Jidda's 3940),⁵ then they should seriously reconsider the policy of support for the National Union Front which can only give the Southern Yemenis a relatively plausible excuse for having another bash at the Saudis. Perhaps this would be a good occasion to remind Saqqaf how poorly other such acts of Saudi "assistance" have turned out.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Sisco⁶

P.S. I am deeply concerned over what appears to be increasing unreality of Faisal.

⁴ Telegram 308 from Sanaa, November 7. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 13 SYEMEN)

⁵ Not found.

⁶ Printed from a copy that bears Sisco's typed signature and an indication that he signed the original.

182. Special National Intelligence Estimate¹

SNIE 36.7–71

Washington, February 11, 1971.

SOUTH YEMEN

Note

This Estimate assesses the situation in South Yemen,² the prospects for Saudi-supported efforts to oust the present government there, and the likely consequences thereof. Its principal conclusions are in paragraph 26.

The Estimate

I. The Setting

1. The British evacuated South Yemen in 1967, turning over the governing of the area to the radical National Front (NF), formerly the National Liberation Front. The Front originally derived from the left-wing Arab Nationalists Movement. Its South Yemen branch has an extremist flavor; some of its principal members are Marxists with a strong ideological affinity for the USSR; others are Maoists. Virtually all its leaders are of rural origin. The Front's policy has been to wipe out vestiges of colonial tutelage and of government by ruling families. In the past three years, it has nationalized most businesses, expropriated most privately owned land, and abolished the former petty states in favor of six large provinces. Although there has been one shakeup in the Front, which involved the ousting of its relatively moderate wing, the government has not faced serious domestic challenge.

2. The former rulers of the petty states of the hinterland, who were to have been the principal figures in the successor regime Britain had hoped to form, went into exile as the British left. Other South Yemeni

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, NIC Files, Job 79–R01012A, Box 418. Secret. The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense and NSA participated in the preparation of this estimate. The Director of CIA submitted it with the concurrence of all members of the USIB with the exception of the AEC and the FBI who abstained on the grounds that it was outside their jurisdiction. The conclusions of the SNIE were passed on to Jidda in telegram 32516, February 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 YEMEN)

² The term South Yemen designates the country that formerly included the Crown Colony of Aden and the Aden Protectorate. In 1964 it was termed the Federation of South Arabia, on independence in 1967 became the People's Republic of South Yemen, and in 1970 changed its name to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. This state is not to be confused with the former Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen, since 1962 called the Yemen Arab Republic, and termed in this paper Yemen. [Footnote is in the original.]

exiles include members of the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) and of the South Arabian League (SAL), both of which had opposed British control of the area. FLOSY lost out to the Front in a bitter struggle for power in 1967. Some of the Front's less extreme supporters are also in exile now, including the former head of the South Yemen Army. Most of the exiles are in Yemen.

3. The South Yemen regime is virtually without friends in the Arab world. Since Egypt pulled its forces out of Yemen following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Cairo has largely ignored political developments in the Arabian Peninsula. Neighboring Oman is hostile to South Yemen for supporting rebels in Dhofar. Most other Arab states, even those of a radical bent such as Libya and Algeria, which had extended some aid, have been repelled by the shrill extremism of the South Yemen Government. Syria has extended a little help, however, and Iraq, which until recently provided several air force fighter pilots, now furnishes some technicians and makes occasional statements of support.

4. South Yemen is an odd mixture of modern city and backward rural hinterland.³ Aden developed as a large port, living off business generated by shipping on the Suez Canal route, becoming a fairly prosperous place with a sizable middle class and a flourishing trade-union movement (the source of FLOSY's support). The hinterland had been largely left to its own devices under its traditional rulers until the 1950s. Dissidence in the rugged and arid mountain country was endemic; the present government experiences the same problem.

5. South Yemen and Yemen are linked by past history, family ties, and a tradition of migration in both directions across the border, and both governments have publicly espoused the concept of Yemeni unity.⁴ However, there has also been sporadic fighting along the border for generations. The two present governments are enemies: Aden sees the reconciliation of San'a with Saudi Arabia and the northern Yemeni tribes as a reactionary move, and San'a is bitterly resentful at the challenge from upstart National Front revolutionaries.

6. The South Yemeni Government is beset by serious economic and financial problems. Before independence, South Yemen lived off payments from the UK and the transit trade through the port of Aden. UK subsidies and the expenditures by British military forces based in Aden stopped in 1967. The UK made payments totalling \$29 million after independence, but this assistance ceased after 1968. With the Suez

³ Current population estimates: Aden, 200,000 (down significantly since 1967); hinterland, 1,250,000. [Footnote is in the original.]

⁴ The Hadramaut—the present fifth and sixth provinces of South Yemen—is not considered by its own people or by most other people in the area as being part of a greater Yemen. [Footnote is in the original.]

Canal closed, Aden's bunkering and transit trade has dropped to about a quarter of its 1966 level. Despite rigorous austerity—civil and military salaries are now less than half the pre-independence level—the South Yemen Government is chronically short of money.

II. Soviet and Chinese Interests

7. The Soviets and the Chinese have both used the opening provided by the country's impoverishment and by the ideological bent of the South Yemen Government. After watching the new regime for about a year, the Soviets began to provide military hardware, mostly on credit, early in 1969. They have provided 10 Mig-15 and Mig-17 aircraft (flown first by Syrian and Iraqi and now by South Yemeni and Arab mercenary pilots), 5 AN-24 transport aircraft, 40-odd medium tanks, artillery, and other military equipment. About 150 Soviet military advisors and maintenance personnel are presently in South Yemen; 50 of these are with the Mig squadron and 10–15 with the AN-24 transport aircraft provided by the Soviets. Most of the remainder—plus some East Europeans—are with the ground forces. The USSR has also extended \$13 million in economic aid and East Germany has extended nearly twice as much. Moscow has, so far as we know, refused to replace the former British budget subsidies.

8. The Chinese have worked on a somewhat different basis. For the past two years, they have supplied arms and training to the South Yemen based Dhofar rebel movement operating against the Sultanate of Oman. They have also extended economic credits totalling \$55 million on liberal terms to the Aden government. The principal Chinese activity is the construction of a road from Aden to Mukalla. In practice Soviet and Chinese communist efforts in South Yemen are complementary, but this does not stem from any agreed division of effort. Indeed, there is a strong element of Moscow-Peking rivalry in South Yemen, and the USSR is concerned not to appear to be less helpful than China.

9. The Soviets almost certainly see access to South Yemen's air and maritime facilities as an option worth preserving in the framework of their broader area goals. To date, however, Soviet use of these facilities has been limited to infrequent port calls at Aden. The facilities consist chiefly of the port of Aden, with its bunkering and repair facilities (the latter include drydocks capable of holding vessels of destroyer size) and Khormaksar airfield, just outside the city. Rumors of extensive Soviet military-related construction on the island of Socotra are without foundation, although Soviet personnel apparently did assist in clearing one of the two dirt airstrips on the island to a length permitting AN-24s to land.

10. Soviet naval activity in the Indian Ocean would be facilitated by use of a local port with reliable provision and repair facilities. Aden,

as it happens, is one of the best and most convenient ports around the Indian Ocean. Its value to the Soviets would be enhanced if the Suez Canal were open. Khormaksar is a first-class airfield. Socotra, by contrast, has neither harbor nor aids to air navigation; its main attraction is its isolation. In view of the economic and military aid Moscow is providing, the South Yemen regime would almost certainly be willing to permit increased Soviet use of any of these facilities.

III. Saudi Interests and Policy

11. Saudi King Feisal feels that he has a mission to preserve the Arabian Peninsula from radical Arab and communist encroachment. He and his advisors view the Soviet presence in South Yemen with deep suspicion. They are inclined to accept extreme versions of stories about the extent of Soviet military assistance, the construction of Soviet bases, and the influence of the Soviets over South Yemeni Government policies. Feisal himself believes that a prime and near-term goal of the USSR is the overthrow of his monarchy. He is convinced that radical and extremist regimes on Saudi Arabia's borders are Soviet instruments to this end. The Saudis are aware that the extremist regime in South Yemen is active in promoting dissidence against the neighboring Sultan of Oman and is concerned that Aden may direct the same sort of activity against Saudi Arabia. The Saudis interpret the border clash at Wuday'ah in late 1969 as evidence of South Yemen's hostile intentions. The Saudis are likely to be encouraged in their efforts against South Yemen by other states, e.g., Iran and Oman.

12. Fear of the intentions of the National Front government in Aden has led the Saudis to aid South Yemeni exiles over the past three years. In 1968 they helped the former ruler of Bayhan move forces through Yemen, with that government's approval, into Bayhan. [*2½ lines not declassified*] As it became apparent that the sultans and their followers alone were having little success, the Saudis agreed to help the SAL, then FLOSY, and finally even former NF supporters who had fled South Yemen. Despite their various anti-monarchical attitudes, all have the virtue, in Saudi eyes, of being enemies of South Yemen's regime.

13. In order to eliminate some of the potential for confusion, the Saudis have encouraged the SAL, FLOSY, and the NF exiles in establishing a National Unity Front (NUF), with headquarters in Yemen. The NUF and other dissident tribal forces are reported to have about 6,000 supporters and hope to raise the number under arms to about 10,000. These figures, even if accurate, must be used with caution, because a force introduced into South Yemen is not likely to have military capabilities equivalent to its numbers. Many recruits will have joined for the opportunity to smuggle weapons, to enjoy the sport of tribal warfare, and to loot. Such recruits are likely to fade away when the fighting gets tough. The record of the dissidents in South Yemen in the past

year has not been impressive. They have denied several rugged mountain areas to government troops, but two sizable efforts by tribal forces fizzled out, one in the Hadramaut and one in an area 60–70 miles north of Aden, after the government brought its airpower and armed forces into action. The question is whether a greatly stepped up insurgent effort in the future will produce different results.

IV. Prospects for the Insurgency

14. The dissidents plan a two-pronged thrust at South Yemen in the next few weeks. One operation involves the movement of some groups into Bayhan, the Hadramaut, and Mahra from Saudi Arabia. This phase, [2 lines not declassified] aims at detaching the fifth and sixth provinces of South Yemen or at the least at forcing the South Yemeni Army to overextend itself. Other dissidents are to enter the second and third provinces from Yemen and advance toward Aden; their advance is supposed to be coupled with terrorism in Aden itself against the National Front and its Soviet advisors. [1 line not declassified] The programs are compatible, but we believe that they will not be adequately synchronized and that South Yemen's Army can deal with them one at a time.

15. The Saudis are not likely to stint in support to a variety of South Yemen dissidents in the coming year. Although some of their aid will be diverted for the benefit of various tribal economies, the dissidents will get enough for their needs. King Feisal has a personal interest in the endeavor, and so do Kamal Adham, Prince Sultan, and the Governor of Najran. The Saudis will, however, threaten to suspend their aid from time to time in an effort to compel cooperation among the various dissident groups.

16. In addition to augmented Saudi support, the dissident tribal forces will have the advantage of operating out of Yemen into areas where tribal rebellions have gone on for years. The Yemeni Government would no doubt prefer to avoid direct complicity in an insurgent drive against South Yemen, but its own bias against the National Front in Aden plus its dependence on Saudi money and goodwill will impel it to continue to support the dissidents—openly if need be. The Yemeni Government, however, is unlikely to commit its own forces.

17. On the other side, much will depend on the loyalty and efficiency of the South Yemeni Armed Forces, about which there is virtually no reliable information. The 10,000-man South Yemeni Army is tribally recruited; although the force is equipped with vehicles, its men and officers are not roadbound. South Yemen's small air force is capable of flying ground support strikes against tribal forces. Despite purges of the South Yemeni officer corps for political reasons in the three years since independence, the armed forces still appear to support the regime and have had reasonable success against tribal insurgents in the past

year. They have, however, been hampered in some instances by the conflicting tribal loyalties of their troops, and some of the latter might rally to the dissidents.

18. Though they will be taxed, the South Yemen Armed Forces should be able to prevent the overthrow of the government. They are unlikely, however, to be able to crush the insurgents. The latter will undoubtedly succeed in denying substantial parts of the hill country to the government; they might even establish effective control over one or more of the former Sultanates near the borders; and with great luck they might succeed in separating at least the inland parts of the fifth and sixth provinces—the Hadramaut Valley—from the rest of South Yemen. But the heart of the South Yemeni Government and regime is Aden and its environs (Aden, Little Aden, Shaikh Uthman). As long as it holds this region and a reasonably large part of the third and fourth provinces, including such towns as Abyan and other administrative centers, the National Front will be able to portray itself as the legitimate government of South Yemen.

19. In the struggle against the insurgents, it is unlikely that the South Yemen Government would need to call on major military assistance from outside, e.g., from the USSR. The Soviet advisors already there would almost certainly increase the maintenance and logistics support which they have been extending. They might in addition fly ground support missions within the boundaries of South Yemen, if Arab pilots are unable to fill the need, but we do not believe that the Soviets would commit their pilots to actions outside that country. In the not unlikely event that the insurgency turned out to be prolonged and inconclusive, the Aden government would need and probably get some additional financial assistance and military equipment from the Soviets. The Soviets would be willing to increase their air role to some extent, if they calculated that they could thereby establish their influence in Aden more firmly and that the risk of international complications would be slight. Moreover, the Soviets might fear that failure to respond to South Yemeni requests would give opportunities to the Communist Chinese.

20. With a view to their future in the Indian Ocean area, the Soviets wish to maintain their present position in South Yemen and continue their access to the air and maritime facilities. We do not believe, however, that the insurgency in South Yemen will develop in such a way as to appear to the Soviets to require a substantial commitment of their own forces. They would, of course, be reluctant to see the National Front government go under, but if its demise appeared imminent, they might decide that it would be advantageous to make a deal with some of the radical insurgent elements. The uncertainties and complications of the situation, the difficulties which they experienced in Yemen in the 1960s, and the prospect of other complications in

the Middle East would all militate against extensive direct Soviet involvement.

V. Implications for Saudi Arabia

21. Although Kamal Adham has asserted that the Saudis are prepared to continue their efforts to oust the South Yemen regime for as long as necessary and to use as much force as necessary, the Saudis probably have not looked far beyond currently planned operations. Probably they have not given much thought to the domestic political implications of support for a protracted insurgency. The Saudi leaders' attitudes suggest that they would not consider one setback, even a serious one, as a reason to suspend aid to South Yemen dissidents. Feisal is almost certain to believe that, if an initial effort failed, it would have been due to inadequate support or poor leadership among the dissidents. The Saudis might try using new dissident leaders, but are almost certain to try the strategy at least once or twice more. The odds therefore favor a prolonged struggle.

22. In the course of such a prolonged contest there are circumstances in which some Saudi Arabian forces might become directly involved in South Yemen. Saudi support of the dissidents is well known to the South Yemen Government, and the latter might try to strike at support bases within Saudi territory, say through air attacks. The logistic and technical limitations of the South Yemen Armed Forces would preclude efforts of any substantial magnitude. The Saudis would, of course, respond to such South Yemeni actions, probably using Saudi aircraft; some skirmishing in the border area could ensue. The Saudis could also employ small numbers of National Guard troops across the border in support of tribal insurgents.

23. The factors operating against a major Saudi commitment of military forces outweigh those in its favor. It is true that Feisal is aging and bitter. He has intense fear about a radical encirclement of his country and feels he must act to prevent it. Feisal apparently feels a need to demonstrate Saudi power in the Peninsula, and he may have been encouraged by the success of his forces in the 1969 border clash with South Yemen. Moreover, he is getting hawkish advice from some of those around him. But a large, direct military involvement is unlikely. In fact, the Saudi Armed Forces have severe limitations, which would rapidly become apparent if a major effort were started. Saudi logistic capabilities to support a sizable move into South Yemen by the regular army or National Guard are poor. There are 300 miles of thoroughly inhospitable terrain between Saudi staging areas and the Saudi-South Yemeni border. Beyond these considerations, the Saudi Government in like situations in the past has been cautious; for example, it refrained from committing regular armed forces in support of the Yemeni royalists in the 1960s, despite great provocations by the Egyptians.

24. Judging from the size of the insurgent force so far reported to have been equipped, the economic cost to Saudi Arabia probably has not been high. If Saudi support continues over an extended period and if the Saudis find it necessary to increase the scale of their activities, the drain on the Saudi treasury could run to several million dollars a year. Measured against the entire Saudi budget this is not a large sum. Over a period of time, however, such a drain probably would be exploited by elements within the country which are already unhappy at its social and political conservatism. If the Saudis were to undertake major military intervention in South Yemen, the economic costs and domestic political risks to the Feisal regime would be considerably larger. If Saudi forces were defeated, then consequences could be very serious for the monarchy.

25. A prolonged Saudi-sponsored insurgency in South Yemen could adversely affect the rather fragile political stability which has existed in Yemen since the Yemeni-Saudi rapprochement and end of the civil war in the spring of 1970. The San'a government, because of its distaste for the South Yemen regime and probably even more because of Saudi financial subsidies, has allowed the NUF to operate freely in Yemen and has served as a conduit of Saudi arms and financial assistance to NUF insurgent forces. There are Yemeni elements, both moderate and radical, however, who oppose Yemeni involvement in Saudi plans, either for fear of South Yemeni reprisals or for ideological reasons. Saudi pressures on San'a to support a continuing insurgency would probably bring these opposing factions into sharper conflict.

26. In sum: (a) the South Yemeni regime appears likely to survive the efforts of the insurgents to overthrow it, but it is unlikely to be able to crush the insurgents; (b) in the course of a prolonged insurgency, some Saudi forces might become directly involved in South Yemen, but factors operating against a major Saudi military commitment outweigh those favoring it; (c) if the Saudis did become involved militarily, the domestic political risks to Feisal's regime would rise; and (d) the Soviets, interested in South Yemen's air and maritime facilities, probably will continue maintenance and logistic support to South Yemeni forces. We do not believe, however, that the insurgency in South Yemen will develop in such a way as to appear to the Soviets to require a substantial commitment of their own forces.

[Omitted here is a map of North and South Yemen. See Appendix B.]

183. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia¹

Washington, May 8, 1971, 0114Z.

80353. Subj: Anti-PDRY Campaign. Ref: Sanaa 277; Jidda 1470.²

1. Report cited para 1 Sanaa reftel based on personal observation of source who has reported accurately in past. We recall that when approached by us following PDRYG forces' seizure in summer of 1968 of war materiel in cases marked with distinctive US clasped hands symbol from Southern Yemeni insurgents, Saudis responded that they not responsible for use that might be made of discarded US ammo boxes. Thus Department cannot rule out possibility that Saudis may be permitting use of old MAP-furnished crates to transfer non-MAP munitions to YAR/PDRY border. While PDRY charges of alleged US–Saudi plotting against Aden are by now old hat, publication by it of photos of any handclasp boxes it might seize is as predictable as it is unwelcome to us.

2. Department appreciates that Saudis likely be more incensed than contrite if confronted with USG protest against alleged delivery of USAID-marked boxes to southern dissidents. However, at Ambassador's discretion, suggest that you find low key way to get across following to ranking Saudi officials: USINT Sanaa recently received information that ammo boxes with US clasped hands insignia have been delivered to NUF elements. While provenance these crates is unknown, USG nevertheless disturbed that use of such boxes to transfer war materiel whatever its origin is likely to create false impression that USG involved in aiding or sponsoring NUF operation. To extent this belief spreads in Yemen and PDRY, it could undermine claim of NUF and other anti-NF dissidents to be patriots acting without foreign direction to expel unwelcome radical regime under Soviet and Chicom influence. If PDRYG forces continue to capture and exhibit quantities of arms and ammo ostensibly provided by USG to insurgents this could also excite Soviet suspicion. It clearly undesirable that Soviets be

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 SYEMEN. Secret; Limdis. Drafted on May 7 by Ransom and Wrampelmeier; cleared in NEA/ARP and EUR/SOV; and approved by Davies. It was repeated to USINT Sanaa and CHUSMTM Dhahran.

² Telegram 277 from Sanaa was not found. Telegram 1470 from Jidda, May 6, stated that Saudi Arabia did not ship weapons to foreign forces packed in crates marked with the U.S. AID clasped hands insignia and that the Saudis would resent any U.S. approach that implied the Saudis were trying to implicate the United States in "SAG supported operations in the south." (Ibid.)

encouraged assume that anti-PDRY campaign may not just be quarrel between different factions of South Yemenis but effort by US, with Saudi and dissident southern Yemeni help, to oust radical regime that has allowed USSR to develop foothold in strategic Aden outpost. Soviet reaction to what it likely regard as open US support for NUF cannot be accurately predicted but could well be increase in its own military aid to PDRY. This development if it occurs would be in neither USG nor SAG interest.

3. Defer to Ambassador's judgment of best level in SAG at which these points can be most effectively made but hope that Sultan will be included in this approach. Peg might be in context of tour d'horizon with Sultan of general threats to USG/SAG mutual interests in Peninsula. This might also be suitable opportunity for Ambassador to draw upon guidance previously provided for use with Saqqaf to share with Sultan US views of situation in PDRY and our estimate probabilities of insurgents' success in toppling Adeni regime. Discussions with Sultan would in our opinion usefully supplement our contacts with Saqqaf and Kamal Adham on this subject.³

Irwin

³ Thacher met with Saqqaf on May 21 and Sultan on June 9. (Telegrams 1731 from Jidda, May 23, and 1964 from Jidda, June 10, respectively; *ibid.*)

184. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco) to Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, May 12, 1971.

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy Toward Yemen—INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

Background

In Riyadh May 2 you told King Faisal you would take another look at American policy toward the Yemen Arab Republic.²

Resumption of Relations

For the past year we have had a small U.S. Interests Section in Sanaa. We expect a Yemeni initiative to elevate this office to an Embassy shortly. The previous Prime Minister, Muhsin al-Ayni, whom you met in New York,³ geared the initiative to elections, which have just ended and brought to office a new Prime Minister, Ahmad Mohammad Numan, who is favorably disposed toward the West. The Yemeni initiative was also tied to improved chances of success in the Jarring mission.

We have repeatedly made it clear that we would welcome such Yemeni initiative to renew relations. We will have to agree on ways to settle our claims for damages resulting from our expulsion in 1967 and must also demand the Yemenis drop charges against former AID officials in Yemen. We are confident we can quickly reach agreement on both problems.

*U.S. Assistance to Yemen, 1970–71**1. With U.S.G. Funds*

Given the cut in our diplomatic relations, Amendment 620(t) of the Foreign Assistance Act has prohibited any U.S. aid to Yemen other than famine relief. In 1970 we provided over \$2 million of food donations to the Catholic Relief Services and WFP for distribution during a famine in Yemen and paid another \$300,000 for transportation of some

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1276, Saunders Files, Persian Gulf. Confidential. Drafted by Ransom and cleared by Atherton and in NEA/ARP and AID/NESA.

² See Document 149.

³ At Rogers's October 17 meeting with al-Ayni, al-Ayni expressed keen interest in resuming diplomatic relations. He emphasized, however, the YARG economic and political obstacles to such resumption without some tangible benefit to balance it out. (Telegram 2534 from USUN, October 17; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 15–1 YEMEN)

of this food to Yemen. In addition, the Peace Corps, which is not subject to 620(t), has sent a first Volunteer to Yemen to work in a UN project and up to twenty more Volunteers may follow. Furthermore, CU has granted to the American Friends of the Middle East (AFME) \$45,000, part of which will be used to finance Yemeni students in Cairo and the U.S. AFME, which has uncovered a number of well-qualified Yemeni students, has requested \$42,000 more from CU this fiscal year; this additional grant is still under consideration.

2. *Without U.S.G. Funds*

With no expenditure of U.S. funds, the Department has been able to perform the following helpful tasks for Yemen, in each case responding to Yemeni requests.

—Experimental seeds were procured for a UN agronomist working in the Yemeni Ministry of Agriculture.

—We requested The Ford Foundation to fund an engineer to survey the Taiz water system, an AID project which has fallen into disrepair. Ford provided \$6,000, and an engineer from a private firm will arrive in Yemen in mid-May.

—We also cooperated in finding a U.S. citizen with extensive AID experience in Yemen to head a UN project which will revive a former AID road equipment workshop.

—We have endorsed YAR projects under study by the UNDP.

—We have brought aid projects for Yemen to Saudi attention; some of these projects the Saudis have already agreed to undertake. Given the YAR's importance to Saudi Arabia, we do not accept the King's statement that Saudi Arabia cannot aid Yemen significantly more than it already has.

3. *Aid Prospects After Renewal of Relations*

Developing any aid program for Yemen will task our ingenuity since, in the short run at least, direct USG bilateral aid will be limited. We tentatively hope, however,

—using AID funds, to make feasibility and engineering studies for Yemeni roads, which might subsequently be built with Saudi funds. American companies could provide the technical know-how and management for such road projects.

—to launch a program of geologic mapping and resource inventory in Yemen, extending southward the work of the 20-year old U.S. Geological Survey mission in Saudi Arabia. USGS will probably pick up part of the tab, and we will look to the Saudis for the remainder for work which will include \$500,000 of aerial photos essential to Yemen's first cadastral and agricultural censuses and surveys of communications.

—to resume AID funding for Yemeni students at AUB and also make available funds for Yemenis to study in the U.S.

—to provide new donations of food to Catholic Relief Services. These donations, which are tentatively projected up to \$2.5 million, will be used both in child feeding and food for work projects in the populous Yemeni highlands.

In addition, we will:

—urge the UNDP to restore and enlarge the Taiz water project, which AID built with such acclaim during the sixties. UNDP's Yemen Director has shown some interest informally in this undertaking.

—play the role of "a broker for Yemen" in the IBRD and IDA; the latter is currently considering other road and infrastructure prospects for Yemen.

As we plan to establish a minimum diplomatic presence in Yemen, our aid efforts have been conceived to minimize staffing. Similarly, we do not anticipate any security assistance or MAP for Yemen, and may not post a defense attaché to our Embassy when it reopens.

185. Letter From President Nixon to King Faisal¹

Washington, September 22, 1971.

Your Majesty:

Since our meeting in Washington,² my government has carefully reviewed the question of how the United States might help the Yemen Arab Republic in response to Your Majesty's request. The importance of Yemeni economic progress under moderate leadership to the security of the Arabian Peninsula is clear to us, as are the many problems of reconstruction and development which face the Yemen Arab Republic at this time. We have been pleased to learn that the Government of Yemen may be interested in resuming diplomatic relations with the United States.³

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's determination to assume primary responsibility for assuring sound progress in the Arabian Peninsula is

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 761, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Saudi Arabia: King Faisal ibn Abdal-Aziz Al Saud, 1971. No classification marking.

² See Document 151.

³ Reported in telegram 625 from Sanaa, September 12. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I)

something that we warmly welcome.⁴ The surest defense against Communist and radical activity in the Peninsula is a strong Saudi role in fostering regional cooperation to achieve prosperity and orderly development throughout the area.

In the case of Yemen, my government wishes to support this Saudi role. In response to your request, I am prepared to authorize a modest new American aid program for Yemen if diplomatic relations with the United States are restored. Ambassador Thacher can explain our thoughts to Your Majesty in more detail,⁵ but I would like to note that our proposals are all designed to provide opportunities for a primary Saudi investment role in projects which will serve the Saudi interest in Yemen. It is my earnest hope that our countries can cooperate in this manner.

The Government of Yemen is being informed of our readiness to provide assistance to certain economic development projects there at such time as relations are resumed.⁶ As I have indicated to Your Majesty before, we would welcome the restoration of diplomatic relations with all Arab countries and the closest possible cooperation with them in the future.

Your Majesty and the people of Saudi Arabia have my very best wishes for the blessings of health, prosperity and peace.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

⁴ Telegram 3240 from Jidda, September 13, detailed the Saudi economic initiative to Yemen. (Ibid., Box 630, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. III)

⁵ Thacher delivered Nixon's letter to Faisal on October 6. Thacher also asked the King to encourage the Egyptians to show restraint should Yemen decide to re-establish relations with the United States. (Telegram 3535 from Jidda, October 7; *ibid.*)

⁶ Instructions were sent in telegram 170101 to Jidda, September 16. (Ibid.)

186. Intelligence Note Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

RNAN-26

Washington, September 27, 1971.

YEMEN: NEW CABINET, OLD PROBLEMS

The third cabinet under the 1971 Yemeni constitution came into office on September 18, 1971, under Prime Minister Muhsin al-Ayni. The cabinet, which is a mixed bag of old and new faces and of left- and right-of-center politicians, reflects the political compromises al-Ayni must achieve in order to survive. His chances for remaining in office at least over the next year appear to be fairly good, but the basic divisiveness of Yemeni politics and the desperate economic situation could shorten his tenure. Though not anti-American, al-Ayni will probably be more cautious about renewing diplomatic relations with the US than either his predecessor, Hassan al-Amri, or President al-Iryani.

Al-Ayni Resigned Just in Time. Al-Ayni has served as Prime Minister before, but, after a year in office, resigned in May 1971 just prior to the start of the Yemen's first constitutional system of government. During this tenure, he presided over the successful conclusion of the civil war, which had lasted eight years, and despite his earlier Ba'athi leanings, he managed to win the confidence of the Saudi government. In the view of many observers, al-Ayni quit while he was still ahead. He apparently intended to wait in the wings while the first Premier under the new constitution, Ahmad Nu'man, struggled with the new system, an economic crisis, and the machinations of a powerful political rival, Army Commander Lt. General Hassan Al-Amri.

As was generally expected, these problems were too much for Nu'man, who resigned after less than two months in office. Following extended negotiations with General al-Amri, President Iryani finally appointed him as Prime Minister in late August. Al-Amri immediately challenged the President in a struggle for power. Meanwhile, al-Ayni served quietly as Ambassador in Paris, biding his time far from the stormy Yemeni political scene.

Al-Amri's Ouster Opened Way for al-Ayni's Return. Al-Ayni's sudden recall as Prime Minister was the result of chance rather than calculation on his part. On August 29, al-Amri, after scarcely a week in office, became involved in an incident with a Sanaa photographer whom he

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 15-1 YEMEN. Secret; No Foreign Dissem. Prepared on September 24 by David E. Long (INR) and approved by Curtis F. Jones (INR).

then shot and killed. President al-Iryani saw his chance to oust al-Amri by taking advantage of the adverse local reaction to al-Amri's lack of self-control. Al-Amri was stripped of all his posts (Premier, Army Commander, and member of the Presidential Council) and went into exile in Beirut.

Iryani thereupon called on al-Ayni, who, after having received the blessing of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, formed a new government on September 19. The relative speed with which al-Ayni was designated can be attributed in part to the Yemeni President's desire to have a government in office on September 26 when Libya's Prime Minister Qadhafi had been scheduled (before last-minute cancellation) to visit Yemen for the Revolution Day ceremonies.

Al-Ayni's Prospects Fair to Middling. Al-Ayni has assumed the premiership during a period of political stability, by Yemeni standards. The new constitutional system appears to be operating reasonably well; the departure of al-Amri has removed a major source of political controversy; and after two cabinet crises in three months, the Yemeni body politic is probably ready for a period of relative calm.

On the other hand, the critical economic and political problems that al-Ayni passed to his successors when he resigned six months ago have become worse. The Yemen is nearly bankrupt. Promised Saudi aid has not yet materialized. Moreover, although al-Ayni removed an irritant to relations with South Yemen by shifting the exiled South Yemeni dissident leader, Abdullah al-Asnaj, from Foreign Minister to Economics Minister, relations with South Yemen are still poor. They are not likely to improve as long as Yemen continues to court, as it must, Saudi political and financial support. Adding to the new government's problems is the pressure the Soviets could exert, as the Yemeni Army's principal source of military equipment, to halt Yemen's drift to the right.

A Balancing Act. Al-Ayni will have to contend with a variety of external factors—Saudis, Soviets, South Yemenis, Americans—as well as internal pressures from both extremes of the political spectrum. His government can be expected to pursue Yemen's post-civil war "opening to the right," but very cautiously. Al-Ayni's nostalgia for leftism and neutralism, coupled with the removal of the most effective check on Yemeni leftists—al-Amri—will probably lead him to be slightly to the left of what al-Amri's government would have been and what President al-Iryani may personally desire. Relations with the US are not likely to worsen, but al-Ayni will probably move slowly in the matter of resuming formal diplomatic ties to the US.

187. Intelligence Note Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

RSEN-5

Washington, January 18, 1972.

SOVIET-YEMENI RELATIONS: KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN

Allegedly succumbing to a long-standing official Soviet invitation to visit the USSR, Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) President al Iryani, accompanied by Foreign Minister al Ayni and a group of other senior military and civilian officials, toured Moscow and the provinces December 7–18. Coming at a crucial period when bilateral relations were deteriorating, al Iryani's trip conceivably could have stemmed the downward trend, further exacerbated the existing situation, or paved the way for an improvement. In the event, bilateral relations were apparently put on "hold."

The Issues. Politically the YAR has become a liability in Moscow's relations with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), which boasts better port facilities and a radical regime more hospitable to Soviet presence and influence. Nevertheless, the Soviet investment (economic: \$98 million extended, \$63 million drawn through 1970; military: \$77 million extended and drawn) is of such a magnitude and Soviet prestige is involved to such an extent that the Kremlin is apparently unwilling to write off the YAR, leave the field to Peking and the US, and concentrate wholly on the strategically more important PDRY.

Perhaps reflecting their own preferences, the Soviets anticipated that the talks with al Iryani would largely concern economic questions, such as debt repayment. At the same time, they would have liked to dissuade the YAR from harboring Saudi-backed, dissident anti-PDRY elements, principally the National Unity Front, which have made repeated incursions into PDRY territory. For their part, the Yemenis would have been pleased to be able to accomplish the reverse—modify the Soviet tilt in favor of the PDRY, particularly in the matter of arms supply, and discourage the Soviet military from masterminding (as the Yemenis suspect) cross-border punitive forays from the PDRY. Considering the strong military flavor of their delegation, the Yemenis also probably put pressure on the Soviets to regularize a more sophisticated arms resupply (what they have is antiquated) and spare parts flow. In view of their disastrous financial position, it is certain that the Yemenis also pressed vigorously for budgetary support and debt rescheduling.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 YEMEN. Secret. Prepared by James M. Ealum (INR/RSE) and approved by Irwin M. Tobin (INR/RSE).

The Answers. The concluding joint communiqué was a study in blandness that gave no insights into what transpired, but suggested that unresolved differences remained. The Yemenis apparently saw only Podgorny² of the ruling triumvirate, not Kosygin, a fact which allegedly caused al Ayni in particular to be unhappy. There were no military references in the communiqué, and it is unlikely that either side moved on questions related to the major military and political obstacle to improved relations—the PDRY. On economic questions the communiqué was ambivalent. It implied that no new aid was agreed upon, but that there would be movement on existing aid projects.

Al Ayni filled in some of the blanks when the returning delegation stopped off in Cairo on December 19. He told MENA that the Soviets would participate in the completion of the Bajil cement plant; construction of silos, grain storage facilities, bakeries, and the Hodeida fish canning factory; and the expansion and deepening of Hodeida port. He implied that new projects and credits were involved. He enigmatically added that the USSR had given the YAR a \$14.4 million “gift.” When the delegation returned to Sanaa on December 21, al Iryani told the press his Soviet visit had been “positive” and that there had been “complete understanding” on matters of bilateral cooperation. He expanded the projects listed by al Ayni in Cairo to include fishing vessels and artesian wells and stated that “some weapons have been presented as a gift to the armed forces.” Once back in Sanaa, al Ayni reportedly admitted that they had failed in their quest for budgetary support and had been pressured (presumably unsuccessfully) on the question of debt repayment. Al Ayni also claimed he had successfully resisted a Soviet effort to draw up a new friendship-cooperation treaty on the Egyptian model; in the end both sides merely reaffirming their 1935 treaty.

Conclusions. The Yemenis appear to have given nothing and received little in the way of significant concessions. On the economic side, the Soviets apparently only unbent enough to free some of the frozen, unused portions of earlier Soviet aid extensions. In other words, the Soviets probably agreed that, in lieu of new credits, work could go forward under previous extensions. In fact, the “new” projects were all included in the 1964 line of credit and apparently will be funded from this source. In this connection, al Ayni’s statement regarding the improvement of Hodeida port may be overdrawn since a full-scale effort would be an extremely expensive project probably requiring additional aid commitments. On military matters, the Soviets were equally restrained. It is likely that al Ayni’s claim of a \$14.4 million “gift” can be

² Nikolai Victorivich Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium.

equated with al Iryani's acknowledgement of a "gift" for his military forces. If so, this would be consistent with the grant or discount basis of the bulk of the \$77 million in military aid the Yemenis have received heretofore. Compared with this figure, the new "gift" would appear to have been the minimum gesture the Soviets thought would placate the Yemeni supplicants. There are no indications, however, that the problems of orderly resupply and spare parts flow were resolved or that the Soviets responded favorably to Yemeni pleas for more sophisticated equipment.

The overall result seems to have been that at a very modest cost the Soviets have managed to maintain the integrity of their pro-PDRY policy without completely shutting the door on the possibility of improved relations with the YAR. Although the Yemenis cannot have been ecstatic over the results of their Moscow pilgrimage, tokenism—for the time being at least—has prevailed.

188. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia and the Interests Section in the Yemen Arab Republic¹

Washington, March 25, 1972, 2037Z.

51603. Subject: YAR–PDRY Conflict. Ref: Jidda 964, Sanaa 197, State 43595 and 37575.²

1. *For Jidda*. Department commends your proposals para 7 Jidda reftel.³ Department reassured hear Saqqaf say Saudi forces would not be directly involved in anti-PDRY effort. Saudis however may be

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL SYEMEN–YEMEN. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Ransom; cleared by Dickman and Atherton; and approved by Davies.

² Telegram 964 from Jidda, March 24, relayed Saqqaf's belief that the PDRY could be overthrown and that Faisal could have "finished off" South Yemen in 1969, but chose not to. Saqqaf also emphasized that Saudi Arabia would not be sending troops into Yemen. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 630, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. III) Telegram 197 from Sanaa, March 23, expressed Stein's view that war between the two Yemens, while not inevitable, might be hard to stop. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL SYEMEN–YEMEN) Telegram 43595 to Sanaa, March 14, is *ibid.*, POL US–YEMEN. Telegram 37575 was not found.

³ In paragraph 7 of telegram 964, Thacher wrote that he would suggest to Fahd and Sultan that Saudi Arabia carefully consider before committing itself too deeply to tribal-military means as the only method to oppose the PDRY threat.

tempted intervene directly in some form if battle, now apparently joined, does not go well for YAR tribes.⁴ Believe therefore you took exactly right line in trying temper official optimism of Saqqaf in toppling Aden regime. When you see Fahd and Sultan,⁵ believe you should reiterate USG belief in value of alternative anti-PDRY strategy along lines outlined in State 43595. Appreciate we cannot usefully advise Saudis abandon tribal insurrection strategy but we can continue warn of dangers involvement of Saudi forces against Soviet-backed PDRY.

2. *For Sanaa*: Maswari query in Sanaa 139 focused on "security and political backing."⁶ Relations could then easily be resumed, according to Maswari. Our response in State 37575 took rather different position that resumption would enable U.S. carry out development assistance which Saudis could easily complement and expand. Under present circumstances Maswari likely to be even more interested now than before in discussing "security backing" rather than resumption. If he raises latter question, response along lines State 37575 continues to be valid in view of Department. Department agrees, however, your remark para 4 Sanaa 197 that YAR should clearly understand USG not potential source of military support in current situation. If Maswari should press you this subject, believe way would be open for your suggestion US word of caution about too great YAR jump into dark.⁷

⁴ This is a reference to the escalating tension that resulted from the assassination of a prominent Shaykh in South Yemen in February. (Telegram 43988 to Sanaa, March 14; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL SYEMEN-YEMEN) Intelligence Note RNAN-10, "Yemen-South Yemen: War Clouds Gathering Over Southern Arabia," March 17, contains information on the Yemeni movement to war. (Ibid.)

⁵ According to telegram 1060 from Jidda, March 30, Thacher met with Fahd on March 28. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 630, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. III) He met with Sultan on April 7. (Telegram 1147 from Jidda, April 7; *ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL SYEMEN-YEMEN)

⁶ Chief of Staff Brigadier Husayn al-Maswari said Yemen faced many threats and wanted to know what kind of political and security backing the United States could offer. A positive answer would facilitate resumption of relations. Stein thought a U.S. offer of the previously arranged \$3 million aid package after resumption of ties and greater Saudi involvement in the short term would be helpful. (Telegram 139 from Sanaa, March 1; *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I)

⁷ Printed from an unsigned copy.

**189. Paper Prepared by Samuel Hoskinson and Harold Saunders
of the National Security Council Staff¹**

Washington, May 11, 1972.

PRESIDENT'S FRIDAY BRIEFING

Arabian Peninsula Affairs: Kamal Adham, the highly regarded Saudi intelligence chief, has informed us about the most recent developments in the budding security arrangements between the Saudis, Jordanians, and Iranians. His main points were:

—He was going to Iran to discuss joint Saudi-Iranian military aid to northern Yemen. The idea was that the Iranians would start off by providing an alternate source of military supply since they had Soviet equipment and spares needed by the Soviet-oriented Yemen military machine. Then after the Iranians had reoriented the Yemenis toward Western arms the Saudis would join in an assistance role. He asked that the U.S. cooperate in the release of equipment of U.S. origin.²

—Adham also intends to discuss with the Shah the possibility of a coordinated area policy between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt aimed at the “neutralization” of the entire area through the elimination of all foreign military presence. The Arab and Iranian forces would then maintain regional security themselves.

—Adham said that Saudi-Omani relations were developing extremely well. With the full knowledge and backing of the Saudis, the Jordanians were sending “500 Army commandos” to fight in Dhofar, and the Saudis had told Sultan Qaboos not to worry about the costs of this operation.

—The Saudis, according to Adham, also support defense and security assistance to the Persian Gulf states by Jordan, particularly in

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1287, Saunders Files, Saudi Arabia. Secret. A typed notation reads: “For HAK.” This paper was not included in the President’s Friday (May 12) briefing. (Ibid., Box 41, President’s Daily Briefing Files, May 1–May 16, 1972)

² The Department notified the Embassy in Jidda that it was investigating the legal problems involved in the transfer of U.S. military equipment to Yemen by Saudi Arabia or Iran. (Telegram 82456 to Jidda and Tehran, May 11; *ibid.*, Box 630, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. III) In telegram 89421 to Jidda, Tehran, Kuwait, and Sanaa, May 20, the Department noted that it was willing to review on a case-by-case basis requests from Iran or Saudi Arabia to transfer FMS items to Yemen, but the absence of diplomatic relations with Yemen meant only weaponry purchased by Saudi Arabia or Iran on a cash basis could be legally transferred to Yemen. Thus no MAP items or items bought on credit under FMS could be transferred. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 19 IRAN–YEMEN)

the form of expertise. They would take a dim view, however, of the Jordanians providing any surplus arms at this particular stage.

Some of this may well be reflected in the President's talk with the Shah³ since the latter thinks very highly of Adham who has been one of the prime behind-the-scenes movers of the security relationship beginning to develop between Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iran. Adham, interestingly enough, also has a close personal relationship with Sadat and has been instrumental in the considerable improvement in relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt since Nasser's death.⁴

³ Nixon visited Tehran May 30 and 31 on his return from the Moscow Summit. See *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, volume E-4, Documents on Iran and Iraq, 1969-1972, Documents 200 and 201.

⁴ Attached but not printed is telegram 839 from Kuwait, May 10. The Yemeni intention to shift its entire military procurement from Soviet to Western sources, with the help of Saudi Arabia and Iran, had been affirmed as early as March 30. Maswari had met with Iranian officials as had the Saudis who broached the topic of surplus Iranian F-5s replacing Yemen's obsolescent MiG-17s. (Letter from Helms to Kissinger, Rogers, and Laird, April 7; Central Intelligence Agency, Executive Registry Files, Job 80-B01086A, Box 3)

190. Telegram From the Interests Section in the Yemen Arab Republic to the Department of State¹

Sanaa, May 19, 1972, 0610Z.

338. Subj: Need for Economic Aid as well as Military Transfers. Ref: State 83466.²

1. Decision to consider Saudi and Iranian requests for transfer of military equipment to YARG will give us some needed latitude in furthering US interests here. Sooner or later Yemenis will learn of this positive step we are taking, and it would be helpful if Chargé could speak to high level YARG official about it at appropriate moment, perhaps at such time as first transfer might be approved.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 19 IRAN-YEMEN. Secret; Priority; Exdis. It was repeated to Tehran (Priority), Jidda, and Kuwait.

² In telegram 83466 to Jidda and Tehran, May 12, the Department authorized the embassies to inform their respective host governments that the United States would consider requests for transfer of FMS equipment from either Saudi Arabia or Iran to Yemen on a case-by-case basis. (Ibid.)

2. At same time favorable as effect of above might be—especially on professional warrior elements in and out of uniform—it is highly important we build approach to Yemenis which emphasizes our genuine interest in their economic rather than their military development. In our opinion most promising route to reach this goal is also through our Saudi, Iranian and Kuwaiti friends.

3. More specifically, there is one potential project which seems particularly suited to type of multilateral assistance we are seeking, i.e., the badly needed renovation and expansion of Kennedy Memorial water project in Taiz. As Dept aware, this USAID project of 10 years ago sparked Taiz's impressive rate of growth. After departure of American technicians, there was unsuccessful effort by UAR to Egyptianize operation. Following Egypt's retreat, YARG ran project for a while before turning it over to present private management, Taiz cooperative organization. Chargé visited project last week and found 100 per cent Yemeni management doing admirable job of nursing along limping but vital operation, using American procedures in which they had been trained. Project is now serving 7,000 customers, up from original 4,000 and has to refuse continuing flow of new requests for service. Two of three original Fairbanks Morse generators are functioning, third being idle for lack of \$40,000 in spare parts. If there are further breakdowns, system itself will come to halt.

4. Technical survey last year by Ford Foundation of what is needed and how much it would cost to renovate and expand project is, of course, immediately available. There certainly should be capable American companies ready to undertake such a job. For all-important funding, we suggest concerted effort be made at this time in Jidda, Tehran and Kuwait to persuade one, two or all three of those govts to participate in joint project. Such cooperation would help offset widely held impression here that only aim of some of YARG's neighbors is to fight to the last Yemeni to defeat PDRY regime in Aden. Even in background US could eventually become similarly regarded if we are associated only with military side of things.

Stein

191. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, June 15, 1972.

SUBJECT

Sultan-Sisco Talks—Arabian Peninsula Part I of IV

PARTICIPANTS

His Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Minister of Defense and Aviation of Saudi Arabia

His Excellency Ibrahim al-Sowayel, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia

The Honorable Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary, NEA

Mr. Francois M. Dickman, Director, NEA/ARP

Mr. Camille Nowfel, OPR/LS (Interpreter)

Mr. Sisco appreciated the opportunity to meet with Prince Sultan to have further discussions on several points that had been raised in the meeting with the Secretary the previous day.²

Yemen:

Mr. Sisco said we were pleasantly surprised at what Prince Sultan had reported to the Secretary about YAR intentions to resume diplomatic relations with the U.S. This was somewhat different from indications we had received in recent conversations with YAR officials including YAR President Iryani. Speaking very frankly, Sisco said that it was our understanding that while the YAR wished to establish relations, it felt it was not yet able to do so given Egypt's public criticism of the US.³

Prince Sultan replied that he had had a meeting with the YAR Premier (al-Ayni) about two months ago following the Premier's recent visit to Moscow.⁴ Sultan had told al-Ayni that YAR-US relations would be beneficial and that Sultan saw no gain for Egypt in opposing their resumption. He thought this argument had made an impression. He said that YAR President Iryani had recently sent messages to Egypt and other Arab countries to advise them that the YAR is considering resuming relations with the US because of increased Communist activity in the area, the YAR's serious economic situation, the fact that Arab countries have recently reestablished relations with other Western

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 SAUD. Secret. Drafted by Dickman. The meeting took place at the Watergate Hotel in Washington. See Document 161 for other parts of Sultan's meetings in Washington on regional affairs.

² See footnote 1, Document 161.

³ As reported in telegram 204 from Sanaa, March 27. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL SYEMEN-YEMEN)

⁴ See Document 187.

countries, and the desire of the YAR military to rid themselves of their Communist advisors.

Mr. Sisco said it would be helpful if Sultan could convey, in whatever way he deemed appropriate, two points to the YAR Premier. First, that the US is ready to resume diplomatic relations at any time, now or two months from now. Second, if the YAR were able to resume relations, the USG would be in a position to offer the kind of economic assistance that we had previously described to the YAR leadership.⁵ This could include about \$3 million in grant aid from supporting assistance funds, donations of food for child feeding and food-for-work projects which could amount to \$2.5 million, scholarships, and collaboration with the Saudis in recruiting American technicians for projects funded by Saudi Arabia. Sultan recalled that a year ago there had been some thought of a US firm doing a topographic survey and he wondered if this was the type of project the US had in mind. Mr. Sisco indicated it might be but because of Congressional requirements, it is impossible to discuss any projects in detail before relations are reestablished. In response to Prince Sultan's question whether the US could discuss YAR projects with the Saudis before the YAR establishes diplomatic relations, Mr. Sisco replied that preliminary talks on an illustrative basis would be possible. Before the US could be specific, however, diplomatic relations would have to be established.

Later in the conversation, Prince Sultan returned to the subject of aid for the YAR. While he appreciated requirements of Congress concerning economic assistance, he nevertheless believed that US assistance to the YAR would be very important as a means to contain Communist in-roads from South Yemen. He urged that the US consider offering the YAR \$20 million in project aid. Prince Sultan believed that the amounts alluded to by Mr. Sisco would be insufficient. Saudi Arabia had already provided Yemen with \$40 million in aid and \$20 million from the US would not be large in terms of its own resources. His Highness recalled that the subject of aid to Yemen had been raised when Vice-President Agnew met with King Faisal last year and he hoped that favorable consideration could be given to this proposal.⁶

Mr. Sisco said he appreciated that the sum mentioned is not great in terms of the YAR's needs and perhaps more could be done eventually. The problem, however is that the USG's hands are tied in the absence of diplomatic relations. Prince Sultan commented that we both

⁵ As reported in telegram 3500 from USUN, October 14 (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 YEMEN); telegram 703, October 11; and telegram 717 from Sanaa, October 17. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I)

⁶ Agnew met with Faisal July 8, 1971. See footnote 2, Document 155.

agree on one thing—that economic assistance for the YAR should be looked into carefully. He hoped that his views concerning the desirability of an important US aid commitment to the YAR, even if it were provided over a period of time in stages, would be conveyed to higher authorities including President Nixon. The Saudis were not urging budget support but financing projects to help build up the YAR infrastructure.

Oman:

Mr. Sisco said that the US was very sensitive to what was going on in South Yemen. We thought one of the best ways to counter South Yemen's radical influence would be to help build up the YAR economy and society. The same policy applied in Oman where the US is shortly going to open an Embassy in Muscat. We will be looking at projects in the technical field in which we can participate. Sisco noted Jordanian and Iranian interest in providing advisory assistance to Oman and that he was encouraged to learn that SAG was also considering providing economic and military assistance to the Sultanate. He thought that the help provided by these four countries would serve to insulate this area of the Peninsula from Communist penetration.

Prince Sultan replied that SAG is ready and eager to provide economic assistance to Oman. However, as far as military assistance is concerned, the Saudis have limitations. About all they could offer would be training Omanis in Saudi military schools and perhaps sending a few military experts. Saudi Arabia did not have ammunition it could spare. With respect to a joint effort including Iran, Jordan, US, and Saudi Arabia, Prince Sultan thought this would be very helpful but a cooperative action of this kind required a US initiative. Only under the leadership of the US could such an effort be started immediately.

Mr. Sisco remarked that the subject has already been discussed by the US with the Iranians and Jordanians and we had encouraged them to work closely with the Saudis. Sisco noted that Jordan's Gulf specialist, General Khammash, was presently in Saudi Arabia to discuss ways in which each nation would help. Sisco believed that there was also a need to decide the means of coordinating our actions since all four countries shared a common objective. Sultan indicated his awareness of the mission of General Khammash who had arrived in Saudi Arabia just as Sultan departed for the US.

UAE

Referring to the previous day's meeting with the Secretary, Mr. Sisco reiterated that the US sees Saudi-Iranian cooperation as of crucial importance to the stability of the Persian Gulf. In this regard, the US would like to see an increase in Saudi-Iranian influence in the UAE. We were aware of the Abu Dhabi boundary question and of King Faisal's generous proposal for settlement. Shaykh Zayid had recently

indicated to Ambassador Stoltzfus that he would welcome an early improvement in relations with Saudi Arabia. We hoped that a close contact might be established since it would allow the Saudis and the UAE to discuss not only mutual security concerns but also outstanding boundary problems.

Prince Sultan appreciated Mr. Sisco's understanding of the Saudi Government's position concerning the UAE. He noted that SAG had played a very positive role to help establish the Federation. It had offered to assist in projects to raise the standard of living in the Federation and to work on defense matters of mutual interest. However, there is a problem related to the question of sovereignty. The UAE still occupies part of Saudi Arabia. While SAG might be able to give up part of this territory, it could not relinquish everything. To do so would shake the confidence of the Saudi people in King Faisal's leadership. Sultan pointed out that Saudi Arabia has had its differences with other countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Kuwait, Jordan and even Qatar, but in time the situation had changed and Saudi Arabia was now friends with all these countries. While Saudi Arabia has the capability to re-occupy overnight those disputed territories originally occupied by the British and now by the UAE, King Faisal wished to settle the issue peacefully. He hoped the US could impress on the UAE the importance of a boundary settlement.

192. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Rogers in Perth, the Interests Section in Sanaa, and the Embassy in Japan¹

Washington, June 29, 1972, 0130Z.

Tosec 123/117268. Tokyo eyes only for Asst Secy Sisco. Ref: Sanaa 466.

1. You are authorized to seek YARG agreement to scenario proposed in State 116176.²

2. Re para 2 reftel,³ we would like to receive written communication from YARG to effect that charges pending against Liapis and Hartman at time of their departure from Yemen in 1967 have been dropped or withdrawn for lack of evidence of illegal conduct on their part. It would be even more desirable if in addition YARG would include in communication to US statement that Liapis and Hartman have been cleared of all suspicion of engaging in illegal activities. While it would not be necessary for YARG to make public announcement or statement on this matter, we would expect it to follow usual procedure for dismissal or withdrawal of criminal charges including appropriate entry in formal public records of court and/or prosecutors office where charges were originally recorded.

3. Concur in desirability of your suggestion in para 3 reftel as to form of compensation.⁴ We must reserve judgment on appropriateness of USG accepting this type of payment in kind for full value of compensation pending results of negotiations on amount of compensation to be paid.

Irwin

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 953, VIP Visits, Secretary of State's Visit to the Mid-East and European Countries, June 28–July 7, 1972. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted on June 28 by Stephen M. Boyd (L/NEA); cleared in L/C, L/M/SCA, and NEA/ARP; and approved by Atherton.

² In telegram 466 from Sanaa, June 28, Stein wrote that Yemen would cooperate with the United States on all points contained in telegram 116176 to Sanaa, June 28. Telegram 116176 noted that resumption of relations required that the charges levied against AID officials Stephen Liapis and Harold Hartman at the time diplomatic relations were broken be withdrawn, and that Yemen publicly state there was no truth to the story that U.S. forces were involved in the June 1967 attack on Arab states. Issues related to compensation could be negotiated later. (Both *ibid.*)

³ Paragraph 2 of telegram 466 stated that Yemen preferred not to make a public statement on the charges against the AID workers. Stein suggested that the Department give him a text of what it would like to receive and that any letter on the issue wait until after Rogers's visit.

⁴ Paragraph 3 of telegram 466 stated the best compensation would be for Yemen to make rent-free land available to the United States for the eventual construction of its Embassy.

193. Telegram From Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State¹

Manama, July 3, 1972, 0718Z.

Secto 133/629. For the President from the Secretary. I have just completed a successful 24-hour visit to the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) capped by a resumption of diplomatic relations.²

Yemen has a larger population than Saudi Arabia. Its strategic location at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula makes it an important country in this part of the world. They are particularly concerned about two things: (A) the Soviet and Chinese Communist toehold in South Yemen which gives them a stepping stone to other parts of the Peninsula, particularly into North Yemen and Saudi Arabia; B) primitive character of their society, in dire need of development, but lacking in any appreciable outside investment.

They welcomed resumption of relations; leading officials and the crowds were warm and friendly; and it was clear we have a lot of friends in this country. Both the Saudis and Libyans who are concerned over Communist inroads in the Peninsula have committed themselves to help North Yemen develop a defense force in case the Communist supported regime of South Yemen decides on some military adventure. We have been and intend to continue encouraging the Saudis to be more helpful to North Yemen and just a few days ago Faisal gave them an additional 10 million dollars. As to our small 3 million dollar aid commitment, we and the Yemenis will canvass priority projects such as water and a survey to determine whether there is oil and copper or other minerals which can eventually become foreign exchange earners. This will be money well spent because the leadership seems to be a good one, particularly Prime Minister al-Ayni. We are also going to help interest the foundations, the World Bank, and the UN Development Program to try to meet some of their main needs more promptly. We will want to follow up promptly in such areas now that we have resumed relations.

Our hope is that the Yemen decision to resume relations might stimulate others such as Sudan and Algeria to follow suit.

Rogers

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 953, VIP Visits, Secretary of State's Visit to the Mid-East and European Countries, June 28–July 7, 1972. Secret; Exdis. Another copy, marked "Eyes Only," is *ibid*.

² The Yemen Arab Republic resumed diplomatic relations with the United States on July 1.

194. Telegram From the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State¹

Jidda, July 12, 1972, 1430Z.

2319. Subj: PDRY Feelers on Relations. Ref: State 124289.²

1. We appreciate there are advantages to possible resumption USG-PDRY relations, especially in terms of affecting attitudes other radical Arab states towards like resumption.

2. At same time, believe we must anticipate extremely adverse reaction from King Faisal and senior levels SAG when they become aware we even discussing subject with PDRYG, a government they feel is dedicated to overthrow SAG and to spread of Marxism/Maoism throughout Peninsula. We wonder if, to a lesser extent, this applies to YAR and Omani reactions.

3. Our impression is that major reason PDRY broke relations in first place was realization no major aid program forthcoming from USG. Absence possibility such a program in future may thus render question resumption academic in any case.

4. Should, however, discussions with PDRY become distinct possibility, believe it important that SAG be briefed at earliest possible moment.

Thacher

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 630, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. III. Secret; Exdis. It was repeated to London, Sanaa, and Kuwait.

² Telegram 124289 to London, July 11, noted that if the PDRY was serious in its recent approach on resuming diplomatic relations, then they use the British Embassy in Aden. (Ibid., Box 729, Country Files, Europe, United Kingdom, Vol. VII)

195. Telegram From the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State¹

Jidda, September 17, 1972, 1423Z.

3018. Subj: Sultan again Discusses F-86's to Yemen. Ref: A. Jidda 2749, B. State 144097.²

Summary: Prince Sultan again seeks our views on transferral of Saudis F-86's to YAR. Embassy recommends we inform Prince we do not believe transfer such aircraft militarily advisable. *End summary.*

1. At conclusion of Chargé's meeting with Prince Sultan Sept 17 (see septel) latter asked Chargé if Emb had received response to Sultan's earlier request for approval, per ref (A), to train Yemenis on F-86's at Dhahran preparatory to giving planes to Yemen.³ Chargé replied that no reaction had been received from Dept but that he would inform Sultan as soon as he had word. Sultan expressed hope that reply could be made to him in Riyadh toward end of month.

2. *Comment:* With arrival of first F-5B's imminent, matter of F-86's once more becoming prominent concern of Sultan's. Recommend therefore that Chargé be authorized, in future meeting with Sultan, to inform him DOD/State consider plan proposed by Sultan in Aug 22 meeting inadvisable militarily. Chargé could refer once again to Ambassador Thacher's points that F-86's are old planes and that Yemenis are not trained in their operation. Chargé could further point out USG reluctance, conveyed to Sultan on other occasions to get involved in any way militarily in struggle between Sanaa and Aden. Chargé could expand remarks to emphasize once more USG believes most important contribution SAG and USG could jointly make to YAR would be in economic development fields. He could conclude that, in any case, delivery of F-86's to YAR could conceivably provoke PDRY and could lead to just kind of escalating tension USG hopes avoid.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1287, Saunders Files, Saudi Arabia. Secret; Exdis. It was repeated to Sanaa and Tehran.

² Telegram 2749 from Jidda, August 23, reported that, during an August 22 meeting with Thacher, Sultan pleaded for the United States to directly assist Yemen in securing aircraft, especially F-86s. Thacher had explained that military aircraft were not considered among "excess items available for transfer," and that the F-86s were unsuitable for Yemen. Sultan asked that his views be passed to Laird. (Ibid., Box 630, Country Files, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Vol. III) Telegram 144097 to Sanaa, Jidda, and Tehran, August 9, had laid out guidelines for the transfer of equipment among Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Yemen. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AID (IRAN) YEMEN)

³ Not further identified.

3. Embassy believes on balance it better to present case against F-86's on basis military/political considerations than attempt come up with barrier of legal technicalities.⁴

Horan

⁴ The legal technicalities were laid out in telegram 160496 to Sanaa, September 1. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I)

196. Intelligence Note Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

RNAN-36

Washington, October 13, 1972.

YAR-PDRY: WAR CLOUDS DARKEN

Full-scale war between the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) seems to be increasingly more imminent. Although both sides still seem to be hoping to avoid a major clash, they are preparing for the worst.

No Apparent Let-Up in Skirmishing. PDRY forces, which took and then relinquished the YAR border town of Qa'tabah on October 1-2, have continued to shell the town. PDRY aircraft reportedly bombed Qa'tabah and also the Harib area to the northeast on October 12. (See map.)² The YAR, for its part, appears to be moving troops south toward the PDRY border. On the same day, PDRY accused the YAR of massing troops near Perim Island, located in the entrance to the Red Sea. A subsequent report indicated that the YAR had actually begun to shell Perim on October 11 from the YAR mountains overlooking the island. YAR Prime Minister al 'Ayni, the most dovish figure in the YAR government, told a French newsman that both Perim and Kamaran Island, which the YAR had seized October 6, belonged to the YAR.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 YEMEN. Secret; No Foreign Dissem; Controlled Dissem; No Dissem Abroad; Background Use Only; Department of State Use Only. Prepared by David E. Long (INR) and approved by Curtis F. Jones (INR/NEA). The fighting in Yemen generated other Intelligence Notes, including RNAN-33, "YAR-PDRY: When is a War Not a War?", October 5 (ibid.), RNAN-34, "YAR: Throwing Down the Gauntlet to PDRY?", October 11 (ibid., POL SYEMEN-YEMEN), and RNAN-38, "YAR/PDRY: Intensity of Border Fighting Increases," October 20. (Ibid.)

² Attached but not printed.

President al Iryani has also made this claim. In the meantime, there were indications that the insurgents, collectively termed the National Unity Front (NUF), hoped to persuade the PDRY troops on Perim to surrender in the same manner as did those on Kamaran.

Elsewhere, YAR tribal forces, army units, and insurgent forces have been gathering at several major points along the YAR–PDRY border: a large tribal force funded and equipped by the Saudis is gathering at Harib; a 600-man force of regular YAR troops arrived in Baydah on October 12; and about 15,000 troops, commanded by the YAR's best officers, are gathering south of Ta'iz on the Ta'iz–Aden road.

YAR Frantically Shaping Up Its Forces. In the last few weeks, the YAR has been busily trying to upgrade its poorly trained and under-equipped armed forces. On October 11, IL–28 bombers and MIG–17 fighters, together with a large quantity of spare parts, reportedly arrived in the YAR, presumably from Egypt and possibly at Libyan urging. (Egypt promised some IL–28s to the YAR some time ago.) The spare parts were to make operational YAR aircraft that had been grounded for lack of spare parts. Only two of the YAR's eight IL–28s and four of its 12 MIG–17s were flyable prior to the airlift. Another report stated that there was a feverish effort by the YAR to overhaul several of its IL–28s and MIG–17s that had been rendered useless by long neglect. In the meantime, Saudi air force transports have been stepping up arms shipments to the YAR and the insurgents, and there are also indications that the Egyptians are sending in military equipment.

Extent of Outside Assistance Unclear. It seems doubtful that President al Iryani would have committed the YAR to full support of the insurgents and thereby risk all-out war with PDRY unless he had outside assurances of assistance in the event of hostilities. The Saudis have been urging the YAR to take this step for some time and have indicated their willingness to help. There has been no evidence, however, of a quantum jump in Saudi military and financial assistance, which heretofore has been insufficient to persuade al Iryani actively to support the insurgents. It is possible that Libya has also offered support. If so, when added to pressure from the Saudis and the YAR warhawks, it could have tipped the balance. Libya has been critical of the Marxist PDRY regime and has been mildly interested in the NUF, but there have been no previous signs that it wished to become heavily involved. Nevertheless, Colonel Qadhafi may have offered assistance to the YAR in the event that it moved decisively against PDRY, possibly in an effort to dilute the YAR's heavy dependence on the Saudis and the West. If the Libyans prompted Egypt to send aircraft and spare parts to the YAR, this could also have been a form of Libyan assistance. As tension has built up, the YAR has called on several Arab states for assistance in the face of the PDRY threat, and it has asked the US for an emergency food airlift.

PDRY, because of its general isolation in the Arab world, has little choice but to turn to the Soviet Union. The Soviets are doubtlessly loath to commit themselves to the PDRY side, for even though their stock is currently low in the YAR, they probably do not want to put all their eggs in the PDRY basket. As a sign of their ambivalence, Soviet technicians are maintaining Soviet-supplied aircraft in the YAR, and the Soviet Ambassador to the YAR denied to Prime Minister al 'Ayni on October 10 that the USSR was committed to PDRY in the present confrontation.

Possibility of Successful Mediation Dim. A Reuters dispatch announced on October 13 that the Arab League mediators had obtained another ceasefire, with both sides pulling back six miles from the border. Over the long run, however, the chances for a negotiated settlement are poor. With the insurgents occupying Kamaran Island and the YAR publicly pressing its claim to both Kamaran and Perim, it seems unlikely that the YAR will settle for terms acceptable to PDRY.

197. Telegram From the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State¹

Jidda, November 7, 1972, 1115Z.

3621. Subject: Military Assistance for YAR. Ref: Jidda 3568.²

Summary: Saudi entreaties delivered through Sultan and more recently by Saqqaf (reftel) should be considered in light fact SAG regards threat from PDRY as by far gravest foreign policy issue it faces and that persistently negative USG response may have in time some impact on King's view of value of tie with US or on his willingness respond in other situations where we seek constructive Saudi help. We have hitherto given Saudis number reasons for our adverse responses to their pleas for help to YAR but these seem to have made little impression. For important reasons, therefore, of Saudi-US bilateral relations, as well as to add weight to our voice re Saudi policy toward Yemen, we suggest consideration be given to making available some type of military transport aircraft for YAR Govt under RSAF auspices.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL SYEMEN-YEMEN. Secret; Exdis. It was repeated to Sanaa.

² Telegram 3568 from Jidda, November 2. (Ibid.)

In interim response Amb might be instructed point out need for Saudi Arabia doing everything possible assist YAR preserve its most important asset: existing, almost universal, support by other Arab govts. Later, if decision made to help YAR with transport planes, other valid suggestions could be placed before Saudis, particularly need for unifying all foreign aid efforts through YAR Govt and preserving ceasefire. *End summary.*

1. In recent months Defense Minister Prince Sultan has on several occasions conveyed urgently to us Saudi hope that USG could play significant role in supplying arms to YAR. This request has now been repeated with further emphasis and as coming from King in Saqqaf's discussion with Ambassador reported ref message.

2. Clearly prospect of unity between two Yemens³ has sharply accentuated Saudi fear that Communist cancer in southwest Arabia will further expand its destructive influence. Dread of Communist regime in South Yemen is in many ways most compelling single consideration affecting determination of Saudi foreign policy. Even if, as seems likely, YAR–PDRY unification endeavor fizzles out, yet Saudi fears of PDRY potential have been brought to new high-water mark of intensity from which they will not readily recede.

3. Saudis' "forward policy" which has encouraged aggressive tactics by tribes and NUF may have been unwise, but reflects depth Saudi determination protect themselves against spread of Communist influence from south. Central fact is that US attitude toward military supplies for YAR seems to be becoming steadily more significant issue in US–Saudi relations. In King's mind US and Saudi Arabia share one great common interest: opposition to Communist expansion. This is bedrock of King's determination maintain, despite various other differences, closest ties with USG. We see strong possibility of both North and South Yemen taking advantage current ceasefire to regroup and return vigorously to hostilities. As we press Saudis to be more forthcoming regarding economic aid for Jordan, we may find their response on that issue affected by ours toward supply of arms for YAR (despite

³ North and South Yemen signed a "Unity Agreement" in Cairo on October 28. This agreement provided for the withdrawal of their respective forces, the reopening of their common border, the repatriation of refugees, a ban on all hostile activities, and the establishment of a unified state within one year's time. The two sides also agreed to meet in Libya on November 25, to discuss unity and begin the process of drafting a constitution. According to "Yemen Unity Talks," a paper prepared in NEA, the odds were against the agreement actually resulting in the unity of the two states. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 641, Country Files, Middle East, Yemen, Vol. I) This paper was transmitted to Kissinger under a November 3 covering memorandum from Eliot. (Ibid.)

our best efforts explain wholly separate considerations affecting two situations). If we prepared approve sale of C-130's to King's dependable neighbor, Sheikh Zayid, he may wonder why we unwilling help with similar type equipment for severely threatened YAR.

4. To date we have justified our negative position toward Saudi requests by stressing US determination concentrate on badly needed economic assistance for war-torn YAR, by our belief that others (Saudis and Iranians) should assume burdens of military aid. We have said we wanted to avoid also possible adverse implications of East-West confrontation which significant US contribution of arms to YAR might imply. But Saudis have remained unconvinced. It would seem desirable we advise them do all possible maintain YAR-PDRY ceasefire and seek means strengthening YAR Government.

5. At present we have little locus stand to urge such policies on King Faisal. Both to demonstrate helpful USG attitude toward what Saudis regard as most acute threat to their security and to add weight to expression of our views on Yemen situation, we suggest consideration be given to selling Saudi Govt two used C-130 aircraft with understanding Saudi Air Force would then arrange make these available for use by YAR. Perhaps ExIm or MAP credit could be offered as further proof our desire be helpful. It would be made clear that once planes delivered their effective operation solely matter for RSAF and YAR, which presumably would have to depend on maintenance facilities available in Jidda. C-130's could be useful not only for military but humanitarian purposes, i.e. emergency distribution of food. We recognize world shortage of this type aircraft, but believe importance our relations with Saudi Arabia and desirability proposing some positive response to current request could justify intense search for planes in good condition which could be made promptly available.

6. We suggest C-130's as flexible, highly useful equipment, particularly appropriate in view of Saudis' reiterated claims that YAR suffers more than anything else from inability to carry on military and civilian supply operations to remote quarters of country. We recognize, that there are other types aircraft nearly as useful such as Caribou or C-123, which USG might perhaps be able make available more easily than scarce C-130's. Any of these aircraft could, we think, be properly operated by RSAF and YAR jointly with Saudi maintenance back up. Point is that if we are to make positive response, it best to do so with some significant piece of equipment which has considerable civilian as well as military use and which Saudis and YAR could not obtain without USG assistance. To define at outset positively and precisely type of equipment we are prepared to offer is by far best means keeping under control Saudi expectations and exhortations with regard to what they would like to have us do now and in the future.

7. Most significant suggestion we can offer Saudis at this stage re Yemen is that Saudi Arabia manipulate its own actions so as above all to retain, and not to dissipate, most important asset now possessed by YAR: namely, widespread support it enjoys among other Arab govts. We could note that Saudi Arabia (which so often believes itself pursuing courses that tend separate it from fellow Arabs) is in present instance apparently at one with other Arab countries in effort shore up YAR.

8. Suggest, therefore, as form of interim response and because point about unified Arab support is so important that Amb be instructed see Saqqaf as soon as possible after present holiday hiatus stating message re aid to Yemen now under consideration in Washington. Meanwhile, we note, as hopefully helpful observation, great desirability preserving and encouraging at all costs existing common Arab support behind YAR.

9. If decision made offer some US aid on lines described above, believe we could at later time put forward other positive suggestions re Saudi policy toward YAR, particularly urgent need for funneling all aid through YAR Govt as best means assuring ultimately development coordinated effective defense and general strengthening of YAR against threat from PDRY. We could in addition, of course, give vigorous support to beneficial advantages of maintaining ceasefire.

10. Accordingly, positive response to Saudi entreaties will, we think give us some leverage express views re developments in Yemen. More fundamentally, however, we think need for constructive reply springs from exigencies of US–Saudi relations: by reiterated negative response to Saudi request for help with threat they consider most urgent one facing them we risk over period of time some erosion in Saudi attachment fundamental relationship with US as well as perhaps diminishing responsiveness to our requests for Saudi support in spheres of special importance to US.

Thacher

198. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 15, 1972.

SUBJECT

Yemen

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Rodger P. Davies, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA
John Moberly, Counselor, British Embassy
Stephen W. Buck, NEA/ARP

Mr. Moberly said he was calling on Mr. Davies as a result of a letter from London concerning the November visit there of YAR Prime Minister al-Ayni. Moberly said that in discussions with the British, al-Ayni had gone into some detail on the needs of the YAR's military. Al-Ayni complained that the YAR had not received weapons, spare parts or adequate maintenance support from the USSR, its principal military supplier, in years. The YARG now found itself virtually unable to maintain its military establishment and was looking for alternate sources of supply. It could not afford to pay for military equipment. Al-Ayni indicated that anything the British could do for the YAR in the military field, including weighing in with friendly parties such as the Gulf rulers and Saudi Arabia, would be appreciated.

Moberly said his Government studied the matter and came to the conclusion that in the Peninsula, their first commitment was to Oman; they could not become involved in helping the YAR militarily. On the other hand they were concerned that a negative reply might lead the Yemenis to the conclusion the West was uninterested in providing support. Moberly asked whether the US might be considering providing some sort of military assistance to the YAR.

Mr. Davies replied that he would not rule out some sort of US role. However, we made it crystal clear to the YAR at resumption of relations and have since then that our assistance would be economic and not military. In strict confidence Mr. Davies told Mr. Moberly that he had talked with the Saudis about their being helpful militarily. Under certain circumstances and provided various legislative requirements were met, we might be willing to authorize Saudi transfers of surplus US equipment to the YAR. However, we would not become a direct

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, DEF 19-8 US-YEMEN. Confidential. Drafted on December 18 by Buck. Sisco sent talking points to Davies in a December 15 memorandum. (Ibid., POL UK-US)

military supplier of the YAR because of the likelihood that this would only result in the USSR increasing its arms supply to PDRY and introduce a cold war flavor in YAR/PDRY relations.

Mr. Davies noted that we did not feel particularly well informed on the YAR's military capabilities and needs. We had asked our embassy in Tehran to obtain an Iranian assessment, but unfortunately the recent breakdown in Iranian-YAR relations over language in the Tripoli communiqué had intervened. Summarizing, Mr. Davies said that we are interested in the Sanaa government's being provided with the military essentials. But we hope to avoid direct US supply because of obvious problems. We hope that regional cooperation, with possible US encouragement, will provide the answer to the YAR's military needs. Mr. Moberly noted that the US and UK positions appeared to be the same.

Mr. Davies pointed out that US economic assistance to the YAR would probably free at least some YAR budgetary resources for defense/security expenditures. He then reviewed US activities and plans for the Yemen, noting that our first resident Ambassador would present his credentials on December 19, the tenth anniversary of US recognition of the YAR.² Our aid program, while modest, would be responsive to Yemeni development needs. A second team of AID experts was in Sanaa developing various assistance projects proposed by the YAR following a visit by an earlier team. We planned to have a very modest AID office operating in Sanaa by February. Its director, Aldelmo Ruiz, was very capable and well-qualified, having served in Yemen from 1962 through 1967 as Director of the Kennedy water project in Taiz. Likely American assistance projects included a temporary water system for Sanaa, rehabilitation and expansion of the Taiz water system, completing Taiz airport, rural water supply, a geological/hydrological survey of Yemen by satellite, extension/agricultural work (small projects in dairy farming, poultry and tobacco), education (fifteen Yemenis already studying at AUB on AID grants) and a Peace Corps-staffed English language training program. We would plan to develop the latter program in close collaboration with the British Council, which Mr. Davies understood was already working in the Yemen.

Turning to Yemen-Iranian relations, Mr. Davies said we were as discomforted as the British by the overly sharp Iranian reaction to the reference to the "Arab Gulf" in the Yemen Unity Summit communiqué from Tripoli. Like London, we are anxious to prevent a break between Yemen and Iran but also anxious not to get in the middle. Mr. Moberly said his Embassy had received a cable that afternoon from the British

² William R. Crawford, Jr. was appointed on October 12.

Ambassador at Tehran saying the Shah had indicated through Foreign Minister Khalatlari that if after 3–4 weeks the YAR wished to send an Emissary, he would be received and in due course aid to the YAR would be resumed.

Mr. Davies asked Mr. Moberly to pass on our appreciation for the productive discussions Ambassador Crawford had had in London and for the FCO's briefing on their recent talks with Prime Minister al-Ayni.³ Mr. Davies said that like the British, we feel that it is unlikely that unity between the two Yemens will fast materialize. It appeared the British in November saw a danger of the better-organized PDRY taking advantage of any unity arrangement, while our assessment was that in any union the four times more populous YAR would have the upper hand. Moberly replied that he had not followed the matter closely, but perhaps the danger of the PDRY tail wagging the YAR dog was now less.

On YAR–Saudi relations, Mr. Davies said that while the Saudis continue to view Yemen unity with great trepidation and reserve, YAR roving Ambassador Numan had at least gained Saudi acquiescence to it during his recent talks in Jidda. The Saudis apparently expect that Prime Minister al-Ayni would be dropped in return for their tolerance of recent unity efforts.⁴

Turning to Iran, Mr. Moberly said that the British had recently been informed that the Shah had become alarmed by a report from an Iranian military source that a party of 250 Dhofari rebels had moved into the Musandam Peninsula near the Strait of Hormuz. According to the Iranians this information came from a British military officer in Oman. The Shah indicated that Iran would be happy to help the Omanis against the Dhofari rebels. Moberly said the British checked out the story and could find no basis for it.

Referring to Moberly's statement about Oman's security having priority for the British, Mr. Davies remarked that Chinese aid to the Dhofar rebels might become minimal. The Chinese seemed to be in a good position in the YAR and the Russians in PDRY, leaving less scope for PRC support for the Dhofari rebels through the PDRY/Dhofar border.

³ Transmitted in telegram 11154 from London, November 20. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL YEMEN)

⁴ Al-Ayni resigned December 15. According to telegram 1112 from Sanaa, December 16, al-Ayni's departure was a result of "cumulative disenchantment with his administration, suspicion of the way in which he handled Cairo Unity Declaration, and King Faisal's caveat that he had to go as price for SAG permissiveness toward YAR–PDRY unity." (Ibid., POL 15–1 YEMEN)

Referring to the Peninsula as a whole, Mr. Davies remarked that there was a good deal of high level interest, emphasized by the Secretary's trip last summer.⁵ We had a dynamic Ambassador in the Yemen and we seemed to be getting off to a good start there even with only a modest aid program.⁶ If we could play a discreet role in softening differences between Sanaa, Riyadh and Tehran, this would be all to the good. However, we did not wish to get in the middle, especially if this made the Saudis and Iranians think they could rely on us to meet the YAR's economic and military needs. We continue to believe that the best way to assist the YAR is through regional cooperation. On the other hand the US does not wish the YAR to become so deprived of military equipment as to have to turn back to the Soviets, their original suppliers.

⁵ A reference to Secretary of State Rogers's July trip to the Middle East and Europe.

⁶ Crawford prepared a detailed memorandum on November 10 on the various aid and developmental programs he thought possible, including the Kennedy Taiz Water System, PL-480, USIA language training, Peace Corps volunteers, CU assistance to Yemenis knowledgeable in English, police training, coordination of UNDP and IBRD activity, grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, poultry production through the Near East Foundation, agricultural programs through International Volunteer Services, military assistance, tourism, and logistics for the American presence. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 761, Presidential Correspondence 1969–74, Saudi Arabia: King Faisal ibn Abdal-Aziz Al Saud, 1972)