

FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC  
CIVIL WAR PERIOD  
~~DURING THE REPUBLICAN ROYALIST WAR 1962-1970:~~

A STUDY OF FOUR MAJOR DECISIONS

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the way in which certain foreign policy decisions were made in the latter stages of the Republican-Royalist war of the 1960s. It seeks to explain how decisions were made, under what circumstances, who the decision-makers were, and what the influences were, internal as well as external, which bore on the foreign policy making of the Yemeni Republic.

In addressing these questions four major decisions are analysed. These are:

1. The rejection of the Khartoum Agreement on Yemen concluded by the Egyptian President Djamal Abd al-Nasir and King Faysal of Saudi Arabia on 31 August, 1967;
2. The recognition of the independence of the People's Republic of South Yemen on 30 November, 1967;
3. The resumption of diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany on 15 July, 1969;
4. The acceptance of the proposed reconciliation agreement with Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Royalists on 31 March, 1970.

These decisions were all made in the second half of the war, beginning at a time when Egyptian influence in Yemen had receded and a more autonomous YAR policy was emerging. These decisions were made by different élites, in response to various stimuli, and under divergent settings and could thus be taken as representative of YAR decision-making in this period.



This investigation confirms that in Yemen, as with other third world countries, the decision-making process was dominated by personalities, and in particular by the two heads of state, Marshal Abdallah al-Sallal and Kadi Abd al-Rahman al-Iryani. However, contrary to the assumption of the primacy in the decision-making process of the personal predispositions of the principal decision-makers, especially in stress situations, the personal predisposition of the two heads of the Yemeni Republic were largely subordinated to the supreme objective of the régime defined in terms of the survival of the Republican system.

External factors helped to shape the decision-making process. The YAR, as a poor-resource developing state, had insufficient capacity to either defend itself against the Royalist military threat or achieve other less vital objectives such as economic development. For these, it had to rely on external assistance and as a result, other states, especially the UAR and USSR in the pre-1968 era, became important in the decision-making calculus. In another aspect, the Royalist threat dictated the need for solidarity within the YAR governing élite and facilitated the adoption of decisions on the crucial issue of security by consensus. Similarity of views and the existence of shared values among the post-November 5, 1967 government, ensured the perpetuation of this pattern of decision-making with respect to almost all issues.

One of the objectives of the study is to contribute to analysing comparative foreign policy decision-making, and some conclusions are related to propositions pertaining to decision-making in third world countries. However, other conclusions show that, in the Yemeni situation, the existing theories have only limited applicability.

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Finally, my thanks go to Professor Fred Halliday, who supervised this research. His expertise, patience, and grasp of Middle East politics in general and Yemeni affairs in particular contributed significantly to the completion of this work.

My hope is that this study is worthy of the considerable interest expressed by the above-mentioned persons and the support they gave me.

I should add that the views expressed in this thesis do not represent either the official views of the then YAR Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the personal views of the persons who contributed to this work. The study is my personal undertaking and I remain solely responsible for the facts and interpretations included in it.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



This study is the first to investigate how certain Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) policies were formulated and implemented. It is intended to be both a contribution to Yemeni studies and an addition to the cumulative knowledge of comparative foreign policy-making. Its significance in these areas is demonstrated in two ways. Firstly, YAR policy-making during the period under consideration took place in conditions of a protracted conflict between the Republican government and the externally-backed Royalist insurgents. This situation may be presumed to have affected the decisional process in many ways and thus to have given such a case study a particular significance. Secondly, the policy-making process took place within newly established Republican institutions. Indeed, the 1960s represented a formative period for YAR foreign policy-making in both conceptual and institutional respects. In this context, the study could provide students of Yemeni politics with some insight into a crucial stage in the evolution of YAR foreign policy-making. To students of comparative foreign policy-making, it represents another instance of third world policy-making under conditions of political and social transformation.

Despite the fact that Yemen has recently been assuming an increasingly important role in regional politics, it remains probably the least studied country in the Arab world. This fact is no more evident than in the almost total absence of works pertaining to its foreign policy. Until very recently, there was an apparent lack of interest on the part of the Arab and Western institutions in Yemen's foreign policy. Due to the country's continued reliance on external aid, its foreign policy was generally presumed to be more of a product of external pressures than an outcome of internal needs. Perhaps for that reason, YAR foreign policy was not studied except in general works on regional

politics. Only during the 1980s is one able to locate literature that deals with the external relations of the YAR. These works are academic studies prepared in Arab universities by Yemeni students. Although such studies contribute greatly to promoting the study of the country's external behaviour, they essentially belong to the tradition of diplomatic history and deal with the YAR relations with individual countries.<sup>1</sup> Only one study has been devoted to a systematic analysis of the country's foreign policy. This study entitled *Al-Siyasah al-Kharidjiyyah al-Yamaniyyah fil Ahd al-Djumhuri* was prepared by Dr. Muhammad al-Hilweh exclusively for academic use. It deals with the internal and external determinants of the country's foreign policy. It is, however, brief and, like the other works on the subject, was unable to consult the available primary sources, written or oral, necessary for such undertakings. How the YAR foreign policy was formulated remained completely unexplored territory. It is the main objective of this study partially to fill this gap by providing, as far as is possible, a systematic analysis of Yemen's foreign policy-making based mainly on primary sources, and in particular on interview material.

The lack of sufficient literature highlights the contribution of this study, but at the same time constituted a severe constraint on the conduct of the project. Much of the required primary information was unrecorded. Minutes of the cabinets meetings were not recorded during the 1960s. Large parts of the state's documents are still scattered and many of those pertaining to the 1960s are lost. What is available is out of the public reach. Even the archives of Radio Sana'a are only partially organised and require special permission before use. The newspapers of the 1960s, on the other hand, were focused mainly on the development of the war.

Unable to rely on analysis of the few available documents, the writer interviewed a number of officials who contributed to the formulation of the country's foreign policies at that time, including the foreign ministers Muhsin al-Ayni, Hasan Makki, Yahya Djaghman, Muhammad Sallam, Mustafa Yakub and Ahmad Barakat. These interviews yielded only limited results, either because some of the interviewees were reluctant to answer questions or because they knew only part of the story. Until very recently, decision making in Yemen was conducted by individuals who did not tend to keep records of what really happened.

Due to the time span, many events were understandably beyond the recall of these individuals. This posed a difficult problem for the researcher. Except for Abd al-Rahman al-Baydani and General Abdallah Djuzyalan, none of the principal political figures have published memoirs - a useful reference for such a study. The writer was not able to meet with the two heads of state, President al-Sallal and Chairman al-Iryani, in order to ascertain their involvement in the decision-making process relevant to the decisions under consideration. It is in fact doubtful whether they would have responded positively to such an enquiry. Both sent written replies to the writer's enquiry but responded only to selected questions.

The value of these interviews were reduced by the fact that some of those who responded tended to present the facts so as to show their role in the best possible light. Nevertheless, the writer benefited from the information provided and interpretation given. In the case of contrasting information, the writer used only those on which there was general agreement and in most cases the various interpretations were included.

The problem encountered with this research could be summarised by the fact that the decision making approach taken, which usually requires abundant information of the internal politics of government, was applied to a case lacking the most basic literature. At one point, the writer contemplated abandoning the project altogether. Failure to secure sufficient information to the complex questions entailed in the study threatened the continued viability of the research. However, the sense of being able to contribute in some degree to the understanding of the foreign policy-making of largely obscure polity prevailed and led to the presentation of this study.

### Methodology

This study analyses YAR foreign policy-making during the Republican-Royalist war of 1962-1970. It seeks to explain how certain foreign-policy decisions were made, under what circumstances, who the decision makers were and what were the influences, internal as well as external, which bore on the policy-making process.

As the study will attempt to explain the interaction of the internal and external factors within the YAR decision making system, the research will use the foreign policy system approach. Advocates of this approach hold that foreign policy is, in essence, a series of decisions made by a group of people who operate within a system consisting of three components: inputs, processes and outputs. Like any other system, the foreign policy system comprises stimuli at one end, a process which responds to such inputs by transferring them or reacting to them, and an end product of some description which constitutes the performance of the system.<sup>2</sup> As applied in this

particular case, the inputs are the operational and psychological environment; the process comprises the formulation and implementation of policies; and the decisions represent the output of the system.

YAR policy-making will be illustrated by the examination of four major decisions. These decisions were taken towards the latter part of the war, between 1967 and 1970. Coming as they did at the point where Egyptian influence was diminishing, they reflect the emergence of autonomous YAR decision-making institutions. In the preceding period (October 1962 to June 1967) YAR foreign policy was, for a variety of reasons, influenced by that of the United Arab Republics (UAR), so much so it was hard to disengage the former's policies from those of the latter.

The study is divided into nine chapters. Chapters 2 to 4 examine the general setting of the decision-making system of the entire period. These are: The Antecedents of the Security Situation, the Decision Makers, and the Foreign Policy Objectives. In the second chapter, the main developments during the first three years of the YAR (September 1962 - December 1965) will be reviewed under three headings, namely: Saudi-Egyptian intervention; the implications of the Arab and superpower rivalry; and internal differences. These influenced the decisional situation in the four cases examined as they formed antecedents of many of the post-1965 events. The decisional context identifies the decision makers and examines their role and significance within the legal and political framework as well as the general socio-political setting. The focus of the examination is on the way war pressures and political imperatives gave the two heads of state, al-Sallal and al-Iryani (1962-1967, 1967-1970 respectively), an added authority over the decision-making process.

Concerning foreign policy objectives, the focus is on the evolution of policies in response to the changing patterns of the Royalist military and political challenge. The persistent challenge to the Republic throughout the war period resulted in the primacy of security over other objectives. As a result, YAR foreign policy has developed through three distinct phases: the Policy of Confrontation (1962-1967); the Prelude to Reconciliation (1967-1968); and the Policy of Reconciliation (1968-1970).

Chapters 5 to 8 examine the four major decisions adopted in the later half of the war period in some detail. With the exception of the initial decision to request UAR assistance in September 1962, these were the most important foreign policy decisions of the entire war era. It must be noted that in the initial period of the war (1962-1965), most of the YAR foreign policy activities focused on the developments of the war and the UAR-Saudi attempts to obtain a peaceful settlement. In addition, UAR intervention in some of the YAR's foreign policy decisions make it less meaningful to talk about completely independent Yemeni actions. The decisions analysed are those relating to:

- The rejection of the Khartoum Agreement on Yemen concluded by Egyptian President Nasir and King Faysal of Saudi Arabia on 31 August, 1967.
- The recognition of the independence of the People's Republic of South Yemen (PRSY) on 30 November, 1967.
- The resumption of ruptured diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) on 15 July, 1969.

- The acceptance of the reconciliation deal with Saudi Arabia on 31 March, 1970.

In analysing these decisions, the research will be guided by the various frameworks devised for the study of policy-making using the system approach, but will not attempt to apply any particular model. The peculiar characteristics of the Yemeni decision-making and the war conditions under which these decisions were made called for a much simpler framework. Therefore, the analysis simply proceeds along the basic sequence of systemic action as used by foreign policy system theorists. These are: the operational and psychological environment (the input); the formulation and implementation of decisions (the process); the decisional outcome (the output); and the decisional consequences (feedback).<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that due to the limited scope of this study, the decisions, which represent the main output of the system will, by necessity, be included but not treated separately. With this in mind, the analysis will proceed along the following lines.

First: the Operational Environment will be investigated in terms of the various acts and/or situations which had a bearing on the decisional outcomes. The emphasis here will be on the degree of relevance to the decision under consideration. In this context, these components fall into two categories; the influences and the stimuli:

- a) Influences: Throughout the war, political action was motivated primarily by defence and security imperatives. As such, the development of the fighting formed a permanent component of the operational environment. On the one hand, there were events which only influenced the setting of the respective decisions and

obviously varied from one situation to another. Economic conditions and the restricted nature of YAR foreign relations, for instance, had a profound effect on the government's decision in 1969 to seek resumption of severed diplomatic relations with West Germany. On the other hand, the inability of the Republican forces to fill the military vacuum left by the withdrawing of Egyptian forces was behind al-Sallal's fierce opposition to the Khartoum Agreement of August 1967.

- b) Stimuli: the second step is to identify the situation or act which constituted the stimulus for the decision under consideration. These by definition vary from one case to another but have the same effect in the sense that they provide the *raison d'être* of the subsequent political action. While, for example, the Saudi-Egyptian accord in August 1967 triggered the YAR response, the dialogue between the Republican and the Royalist side during the Djedda Islamic foreign ministers' conference (March 1970) constituted the stimulus for the subsequent decision on YAR-Saudi reconciliation.

Second, The Perception of the Decision Makers: The emphasis is on the perceptions of these individuals and how these perceptions were related to the relevant political behaviour. In the Yemeni case, foreign policy decision-makers were located at the top of the governing élite's hierarchy. Theoretically, the prime minister, the foreign minister and members of the Republican Council (after November 1967) constituted the decision-making forum during the various stages of policy-making relating to the issues under investigation. Practically, however, the two presidents were the real and sometimes sole decision makers. As a result, their individual perceptions are



particularly relevant. The decision to recognise the PRSY is attributed, partially at least, to the personal predisposition of Chairman al-Iryani.

Third, The Decisional Process: The investigation focuses on the final political choice of members who formed the ultimate decision-making unit responding to the stimulus. The process is traced through three stages: the predecisional activities, the choice selection and the implementation. The emphasis is on the role of the principal decision maker: the way he controlled the flow of information about the event, his style in promoting responses in line with his preferences, and the procedures followed to ensure consensus on the choice made. For example, in the case of the reconciliation decision, al-Iryani withheld information from cabinet members about the controversial aspects of the deal being arrived at in Djedda in March 24-26 and chose to reveal full details only during the joint Republican Council-Cabinet meeting in which the proposed deal was considered and accepted, i.e. on 31 March, 1970.

Fourth, the Feedback: Here the investigation examines the implications of the decision for the decision-making structure and processes, as well as for the internal and external environments. Furthermore, each decision was assessed by its effect on the achievement of the sought objective. If it furthered that objective, the decision makers tended to pursue a similar course of action in the same issue area. Conversely, if the decision did not further the projected result, the decision makers would most probably adopt a different course of action. For instance, the positive economic and political results achieved by the resumption of relations with the FRG

in 1969 enhanced the YAR leadership's convictions of the validity of their approaches to the West.

### The Theoretical Context

The foreign policy-making of the YAR posed interesting theoretical questions. First, why did the country's external behaviour throughout the active war period (1962-1968) remain consistent although the decision-making élite in the post-1967 era held views which diverged from and contrasted with those of the pre-1967 élite? Similarly, how can we explain the fact that decisions were made by consensus within the government despite the fact that the decision-making élite was comprised of individuals with different backgrounds and experiences? The answer, in the writer's view, lies in the nature of the environment and the decision-makers' perception of it, including their objectives. It is generally agreed that environmental factors are relevant to foreign policy choices only as far as the decision-maker perceived them as being so. More specifically, a situation becomes an "occasion for decision" only when the decision-maker perceives it as relevant to his foreign policy objectives. This makes the identification of decisional situations a subjective phenomenon.

However, efforts have been made to establish criteria for comparing decisional situations. Charles Hermann has suggested certain characteristics of crisis situations, and has used them as criteria to compare various decisional situations. A crisis is said to exist when a situation possesses the following three characteristics:

1. Threatens the high-priority goals of the decision-making unit.

2. Restricts the amount of time available for response before the situation is transformed.
3. Surprises the members of the decision-making élite when it occurs.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of these three attributes in a situation produce certain effects on the decision-making process and thus distinguish this decisional situation from others. Charles Hermann used these criteria for comparing various decisional situations and formulated hypotheses on the decision-making pattern produced in each of these situations. A set of seven situations were identified, ranging from the typical crisis situation to routinely made decisional situations. In addition to the crisis situation, he identified seven situations.

1. Innovative situations, perceived to contain high threat and surprise but allowing an extended amount of time for response.
2. Inertia situations which involve low threat, extended time, and surprise.
3. Circumstantial situations which involve low threat, short time and anticipation.
4. Reflexive situations, characterised by high threat, short time and anticipation.
5. Deliberative situations, containing high threat, extended time, and anticipation.

6. Routinely made situations, involving low threat, extended time, and anticipation.
7. Administrative situations, said to exist when there is low threat, short time and anticipation.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the entire war period (1962-1970), the Royalist military and political challenge continued to pose a threat to the existence of the Republic. Due to the predominance of Saudi Arabia and the Egyptian role in the war, most of the YAR foreign policy actions, in the pre-1966 era, were a mere reflection of actions taken by the two intervening powers.<sup>6</sup> Most of the contacts and negotiations between these Arab states on a possible settlement of the war were made without prior knowledge of, or consultation with, the YAR leadership. As such, the YAR foreign policy actions in this respect were mostly of a reflexive nature. A combination of a deliberate policy by the post-November 1967 government aimed at reducing the influence of external factors in the Republic's policies<sup>7</sup> and a change in the regional politics, made it possible for the post-November 1967 leadership to initiate pre-planned policies. Thus, most of the decisions of that period were deliberative.

More specifically, the theoretical specifications provided by the Hermann model are applicable only to two of the four decisions under consideration. The three characteristics of the prescribed crisis situation are relevant to the Khartoum agreement while the decision on the PRSY is typical of the Reflexive Situation. In the other two cases, the FRG and the Reconciliation, these propositions are less relevant. In neither case was there a threat to the high value; instead the situation was perceived by the YAR decision-makers as

providing opportunities for achieving the primary policy objectives defined in terms of ensuring the survival of the Republican régime and the promotion of economic development.

Making decisions is, according to Snyder *et al.*, the selection by the decision makers from a socially defined, limited number of problematical alternative projects, of one project intended to bring about the particular future state of affairs.<sup>8</sup> Much of the efforts being made in the field of comparative foreign policy are directed towards investigating "the influence or influences which affected the decision makers choice." In this respect two models have been developed: the analytical model and the cognitive model. Proponents of the former portray a decision maker as a rational person who obtains and processes information constantly and flexibly, attempting to discover the optimal alternatives. In this respect, the decision maker considers possible courses of action and evaluates the likely consequences of each in terms of costs and benefits. He then selects the course of action most likely to achieve the desired goal.<sup>9</sup> Advocates of the cognitive model, on the other hand, suggest that the explanation lies in the cognitive process of the decision-makers. Any investigation into the decision-making should be directed towards understanding the way the cognitive mechanism is formed, modified, and operated so as to structure perceptions and hence determine behaviour. Most problems in the decision-making process, they suggest, arise when decision-makers misperceive the situation which constitutes a constraint on his rationality. Janis and Mann examine the ramifications for decision-making in cases of effective reactions associated with psychological stress. Their conflict model of decision-making is based on the assumption that the decision-maker's main drive is how to resolve decisional conflict or the simultaneous

opposing tendencies within the individual to accept or reject a given course of action. In this respect, the decision-maker asks himself about the costs, risks, and possibilities arising from responding to the problem. If no serious risks to the current policy are perceived at the outset, the response will be to do nothing (Unconflicted Inertia). If there is a potential risk, an alternative policy is adopted (Unconflicted Change). If no such policy is available, then stress enters the decision-making process directly. This leads to a pattern of "defensive avoidance" which can take any of three forms: procrastination, shifting the burden of responsibility to someone else, or "bolstering".<sup>10</sup>

The dominant role of personalities in the formulation of foreign policies in third world countries has become a truism in current political theories. It was suggested that to understand foreign-policy-making in the Middle East, it is more useful to analyse the leaders' personalities, perceptions, values and needs than to examine organisational procedures or bureaucratic competition.<sup>11</sup> But this was not specific to the Middle East: there are conditions in both developing and developed countries alike which allow decision makers to reflect their idiosyncratic predispositions on the decisional outcomes. Among these are crisis situations, where time constraints allow only a few individuals to participate in the decision-making. The idiosyncratic input of those who are concerned with making a decision is likely to be highly significant. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that the influence of personal factors on the decision-making process has a negative effect on the political outcome, for they inhibit rationality. But the predominance of personalities in the policy-making, even in crisis situations, at times seems rational. In an influential study, Sidney Verba

identified circumstances which affect the degree to which personality factors affect the behaviour of the decision maker. Among these are conditions in which the values involved are both vital and clear. He concludes that:

"Insofar as one has such a goal or set of goals in mind, the situation itself will be more compelling. Attention will be focused on the choice situation and the effect of unrecognised influences upon the individual will be reduced."<sup>12</sup>

The post-revolutionary élite in Yemen comprised individuals holding divergent value systems, but with one salient common objective defined in terms of the maintenance of the Republican régime. As a reaction to the persisting Royalist challenge, the moderate post-1967 government, like the pre-1967 radical government, put security at the top of their objectives. The first post-November government also followed the same line in its foreign relations to that of al-Sallal's government. It was only when the Royalist threat began to recede in mid-1968 that conflict within the "goal system" of the post-November régime surfaced. Goal inconsistency within the government was eliminated by the ejection of the left in the aftermath of the 1968 intra-Republican clashes. From September 1968 onwards, members of the decision-making élite possessed not only a similar value system but also agreed on the structure of that goal system.

## NOTES ON CHAPTER I

1. These studies are: Husayn al-Rawayshan, *Tatawwur Al-Ilakat al-Kharidjiyyah lil Djumhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah 1967-1984*; Khadidjah al-Haysami, *Al-Ilakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah 1962-1980*; Mansur al-Zandani, *Ilakat al-Djumhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah bil Dawlatayn al-Udmayayn 1962-1984*; Mutahhar A. Ibrahim, *Al-Ilakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Misriyyah 1943-1973*, Institute for Diplomatic Studies, Cairo; Samir M. Khamis, *Al-Ilakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Urduniyyah 1962-1984*. A further study, on YAR-USA relations is currently being prepared at the London School of Economics by Ahmad al-Madhadji.
  
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CHAPTER II

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE SECURITY SITUATION:

THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE REPUBLICAN-ROYALIST WAR

1962 - 1965

On 26 September, 1962, a military coup in Yemen overthrew Imam Muhammad al-Badr and established the YAR. The coup put an end to the Imamate after a rule little short of a millennium and many, both inside and out of the country, welcomed the revolt as a step towards a better future. The Hamid al-Din Imams, in their determination to hold on to power, had resisted modern ideas and thus kept the country largely isolated from the rest of the world. They kept their foreign relations to the minimum and only entered into diplomatic relations when the necessity arose.<sup>1</sup> An American specialist defined the Imamate's foreign policy as being governed by the desire "to be left alone".<sup>2</sup> Internally, the country was so backward that at the time of the revolution Yemen was said to be "dashing towards the fifteenth century."<sup>3</sup> Although this was an exaggeration, the country was among the most backward in the world. In the political field there were no modern political institutions or government bureaucracies with delegated authority. As an autocrat, the Imam was personally the focus of all executive, administrative and judicial power, and all matters regardless of size were determined by his sole discretion. In the socio-economic field, a complete absence of modern services and unexploited resources coincided with an almost complete stagnation of the economic and social systems.<sup>4</sup>

During the three years that preceded the revolution, Imam Ahmad faced the most sustained challenge to his rule. The anti-Imam factions, whose long-term aim had been to eliminate despotic and conservative monarchs, replacing them with reform-minded ones, had by the end of the 1950s begun to work towards the establishment of a republic.<sup>5</sup> Simultaneously, the Imamate lost the loyalty of the army and the two main tribal Federations, the Hashid and the Bakil, on whom the Imamate depended for its existence. The revolt in 1959 of the Hashid and the

Bakil, traditionally known as the 'Wings of the Imamate', was followed by further unrest within the army.<sup>6</sup> The army had played the main part in the revolts of 1948 and 1955 and continued to plot the assassination of Imam Ahmad. In March 1961, three officers made the most serious attempt on his life in which the Imam was wounded seriously. Ahmad tried to contain the uprising by a combination of promises of reform and cruel suppression of the opposition. On 19 September 1962, he died while the country was still in turmoil following a series of violent student demonstrations.

Many Yemenis were hopeful that Muhammad al-Badr, who succeeded his father on 20 September, 1962, would introduce the much needed changes. As a Crown Prince, al-Badr had given every indication of having liberal inclinations, but after assuming the throne he publicly stated that he intended to pursue the policies established by his father. This confirmed the suspicions of the officers who were already planning a coup, ever since they founded the Free Officers Organisation in December 1961. Upon learning that al-Badr had indeed resolved to suppress the opposition, the Free Officers decided to act. At 2300 hours on 26 September, 1962, a small column of tanks and armoured vehicles surrounded the al-Bashai'er Palace where al-Badr was attending a cabinet meeting. After failing to persuade al-Badr to surrender, the tanks shelled the palace. The next morning it was announced that the new Imam had been killed in the palace bombardment and a Republican régime had taken over.<sup>7</sup>

It immediately became clear that the revolutionaries, who by then comprised not only the officers but also several civilian groups, were not aiming at a simple change of government but at a radical restructuring of the country's socio-economic and political system.

In the first policy statement broadcast on 27 September, it was announced that the principal aims of the Revolution were: to put an end to the absolute rule of the individual and to do away with foreign influence in Yemen and to replace the monarchy with a democratic, Islamic Republican régime based on social justice in a unified state, representing the people's will and realising their demands.<sup>8</sup> Mainly because of the lack of sufficient resources and due to the preoccupation with the ensuing war, many of the stated objectives were not realised. Nevertheless, measures were taken in the following weeks which resulted in radical changes. Briefly summarised they were: the establishment of the Republic, the removal of the old ruling oligarchy, the end of large-scale landlordism, and the creation of a public sector in the national economy.<sup>9</sup>

From the first moment of its inception, the Yemeni Republic was faced with difficulties emanating from both its complicated internal conditions and a largely hostile external reaction. As the first republic in the Arabian Peninsula, it was viewed with apprehension by the traditional theocratic and shaykhly-dominated régimes which still ruled the rest of Arabia.<sup>10</sup> It also met with suspicion by both Britain and the USA, who were fearful of the effects the Yemeni revolution might have on their vital economic and strategic interests in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf. Because of its increasing dependence on Middle East oil and its reliance on Aden as a military base and bunkering station, Britain had the greater cause for concern.<sup>11</sup> In short, the YAR was widely perceived to be a threat to the status quo in the area, especially as it had the military aid of President Nasir. Saudi Arabia and Jordan were the first of its neighbours to react. On 1 October Saudi troops were deployed along

the borders with the YAR and both monarchies played a vital role in encouraging the counter-revolution within Yemen.

Naturally, the Hamid al-Dins were eager to restore the monarchy in Yemen but it is generally acknowledged that without Saudi support the Yemeni Royalists would never have been able to initiate substantial resistance to the Republican government, let alone sustain it for more than seven years.<sup>12</sup> However, upon hearing the news from Sana'a, Prince al-Hasan (al-Badr's uncle and the then Yemen's representative at the United Nations) was confident enough to claim the Imamate. On 28 September he left for Saudi Arabia claiming that the revolt had been carried out by a small army group with no popular support and vowing to crush it.<sup>13</sup> However, before he left New York, Jordan had instructed its representative at the United Nations to convey its recognition of al-Hasan. On 30 September, al-Hasan arrived in Saudi Arabia and on 5 October, after obtaining the support of King Saud, he declared a Royalist Government-in-Exile. Without delay, he began sending the Hamid al-Din princes to the northern Yemeni tribes to offer gold and arms in exchange for their loyalty. At the beginning of October, Jordan sent a mission to Djedda to lend him military support.<sup>14</sup>

The existence of the Royalist government and the military deployment within Yemen were portrayed as internal opposition to the régime in Sana'a and an indication of support for the Imam. This was not exactly the case. Except for some tribes in the north and east of the country, the Yemeni people had responded enthusiastically to the proclamation of the Republic, a fact reported even by Western media who were unsympathetic to the new régime in Sana'a.<sup>15</sup> Among the tribes which later rallied to the Imam, only some Zaydi tribes in the

north-west region had followed him in his capacity as their religious leader. The loyalty of the rest of the tribes making up the main body of the Royalist army was neither based on firm commitment nor on political opposition to the Republic. This fact became clear to al-Badr himself who in fact had managed to escape from his besieged palace on the night of the coup and had taken refuge in the north. There he tried to rally the Zaydi tribes to march on Sana'a as his father had done in 1948; but none of these tribes was prepared to offer him protection, let alone fight for him. However, when he received cash from Saudi Arabia with which to pay them and after they had suffered mistreatment by the Republicans and their Egyptian allies which had created wide resentment, some of them agreed to join him.<sup>16</sup>

Despite all the challenges, internal and external, which the Yemeni revolution faced, its chances of success were greater than those of previous revolts. During the revolt of 1948 and the coup of 1955, the revolutionaries could not attract any support from the Arab states which were nearly all either still governed by monarchical régimes or had become conservative republics. However, in 1962 when the September revolution broke out, the idea of revolutionary Arabism was being officially promoted by the United Arab Republics (UAR) and there were already revolutionary governments in Iraq, Syria and Algeria. In anticipation of external intervention against the projected revolution, the Free Officers had, prior to the September coup, sought and received a promise from the Egyptian President Djamal Abd al-Nasir to come to their aid in case of foreign intervention.<sup>17</sup> On 29 September, Colonel al-Sallal, Chairman of the Revolution Command Council (RCC), sent a telegram to Nasir in which he emphasised the revolutionary character of the coup and requested Egypt's help. In an immediate reply, Nasir expressed official UAR recognition of the YAR

and pledged Egyptian support.<sup>18</sup> Three days later a small contingent of Egyptian troops arrived in Yemen to underline the UAR commitment to the survival of the new régime in Sana'a. Almost all YAR leaders agreed that the subsequent UAR aid saved the Yemeni Republic from immediate collapse and gave it time to develop into a viable state.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the immediate outcome of the Egyptian help was a mixed blessing. Instead of serving as a deterrent, Egypt's "symbolic" military aid was subsequently used by Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Britain as a pretext for further intervention.

#### Implications Of The Response Of The Arab World And The Wider International Response

At the time when the Yemeni Republic came into existence, the Arab world was sharply divided between a revolutionary bloc led by the UAR and a conservative camp led by Saudi Arabia. As early as the first day of its inception the new régime in Sana'a stated that it identified itself with the Arab revolutionary movement and requested Egypt's aid. This obviously alarmed not only the governments which opposed the YAR for one reason or another, but also the principal Western governments which were 'at odds' with President Djamal Abd al-Nasir. The position of these states was partly reflected in their stance regarding recognition of the YAR.

Intra-Arab response to the Yemeni revolution was varied, as were the Arab states in their ideological and political identification. The radical Arab régimes of Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Algeria enthusiastically welcomed the Yemeni Republic and recognised it within the first two weeks.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the Arab monarchies of



Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco and Libya opposed the YAR. The moderate Arab republics of Sudan, Lebanon and Tunisia recognised the new régime in Sana'a, although their subsequent relations with Sana'a remained restricted.

These initial responses were not to prove lasting. Within a year the monarchies of Morocco, Libya and Kuwait joined in recognising the YAR.<sup>21</sup> Jordan, in the conciliatory atmosphere which followed the First Arab Summit Conference, announced its recognition of the Yemeni Republic on 22 July, 1964, leaving Saudi Arabia the only Arab state continuing to support the deposed Imam. On the other side, relations between Nasir and the governments of Iraq and Syria affected the latter's relations with the YAR.<sup>22</sup> The Ba'athist government in Syria, which had persistent ideological differences with Nasir, resented his treatment of the Ba'ath followers in Yemen. Its relations with the President al-Sallal régime were, consequently, strained.<sup>23</sup>

In the wider context of the cold war, the Soviet Union declared its support of the Yemeni Republic, recognising that it had inaugurated the first anti-imperialist struggle in the Arabian Peninsula. On 28 September, 1962 Premier Khrushchev sent a cable to al-Sallal conveying Soviet recognition of the YAR and at the same time warning that it would "regard as inadmissible any foreign interferences in the domestic affairs of Yemen".<sup>24</sup> This early friendly Soviet gesture served to consolidate a relationship between the two countries which dated back to 1928. In March, 1964, a five-year Friendship Agreement was signed between the two countries. This resulted in more economic Soviet aid to the Yemen, although military aid continued to be channelled through the UAR.<sup>25</sup>

By mid-October 1962, twenty-four countries had recognised the YAR; all except one were either third world countries or socialist states. The hesitation of the Western democracies, especially Britain and the USA, caused concern to the Yemeni revolutionaries because they felt the attitude of the rest of the members of the UN depended on the position of these two great powers. In addition, the reluctance of the West to grant recognition might give credence to the allegations that the Yemeni revolution had communist connections.<sup>26</sup> The YAR Foreign Minister was sent to New York in the first week of October in an attempt to secure the recognition of the USA and admission to the UN at the same time. Earlier, on 2 October, he had stated that international recognition of the YAR was needed "not to consolidate the government in Yemen but to cut the routes to external intervention".<sup>27</sup>

As suggested earlier, the West was generally unreceptive to the revolutionary régime in Sana'a because of the latter's association with President Nasir and because of potential implications for their own interests in the area. Britain and France invoked traditional criteria of international law in denying recognition. Their argument rested on the facts that ex-Imam al-Badr was still alive, and that he allegedly had a large amount of support in Yemen. This position was one of political expediency rather than adherence to legal criteria. In October, 1962, West Germany became the first Western state to recognise the YAR, reportedly with the encouragement of other Western states which sought to balance the increasing Soviet influence in Sana'a.<sup>28</sup>

For almost two months, the USA was in a dilemma as to whether to withhold recognition of the new government in Sana'a, as the British

had been urging, or to give its support to the YAR in order to balance and curtail the growth of Egyptian and Soviet influence over it. On 21 November the US Charge d'Affairs in Sana'a declared that the Republican government was in full control of the country, except for some remote areas.<sup>29</sup> The Kennedy administration was increasingly aware of the need for YAR co-operation in its plans to prevent a further escalation of the conflict which could damage American interests in the area. On 19 December, 1962, the US Government announced its recognition of the YAR, citing the YAR's affirmation of its goodwill towards its neighbours as the reason for this decision.<sup>30</sup>

This move on the part of the USA revealed the extent of its influence in the UN, for on the day that followed its recognition of the YAR the Credentials Committee of the UN General Assembly voted in favour of accepting the delegation of the YAR as the official delegation of Yemen in place of the Royalist representatives. The General Assembly accepted the Committee's recommendation with seventy-four in favour and four against, thus confirming the international legitimacy of the YAR.<sup>31</sup>

This left Great Britain, Saudi Arabia and Jordan the only states in the world which still recognised the Imam's government. The two Arab monarchies made strenuous efforts to prevent the UN from accepting the YAR. During the UN General Assembly's debate on 20 December regarding Yemen's contested seat, they claimed that there were two authorities in Yemen, one the "legitimate government of the Imam" and the other "self-proclaimed" régime of the Republicans which would have no chance of survival without the presence of foreign troops.<sup>32</sup>

The Arab League was slow to respond to the situation in Yemen. In October 1962 it received simultaneous requests from both the Royalist government in exile and the YAR, for a meeting of the Arab League Council to consider the situation in Yemen. Due to the fact that the members were at that time divided over the issue, the request was not put forward for consideration. When the League Council held its 38th Ordinary Session in March, 1963, the situation had changed in so far as the YAR had been recognised by most member states in the interim. The Council decided therefore, on 23 March, despite Saudi Arabian opposition, to admit the YAR to membership of the League.<sup>33</sup>

The British posture towards the Yemeni Republic was based on the assumption that the new Nasir-supported régime in Yemen might pursue Yemeni claims to the colony of Aden and the protectorates in Southern Arabia with renewed vigour. In the event of this being the case, the British feared that the Yemeni Republic would find wide support among the inhabitants of the colony, many of whom were of North Yemeni origin. Despite repeated assurances by the YAR leaders of their peaceful intentions, the British Government retained its deep suspicion of the new government in Sana'a. On 23 October, the British cabinet decided in principle to recognise the Yemeni Republic but subsequently retracted this decision under pressure from the powerful Royalists' lobby.<sup>34</sup> In the first week of February 1963, Britain still insisted that the situation in Yemen "was not sufficiently clear to justify recognition", on the basis that a government is only recognised when it is in effective control of a country.<sup>35</sup> On 10 February, 1963, the government in Sana'a gave Britain a week to recognise the new régime and when no favourable response was forthcoming, the British legation in Ta'iz was closed on 17 February.<sup>36</sup>

## Predominance Of The UAR and Saudi Arabia

The most significant feature of the pre-1967 era was the extent of the influence which the UAR and Saudi Arabia exerted on the conflict in Yemen. Basically, the two Arab states viewed their support of the Yemeni warring factions as an extension of their ongoing rivalry. Until the Egyptian withdrawal from Yemen in 1967, each committed its prestige and resources to ensure the victory of its respective Yemeni allies. In short, these two powers played a primary role in deciding the way the war was to be settled.

This was because, of all the states involved, Egypt and Saudi Arabia perceived the Yemeni revolution as closest to their own interests and they moved accordingly. President Nasir decided to support the Yemeni Republic mainly in order to reaffirm Egypt's role in promoting a pan-Arab revolution. Thereby he hoped to secure a foothold in the western corner of the Arabian Peninsula from where he could spread his revolutionary ideas and Egyptian influence throughout the rest of Arabia. Soon this support developed into a significant military involvement. A small contingent of Egyptian troops, about 100 strong, arrived in the Yemeni port of Hudaydah on 5 October, 1962 in what was believed to be a token demonstration of the UAR commitment to the survival of the YAR.<sup>36</sup> However, steady reinforcement in reply to the escalating number of Royalist attacks on the Yemeni Republic meant that by August 1965 the force was 70,000 strong.

Saudi Arabia, already considerably alarmed by the success of the Republican coup in Sana'a, became even more concerned by the Egyptian military intervention. The Egyptian propaganda which accompanied the dispatch of the troops, combined with the ideological-political

rivalry which then existed between Cairo and Riyadh, led the Saudis to believe the ultimate objective of the Egyptian intervention in Yemen was the destabilisation of their own monarchy.<sup>37</sup> As a result, the Saudis redefined their objectives in Yemen with the ejection of the Egyptian forces becoming the top priority.<sup>38</sup> They believed the withdrawal of the UAR from Yemen would not only remove the Egyptian military threat from the Saudi borders but would in effect substantially improve the chances of the Royalist takeover. While the Republicans would be left without the Egyptian support, the argument went, the Royalists would continue to receive clandestine aid across the borders.<sup>39</sup>

During the initial phase of the ensuing war between the Republicans, backed by the UAR, and the Royalists, supported by Saudi Arabia, which extended from October, 1962 to mid-1963, each side sought a military victory. Basically Nasir decided to intervene militarily in Yemen on the false belief that the Royalists were weak and that the Republican government would need only limited Egyptian assistance to overcome the opposition speedily and decisively.<sup>40</sup> The truth of the matter was that the Royalists had early on captured several strategic positions in the north and east and established supply routes up to Nadjran in Saudi Arabia and through Harib to Bayhan inside the South Arabian Federation. As a result, the strength of their position, combined with the guerrilla type of warfare they followed over notoriously difficult terrain, made it almost impossible for the Republican side to achieve a victory over them, speedily or otherwise.

By the first week of December 1962, Royalist attacks had escalated to the point that the Egyptians had not only substantially increased their troops from the original 100 to around 15,000, but had also

decided to take over the responsibility for the military confrontation with the Royalists from the Republican army.<sup>41</sup> The legal basis for joint military operations between the Egyptians and the Republican forces had already been established on 10 November, 1962 when the YAR and the UAR had signed a five-year military pact which obliged each to come to the aid of the other in case of external aggression.<sup>42</sup>

Because of their military weakness and political vulnerability at the time, the Saudis adopted a defensive strategy, avoiding in the process any direct involvement in the fighting in Yemen. Instead they provided the Yemeni Royalists with large-scale financial and military aid, enabling them to engage the Republicans and the Egyptian troops themselves. King Faysal believed that by intervening in Yemen, Nasir had involved himself in a quagmire and that the continued financial and military drain would sooner or later force the Egyptians out of Yemen.<sup>43</sup> This threat to UAR involvement became more real as the Royalists began to receive help from a variety of sources including Britain, France, and Iran.<sup>44</sup>

In November 1963, President Nasir, having become aware of the potential consequences for Egypt of a prolonged military involvement in Yemen, prepared to launch two major military offensives aimed at the decisive defeat of the Royalists. The first was made in February 1963 and the other followed in June 1964. Both these operations did indeed cause major setbacks to the Royalists, dislodging them from the strategic positions they controlled and cutting their supply routes, especially through Harib and Marib. But these defeats did not finish them off. Due to the difficult terrain of the northern and eastern parts of the country and the unfailing supply of foreign aid, the Royalists were not only able to survive but to reply with counter-

attacks. In a major counter-offensive beginning in December 1964 and continuing sporadically until July 1965, they were able to regain control of areas they had been evicted from in the 1963 Republican offensive and by August 1965 the military situation had returned almost to what it was at the beginning of 1963.<sup>45</sup>

### Attempts at Settlement

Failure to settle the conflict militarily stimulated efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The fact that these efforts were either made by, or addressed to, Saudi Arabia and the UAR indicates the degree to which the importance of these two powers was paramount.

The first peace initiative was taken by the US administration; it was not aimed at securing a peaceful resolution to the war but was an attempt to contain it within Yemen itself. Following aerial attacks by the Egyptians on Royalist targets inside Saudi Arabia in November 1962 and January 1963, the Kennedy administration feared that an escalation of tension might lead to direct confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and that this would threaten both the stability of the Saudi monarchy and the US strategic and oil interests in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>46</sup> On 1 March the UN, under pressure from the US, sent the Under-Secretary, General Ralph Bunche, to visit Yemen on a fact-finding mission. About the same time the US special envoy, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, made several visits to the UAR and Saudi Arabia. The underlying purpose was the same as that of the Bunche mission, but the American diplomat met with greater success and later negotiated an agreement for a simultaneous disengagement by the two states from Yemen.



Inevitably, Nasir showed more interest in negotiating an agreement that would consolidate the military successes achieved by the Republican side during the military offensive of February 1963. The then Saudi Premier Faysal was less enthusiastic to conclude a deal under these circumstances but was in no position to stand up to the UAR military challenge.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, both leaders signed a disengagement agreement the details of which were disclosed by the UN Secretary General on 29 April, 1963. Under the terms of the agreement, Saudi Arabia undertook to terminate all aid to the Royalists and prohibit the use of its territory by them, while the UAR promised to begin a phased withdrawal of its troops from Yemen without taking any punitive actions against the Royalists.<sup>48</sup>

In accordance with the agreement, a UN observation team (UNYOM) arrived in Yemen on 13 June, although it was not until 4 July that they began their task. They were deployed in Sana'a, Hudaydah, Sada, Nadjran and Djizan, where they were presumably intended to monitor the implementation of the agreement. Both the inadequacy of the facilities put at the disposal of the mission and a shortage of supplies limited the effectiveness of its operations right from the start. Moreover, the Royalists, who were not recognised as a party to the conflict, were determined to undermine the efforts of the UN, and, with the help of Britain across the borders, they continued the fighting. This ultimately led to the Egyptians ceasing their withdrawal.<sup>49</sup>

Notwithstanding the lack of progress, Saudi Arabia and the UAR continued the extension and financing of the UNYOM on a two-monthly basis while the Secretary-General continued to submit pessimistic reports to the Security Council. In the spring of 1964 the fighting

increased and as a result the mission was finally terminated on September 4 of that year.<sup>50</sup>

The first attempt to end the war was in Yemen was made in the calmer atmosphere of the intra-Arab detente which followed the First Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo in January 1964. Amid the spirit of reconciliation which was reflected in the resumption of relations between Cairo and Riyadh, Faysal and Nasir responded positively to the mediation efforts initiated by the Algerian and the Iraqi presidents to settle their differences over Yemen. Positive ideas for a settlement were worked out by the officials of the two countries during the first half of 1964 and a final formula was reached in September. At the conclusion of the Second Arab Summit in Alexandria (September 1964) President Nasir and King Faysal held talks on the Yemeni problem. After these talks which lasted from September 11 to 14, the two leaders issued a joint communique which became known as the "Alexandria Agreement". By this accord, Saudi Arabia and the UAR undertook to "make the necessary contacts with the parties involved for a peaceful settlement".<sup>51</sup>

Peace talks were subsequently held between Republican and Royalist delegations at Erkuwit in southern Sudan on 1-3 November, 1964, with Muhammad al-Zubayri leading the Republican side and Ahmad al-Shami heading the Royalists. An agreement was soon reached, and it was announced that a cease-fire would become effective on 8 November, 1964. It was also agreed that a National Congress, consisting of 63 tribal leaders and an 18-member preparatory committee, was to meet in a Yemeni town on the 23 November to formulate terms for settling existing differences. Also Saudi Arabia and the UAR were to be asked to implement the Congress decisions.<sup>52</sup>

The planned congress was never held. First it was announced on 20 November that it was to be postponed indefinitely. Despite the initial goodwill shown by President Nasir and King Faysal, it became evident that neither was ready to force concessions on his Yemeni ally. The only outcome of this attempt was the fact that it helped to crystallise the differences between the two Yemeni sides. It was announced that the proposed congress was postponed because of disagreements over where it should take place and the numerical allocation of delegates.<sup>53</sup> However, the fact was that the two sides disagreed on the more substantive aspects. The Republicans would not agree on any alterations to the Republican régime while the Royalists insisted that it was up to the proposed Congress to decide on the nature of the future régime. On another point, the Republicans would not countenance the immediate withdrawal of the Egyptian forces while the Royalists demanded a guarantee that the Egyptian forces would leave the country before any plebiscite on the future government.<sup>54</sup>

Contrary to the Alexandria Agreement, the second attempt at a peaceful settlement was fraught with considerable tension between the UAR and Saudi Arabia. In the summer of 1965, Nasir, concerned at the mounting cost of the war and impatient with the Republican bickering, took the initiative in another attempt at finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. As the Royalist forces were on the offensive at that time, King Faysal was not as anxious as Nasir to come to an agreement, and responded only after Nasir threatened to put a decisive end to the conflict one way or another.<sup>55</sup> In July 1965 communications between the two leaders were resumed. These resulted in a meeting between them which took place in Djedda on 23-24 August. After the meeting a new agreement to settle the conflict in Yemen was announced. The main conditions of the accord, which came to be known as the Djedda

Agreement, were an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Yemen by September, 1966, the ending of Saudi military aid to the Royalists, the setting up of a provisional Yemeni government, the holding of a plebiscite in November 1966 and the formation of an interim conference consisting of all Yemeni factions. The conference was to meet in the northern city of Haradh on 23 November to form a provisional government, make arrangements for the transitional period and organise the plebiscite.

In order to rebut any criticism from his Yemeni allies for his part in the agreement, Nasir arranged a meeting in Alexandria with the leaders of the two Republican factions, the moderates and the radicals. At the meeting, which took place on 19 August, Nasir explained his ideas in general terms to the Republicans. The Republicans were ambivalent towards Nasir's efforts and when the terms of the Djedda Agreement were announced they were far from satisfied, believing that Nasir's eagerness to withdraw from Yemen had made him offer too many concessions to the Royalists' side. On 21 September, 1965, the YAR Presidential Council and the Cabinet issued a joint statement in which they welcomed the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and the UAR but made a point of affirming their commitment to the Republican system.<sup>56</sup> The Republicans, especially the hard-liners, had no wish to take part in the proposed conference and agreed only when they received Nasir's assurances that the Republican system would not be jeopardised.<sup>57</sup>

The conference commenced in Haradh on 23 November as scheduled with equal representation on each side. The meeting was scarcely underway before sharp differences began to emerge as each side tried to interpret the Djedda Agreement to its own advantage. The main bone of contention was the nature of the provisional government: the

Republicans insisted on the continuation of the Republic administration while the Royalists insisted on a neutral "Islamic state". A recess was called and, because of failure to resolve the disputed issues, the conference was never resumed.<sup>58</sup>

Although some suggested that the Yemenis were responsible for the failure of the conference, it was clear that King Faysal and President Nasir were also not keen on its success. By December, the king had received new military equipment which increased his confidence and made him feel less vulnerable to a possible Egyptian attack. Nasir, for his part, became suspicious of the Saudi moves, especially King Faysal's attempt to promote an Islamic alliance, and began to prepare for a new round of confrontation.

### Intra-Republican Differences

A crucial element in the political situation in the YAR was the intra-Republican discord which created instability within the system and at the same time contributed to the lack of coherent policies. Most of the differences whether on a personal level or in the wider political arena, sprang from the divergent backgrounds and political views of the post-revolutionary élites. Many of the differences that began to emerge in the weeks following the revolution were of a personal nature. For instance, Abd al-Rahman al-Baydani, who became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs in the 31 October 1962 cabinet, was opposed by many covetous of the leadership. There were similar rivalries among senior officers in the army.<sup>59</sup> These did not inflict any lasting damage on the stability of the régime and were kept largely under control by the occasional intervention of the

UAR.<sup>60</sup> More fundamental differences also began to develop in the early days after the revolution. In the first stages of the war, the three veteran leaders, Ahmad Muhammad Nu'man, Kadi Abd al-Rahman al-Iryani and Kadi Muhammad al-Zubayri, were reported to have expressed doubts about the inflexible policy against the pro-Royalist tribes pursued by the Egyptians and supported by al-Sallal. These moderates advocated conciliation and benevolence towards the disaffected tribes - Ahmad Nu'man recommended conclusion of a series of agreements with local shaykhs to win them one by one from the Imam's side, and so gradually extend the influence to the Republican government.<sup>61</sup> These views, however, were kept within the government and were not expressed publicly, partly because the moderate leaders wanted to avoid anything that would alienate the Egyptians at a time when no other alternative to the military confrontation was available.

The first time intra-Republican differences surfaced was at a popular conference held in September 1963. The conference was convened in Amran, to the north of Sana'a, with the stated purpose of finding ways and means of consolidating the régime. At the end of its deliberations it adopted resolutions which concentrated on internal affairs and were, in general, supportive of the government's policies *vis-à-vis* the Royalists. These resolutions involved measures designed to eliminate corruption, rationalise internal policies and introduce reforms, specifically a constitution and a freely elected parliament.<sup>62</sup> However, during the deliberations it became clear that the most fundamental differences within the Republican ranks revolved around the best way to deal with the ongoing conflict with the Royalists. In effect, there were two factions advocating opposing policies. The radicals, represented by the majority of the intellectuals, the senior officers and the followers of various

political organisations, called for firmness and determination as the best way to defend the Republic and secure the régime. The moderates, represented by what was left of the old Free Yemeni Movement, the tribal Shaykhs and most of the junior officers, advocated, on the other hand, reconciliation with the Royalists (with the exception of members of the Hamid al-Din family) and called for a policy that would win over the rebellious tribes. These differences were of no immediate political relevance because of the priority given to the war with the Royalists and because the régime of al-Sallal would not permit the moderates to dictate policies.<sup>63</sup>

The failure of the Erkuwit Peace Conference (November 1964) brought, *inter alia*, the differences among members of the governing élite into the open. On 2 December, 1964, the two vice-Premiers, al-Zubayri and al-Iryani, together with Nu'man, Chairman of the Consultative Council, resigned from their respective posts in protest against al-Sallal's policies. In their letters of resignation they accused al-Sallal's régime of alienating popular support through its corruption and incompetence, and proposed that the president's powers should be transferred to a five-man Council of Sovereignty for an interim period of five years.<sup>64</sup>

A political crisis ensued when all cabinet members except one also resigned in solidarity with the three leaders. Within one month a new government was formed by General Hassan al-Amri. In the new cabinet announced on 5 January, 1965, only half the members of the previous government were included. Furthermore, a state of emergency was declared in Sana'a, and a tribunal was established to try several former ministers and dissident Republican leaders.<sup>65</sup>

During 1964 the Egyptian presence had become increasingly the focus of criticism, especially by those who blamed the Egyptians for both the prolongation of the war and the impotence of the government. In the aftermath of the December 1964 crisis, a group of Yemenis who became known as the "Third Force" went to Beirut and Saudi Arabia in protest against the situation in Yemen. Their demands, which became the basis of the political manifesto of the "Union of Popular Forces", were briefly: the end of foreign intervention in Yemen, meaning the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and the simultaneous termination of Saudi aid to the Royalists; the convening of an intra-Yemeni popular congress in order to form a provisional government; the holding of free elections with a view to choosing a Constituent Assembly to decide the country's form of government.<sup>66</sup>

No longer held in check, as hitherto in 1963, the intra-Republican differences developed into a struggle for power between the two factions, namely the moderates and al-Sallal's government, and ultimately affected YAR policies. Following the December 1964 rift, Kadi al-Zubayri moved to Barat where, on 16 February, he founded an opposition party called *Hizb Allah* (Party of God). It had the objective of establishing an "Islamic Republican Consultative Rule" for Yemen and called for a peaceful settlement and the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces.<sup>67</sup> Al-Zubayri's posture reflected the growing schism within the Republican leadership. There was not only friction over the issue of the settlement of the war but also over the nature of relations with the UAR. Most of the radicals, including al-Sallal, lent their unreserved support to the Egyptian presence in Yemen and were happy to rely entirely on it.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, the moderates, including the three leaders, Nu'man, al-Zubayri and al-Iryani, adopted an altogether more guarded approach. While they



wholeheartedly welcomed the UAR military role in defence of the Republic, they sought to limit the degree of Egyptian involvement in the formulation of YAR policies and particularly advocated self-reliance in finding a solution to the conflict.<sup>69</sup> On 1 April, 1965 al-Zubayri was killed in obscure circumstances, but his death led to popular indignation and brought about the moderates rise to power. Under pressure, al-Sallal was forced to ask Ahmad Nu'man, al-Zubayri's colleague, to form a new government with the freedom to initiate reforms. The cabinet he assembled on 20 April accordingly represented the Republican moderates in both its composition and policies.<sup>70</sup>

Nu'man's cabinet set as a priority the convening of a peace conference that would include all Yemeni factions, Republican and Royalist. Although the Royalists refused to take part, the conference was held in Khamir, to the north of Sana'a, from 2-5 May 1965. Most of its resolutions were dedicated to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. They included one to send delegations to Arab countries to seek cooperation in ending the war, and another to appoint a committee to make contact with the Royalists for the same purpose. It was also decided that a Yemeni "people's army", about 11,000 strong, should be formed which would gradually relieve the Egyptian forces. The conference also called on the government to amend the constitution.<sup>71</sup>

The Khamir conference gave a popular mandate to the moderates who had clearly won that round in the political struggle with their radical rivals. On 8 May, al-Sallal was obliged to approve an interim constitution and two days later Nu'man sent a telegram to King Faysal requesting his cooperation in resolving the war. In the second half of June a delegation visited several Arab capitals to implement the Khamir resolutions.

Neither al-Sallal nor the UAR were pleased by Nu'man's policies. The first resented the measures taken to limit his powers while the Egyptians did not like Nu'man's independent stance. On 28 May, 1965 al-Sallal precipitated a political crisis by forming a Supreme Council of the Armed Forces without consulting the Prime Minister. Nu'man considered the action unconstitutional and on 1 July resigned his post in protest. This action brought the power struggle between the moderates and radicals to a head. On 14 July, General al-Amri, who was in favour of a hard-line approach, formed a nineteen-member cabinet which included only three ministers from the previous government. Al-Amri's cabinet lost no time in reversing the policies of his predecessor. The policy statement of the new cabinet emphasised the need to uphold the Republican system, to debar the Hamid al-Din family from any part in government and to eliminate rebellion, dissension and reaction.<sup>72</sup>

The moderate leaders had been widely supported by the tribes and the expulsion of the al-Nu'man government meant more dissension from within the Republican ranks. On 20 July 1965, nearly 250 Republican shaykhs arrived in South Yemen from where they sent telegrams to the Arab League and the UN demanding the reinstatement of the Nu'man government and the implementation of the Khamir resolutions.<sup>73</sup> Afterwards they left for Saudi Arabia where they met King Faysal and under his auspices held talks with the Royalists and the popular forces on ways in which the war could be settled. From this two-week conference, which was held at Ta'if, Saudi Arabia from 1-31 August, a four-step settlement plan emerged. The *sine qua non* of the plan was the establishment of an Islamic state in Yemen with a provisional government to arrange for a plebiscite on the future form of government.<sup>74</sup>

As an attempt at settlement the Ta'if Agreement had no real chance of success for it reflected the Saudi views too closely. It pin-pointed the basic difference between the Republicans, radicals and moderates who on one hand insisted on the Republic and on the other the popular forces who sought to abandon the Republic in favour of an Islamic state.<sup>75</sup> The Ta'if Agreement was immediately rejected by both the YAR government and the moderate Republicans. In a statement on 18 August, General al-Amri's cabinet rejected the Ta'if Agreement and denounced the conference as "merely a continuation of Saudi acts of aggression and sabotage" against the YAR.<sup>76</sup> For his part, al-Iryani categorically rejected the Ta'if Agreement, insisting that any accord must include two basic terms: the maintenance of the Republic and the permanent removal of the Imam and his family.<sup>77</sup>

### Conclusion

The war which broke out after the overthrow of the Imamate on 26 September, 1962 increased the polarisation of forces in the Arab world and involved great power rivalry as well. The intervention by the UAR and Saudi Arabia in Yemen was perceived mainly within their ongoing rivalry but also invited indirect involvement of the other powers which had a vested interest in the Arabian Peninsula, notably Britain, USA, and USSR. This engulfed the YAR in wider regional conflict and confronted the Yemeni Republic with many challenges. The revolutionary character of the Yemeni revolution and its association with President Nasir's Egypt were at the root of the problems the YAR faced in the pre-1976 era. Many states denied recognition to it partly because of its association with the UAR and revolutionary policies. Increasing involvement by the UAR and Saudi Arabia led to

loss of control by the YAR of the conflict which became linked with relations between the two Arab states. In its domestic politics too, the increasing involvement of the UAR in the war led to increasing influence over the Republic's own policies. No less a threat were the sharp differences which developed among the two Republican factions, the radicals and the moderates, over the extent of the Egyptian influence and the strategies of settling the war.

## NOTES ON CHAPTER II

1. In numerical terms, the Mutawakkilat Kingdom had fairly wide diplomatic relations, but these were only meant to enhance the international legitimacy of the regime and reflected no real activity. At the time of the 26 September Revolution, Yemen had diplomatic relations with 22 states, Arab and non-Arab. But while Yemen established permanent representation in 18 of these states, it was a host to only nine embassies, see A. H. Sharafaddin, *Daily American Commercial Printing Section, Rome, Italy, 1961, p.70.*
2. David McLintock, "The Yemen Arab Republic" in David E. Long and Bernard Reich (eds.) *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North America*, Westview Press, 1980, p.184.
3. John Peterson, *Yemen: The Search For a Modern State*, Croom Helm, London, 1982.
4. An examination of the pre-September economic conditions is to be found in the book by Muhammad al-Attar *al-Takhalluf al-Iktisadi wal-Idjtima'i fil Yaman* and Muhammad Ana'm's work entitled *Government Organization as a Barrier to Economic Development in Yemen*, see bibliography.
5. Abdallah al-Thawr, *Thawrat al-Yaman*, Sana'a, Dar al-Hana lil Tiba'ah, 1968, pp. 116-117; Abdallah al-Shamahi, *Al-Yaman: al-Insan wal Hadharah*, Sana'a, Dar al-Kalimah, 1984, pp.306-308.

6. Rabhi Sahwiel, "al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah wa Atharaha ala Harakat 26 min Siptimbir 1962" in *Thawrat 26 Siptimbir: Dirasat wa Shahadat lil Tarikh*, Markaz al-Dirasat wal Buhuth al-Yamani (Sana'a), Beirut, Dar al-Awdah, 1986, pp.49-54.
7. The original account of the coup as narrated by the "Free Officers" themselves is to be found in *al-Thawrah al-Yamaniyyah: Asrar wa Watha'iq*, Markaz al-Dirasat wal Buhuth al-Yamani (Sana'a) Kuwait, Matab'i al-Riyadi, 1978, pp.141-180.
8. *ibid.*, pp.181-182.
9. George Haddad, *Revolutions and Military Rule in the Middle East. Part III. The Arab States: Egypt, the Sudan, Yemen, and Libya*, Robert Speller & Sons, 1973, p.253.
10. Ali Rahamy, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World, 'Intervention in Yemen 1962-1967'*, University Press of America, DC, p.86.
11. See Muhammad Hassanain Haykal, *Sanawat al-Ghaliyan: Vol. I*. Cairo, Muassasat al-Ahram lil Tardjamah wal-Nashr, 1988, pp.631-649.
12. See *U.S. News and World Report*, 31 December, 1962.
13. *Al-Hayat*, 29 September, 1962.
14. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 1963, p.19298.

15. Muhammad al-Attar, *Al-Takhalluf al-Iktisadi wal Idjtiam'i fil Yaman*, Algiers, al-Matbua'at al-Wataniyyah al-Djazairiah, 1965, p.294.
16. Edgar O'Ballance, *The War in the Yemen*, Faber And Faber, 1971, p.81. For a detailed account of al-Badr's escape, see *Al-Djaish wal Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman: 1919-1969* by Colonel Nadji al-Ashwal. Published in Sana'a by Matab'i Idarat al-Shu'un al-Ammah wal Tawdjih al-Manawi lil Kuwar al-Musallahah, 1985, pp.221-225.
17. Al-Thawr al-Yamaniyyah, *Asrar wa Watha'iq*, op. cit., pp.101-102
18. For texts of telegrams, see *al-Hayat*, 30 September, 1962.
19. See al-Sallal's conclusion to that effect in *al-Ahram*, 17 October, 1987; al-Iryani's similar view in *Wathaik Ula An al-Thawrah al-Yamaniyyah*, op. cit., p.170.
20. The UAR was the first Arab state to recognise the YAR on September 29, and was followed by Syria and Tunisia (October 1). Algeria and Sudan followed suit on 8 October, and Lebanon accorded recognition a week later. (Source *al-Hayat*, Beirut). Apart from the revolutionary Arab governments, Kuwait was the only Arab government providing economic aid to the YAR during the war period.
21. Al-Kitab al-Sanawi, Ministry of Information, Sana'a, 1963, p.16.

22. *The Economist*, 22 October, 1962. In his book *al-Tarikh al-Sirri lil-Thawrah al-Yamaniyah*, pp.142-143 Djuzaylan mentioned that he was told by the Iraqi ambassador that the Iraqi President General Kasim thought President Nasir was behind the Yemeni Revolution. In their declaration of recognition of the YAR, both the Syrian Foreign Minister and Iraqi President General Kasim implicitly criticised the UAR intervention in Yemen. (see texts in *al-Hayat*, 2, 10, October, 1962).
23. When relations between the Ba'athist Government in Syria and President Nasir deteriorated following the failure of the unity talks of 1963, the former came openly in support of the Yemeni moderate republicans who opposed al-Sallal and criticized some of the UAR policies in Yemen. In 1965, the Syrian Government strongly supported the Nu'man Government and denounced the Djedda Agreement (August 1964). See ME/1948/A/5 and ME/1902/A/4-5.
24. *Time*, October 5, 1962.
25. Muhammad al-Hilwih, *Al-Siyyasa al-Kharidjiah al-Yamaniyyah fil Ahd al-Djumhuri: Dirasah Tahliliyah fi Aba'diha al-Dakhliyyah wal Kharidjiyyah*, King Saud University, Riyad, 1985, p.25.
26. Abd al-Rahman al-Baydani, *Azmat al-Ummah al-Arabiyah wa-Thawrat al-Yaman*, Cairo, Matab'i al-Maktab al-Masri al-Hadith, 1984, p.401.
27. *al-Hayat*, October 3, 1962.
28. *The New York Times*, 24 October, 1962; *al-Hayat*, 20 October, 1962.



29. Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, London, 1983, p.201.
30. Abd al-Rahman al-Baydani, *Azmat al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah wa Thawrat al-Yaman*, op. cit., pp.541-542.
31. See details in *al-Hayat*, October 21, 1962.
32. Abdul Wahid Zindani, *Arab Politics In The United Nations*, Sana'a University Publications, 1977, p.188.
33. Said Badiib, *The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict Over North Yemen, 1962-1970*, Westview Press, 1986, p.57.
34. See Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, London, op. cit., 1983, pp.200-201.
35. George Haddad, "Revolutions and Military Role in the Middle East", op. cit., p.263.
36. Salah al-Hadidi, *Shahid ala Harb al-Yaman*, Cairo, Maktabat Madboli, 1984, pp.38-39.
37. Ghassan Salamah, *Al-Siyyasah al-Kharidjiyyah al-Saudiyyah Mundhu A'm 1945: Dirasah fil Alakat al-Dawliyyah*, Beirut, Ma'ahad al-Inma al-Arabi, 1980, p.636.
38. See Frederick Gause, *Saudi-Yemeni Relations: Domestic Structure and Foreign Influence*, N.Y. Columbia University Press, 1990, p.62.

39. Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, Cairo, Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyah al-Ammah, 1981, p.135.
40. Salah al-Hadidi, op. cit., p.44; This Egyptian view was shared by the YAR leadership. See replies of Ali Kasim al-Muaiyyad in *Thawrat*, 26 September, Vol. I, op. cit., p.183.
41. Salah al-Hadid, op. cit., pp. 63-64; Ahmad Yusuf, *al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.201-210.
42. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, March 16-23, 1963, pp.19300-19301.
43. Christopher McMullen, *Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963; A Case Study in Mediation*, Institute for the Georgetown University, Washington, 1980, p.3.
44. Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, Penguin Books, 1975, p.110.
45. Edgar O'Ballance, *The War In The Yemen*, op. cit., pp.138-141.
46. Christopher McMullen, *Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963*, op. cit., p.2.
47. See Ahmad Yusuf, *al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.217-218.
48. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, February 8-15, 1964, p.19891.

49. See Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.241.
50. Abdul Wahid Zindani, *Arab Politics in the United Nations*, op. cit., pp.192-193.
51. Muhammad al-Shuaybi, *Mutamar Haradh wa Muhawalat al-Salam bil Yaman*, Damascus, 1980, p.25.
52. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, January 16-23, 1965, p.20530.
53. Khadijah al-Haysami, *Al-Ilqat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah, 1963-1980*, Cairo, Dar al-Matba'ah al-Salafiyyah, 1983, p.174-175.
54. See Edgar O'Ballance, *The War In The Yemen*, op. cit., p.149.
55. See *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, October 9-16, 1965, p.21003.
56. SWB, ME/1953/A/I.
57. Muhammad al-Shua'ybi, *Mutamar Haradh wa Muhawalat al-Salam bil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.51-57.
58. Ahmad J. Afif, *Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman*, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 1982, pp.148-150.

59. Yemeni sources reveal that personal animosities among senior officers , especially al-Sallal, al-Djaifi and Djuzyalan began to surface as early as the end of October 1962. (See Djuzyalan's book *al-Tarikh al-Sirri lil Thawrah al-Yamaniyyah*, pp.140-142 and al-Baydani's *Azmat al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah...*, pp.436-441). Sources consulted by the writer suggest that personal ambitions for leadership were the underlying causes.

60. In their efforts to ensure cohesion of the régime, President Nasir had intervened personally (and sometimes upon the request of the YAR leaders themselves) to mediate in their differences (see Yusuf pp.356-357). As many opposed al-Baydani, the Egyptian President withdrew the former to Cairo in January 1963 and later convinced al-Sallal to ask Hamud al-Djaifi to form a new cabinet with wider participation.

61. Edgar O'Ballance, *The War In The Yemen*, op. cit., pp.89-90.

62. See text in Ahmad Afif, *Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.339-345.

63. *ibid.*, pp.131-132.

64. Ali Rahmy, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World*, op. cit., p.177.

65. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, January 16-23, 1965, p.20531.

66. Text of the manifesto in *Min Adjl al-Salam fil Yaman: al-Mushkilah wal Hall*, The UPF-information department, Beirut, 1965.

67. For the first of these demands see Nagi al-Ashwal, *al-Djaish wal Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.276.
68. Khadijah al-Haysami, *al-Ilakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, op. cit., p.87, 189.; Afif, *al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.128.
69. Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, pp.292-293.
70. *ibid.*, p.291.
71. Sultan Nadji, *al-Tarikh al-Askari lil Yaman: 1839-1967*, Kuwait. Sharikat Kathimah lil Nashr wal Tardjamanh, (no publication date), p.231.
72. Khadijah al-Haysami, *Al-Ilakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, op. cit., p.185.
73. Edgar O'Ballance, *The War In Yemen*, op. cit., p.148.
74. See text of the resolutions of the Ta'if conference in *Mutamar al-Taif: Nusus wa Wawatha'iq*, compiled by Zayd al-Wazir. Ittihad al-Kuwat al-Sha'biyyah Ladjnat al-I'lam, Beirut 1965.
75. Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.289.
76. Khadijah al-Haysami, *Al-Ilakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah*, op. cit. p.188.
77. *Al-Wakaqi al-Arabiyyah*, August, 1965, p. 516-517.

CHAPTER III

THE DECISION MAKERS

Adeed Dawisha, in his influential study of Middle East foreign policy-making, has suggested that examination of the decision-making élite should involve three categories, corresponding to the scale of their descending importance and influence in the decision-making process. The first category refers to the hegemony over the decision-making structure of one person, usually the head of state. The second is the ruling élite, which comprises a small group of people who are regularly consulted by the principal decision-maker in either their individual capacity or as representatives of institutions. The third category, the political élite, consists of individuals and institutions who participate in the decision-making process without necessarily being allocated any decision-making powers.<sup>1</sup> This proposition is particularly relevant in the case being studied because it provides a useful basis for examining the different levels of participation in the Yemeni decision-making process. For reasons explained in the first chapter, the emphasis in the Yemeni case is on the role of individuals rather than that of institutions. With this in mind, the following section will briefly describe the Yemeni decision-making élite on the basis suggested by Dawisha. In this case, the decision-maker refers to the head of state and the second deals with members of the Republican Council (after 1967), the prime minister as well as the foreign minister. The third category includes representatives of the various political forces, namely tribal shaykhs and military officers, as well as representatives of the various political groups.

## The Principal Decision Makers

The situation in the YAR is not very different from that of other Arab countries where the decision-making system is dominated by a principal decision-maker, namely the head of state. Except for the Second Interim Constitution (1965), all Yemeni constitutions so far have given the president a central role in the policy-making mechanism of the state. Although the government system was a combination of both parliamentary and presidential systems, the head of state was accorded substantial authority. The first Permanent Constitution issued on 27 April, 1964 had, for instance, made the president responsible for a wide range of functions. In addition to being the head of state, the President was also the head of both the Political Bureau and National Security Council as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. He shared with the cabinet the formulation of the state's policies, nomination of the Prime Minister and members of cabinet, and had the right to dismiss them. With the concurrence of the Consultative Assembly, he could declare war, approve treaties, and also accept the accreditation of foreign diplomatic representations in Yemen.<sup>2</sup> During the pre-1967 period however, the role of President al-Sallal in the policy-making of the YAR was in reality severely limited. His long and recurrent visits abroad, the pressures from the opposition and the interference of the UAR made his role mostly irrelevant. Only after the elimination of the opposition in September 1966 and the waning of the UAR's interest in Yemen following the June 1967 war did President al-Sallal exercise effective control of YAR policies.

The changes which took place in 1967 meant that the government came to be based on a parliamentary system where the executive authority was



divided between the Republican Council (*al-Madjlis al-Djumbhuri*) and the Council of Ministers (*Madjlis al-Wuzara*). According to the Third Provisional Constitution (November 1967) the office of the presidency was transferred to a three-man presidential council whose chairmanship was to be rotated among its members every eight months. The authority of the council's chairman was, according to this constitution, reduced to mostly ceremonial duties. The Consultative Assembly (*Madjlis al-Shura*) was given powers formerly under the president's jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup> However, the Assembly did not actually come into existence until after the national reconciliation of May 1970. The National Council which was established in March 1969 as a temporary replacement for the Consultative Assembly was given only limited authority and the real authority continued as before to rest with the executive, dominated by the chairman of the Republican Council Kadi al-Iryani.

These legal provisions only partly explain the dominant role played by the two heads of state and are less relevant in explaining their long occupancy of the office. The explanation lies in two inter-related factors: the personal qualities of the two leaders and the pressures of war.

Colonel al-Sallal was chosen to be the leader of the Revolution by the Free Officers on the night of the September 1962 coup because, as Chief of Staff of the Imam's guards, his support was vital and also because a high-ranking officer was needed to lead the Revolution. There were some who considered him unsuitable because of his humble social background while the moderate Republicans to a man objected to his confrontational policies. However, his popularity was lasting among many Yemenis who identified with his views, especially the leftist elements who still remained part of his cabinet in October

1967. Like most of the Yemeni officers, he was an enthusiastic supporter of Djamal Abd al-Nasir's revolutionary Arabism but was less diplomatic in expressing his views. A Yemeni writer described him as a "revolutionary who put on the costume of a politician." <sup>4</sup> His open and candid support of UAR policies in Yemen led many inside and outside Yemen to accuse him of being an Egyptian puppet. Undoubtedly, al-Sallal owed his five-year tenure of the presidency (from October 1962 to November 1967) mainly to Egyptian support. The latter supported him partly because of their desire to maintain stability in the higher echelons of the YAR power structure.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike al-Sallal, Kadi al-Iryani who became Chairman of the Republican Council on November 5 1967, did not provoke wide opposition within the governing élite. He seldom took sides in disputes and was known as "the man who holds the middle of the stick". Throughout the first five years of the Republic, in spite of his moderate views, he was never considered to be one of al-Sallal's enemies and he enjoyed the respect both of the Egyptians and those who were opposed to the Egyptian presence.<sup>6</sup> His background as Kadi (religious judge) and his revolutionary credentials as a veteran leader of the anti-Imam movement accorded him influential social and political status. He became chairman of the Republican Council in 1967 and was re-elected several times, having demonstrated his ability to strike a balance between the opposing Republican factions, especially following the August 1968 clashes, as well as having exhibited the moderate views deemed necessary for eventual reconciliation with the Royalist side.<sup>7</sup>

President al-Sallal's domination of the decision-making system was absolute by mid-1967. Members of the cabinets formed in September 1966 and October 1967 were either individuals loyal to him personally

or persons supportive of his policies. There is virtually no way of telling how al-Sallal arrived at his final decisions. In some cases the Cabinet was only informed afterwards. He relied on a small group of aides which included his chief of cabinet, to collect information on foreign policy issues and provide him with advice on foreign policy matters, but he retained the last say in making the final political choice.<sup>8</sup>

Al-Iryani on the other hand, showed no desire to control the decision-making although he remained throughout his tenure the centre of the process. Because of his status and political skills, al-Iryani invariably had the last word politically, despite the fact that many of his colleagues were individuals of considerable experience, like Muhammad Ali Uthman (a permanent member of the Republican Council) and Ahmad Nu'man - the other influential moderate leader. He tended to leave matters to be thoroughly debated and only intervened if it became necessary over controversial issues, although he always had the decisive say. In all cases, he never took a decision unless he was absolutely sure it was the right one.<sup>9</sup> He was heard to say on many occasions that he was "an arbiter, not a ruler".<sup>10</sup>

### The Ruling Élite

In addition to the two members of the Republican Council, the ruling élite also included the prime minister and usually the foreign minister. Notwithstanding the legal prescriptions, the role of the cabinet in foreign policy formation amounted to no more than rubber stamping decisions handed down to it from above. However, due to their position as heads of the government, the three Premiers who

presided over the six cabinets formed after November 1967 were actively involved in the policy-making process and in turn constituted part of the ultimate decision-making élite. Abdallah al-Kurshmi was largely preoccupied with the financial crises which confronted his short-lived cabinet (September 1969 - February 1970) but the other two premiers, General al-Amri and Muhsin al-Ayni, were able to play a more active role in foreign policy. Al-Amri had almost no training or special interest in foreign affairs. He was primarily a military leader who combined the post of premier with that of commanding the army. As a result he devoted most of his energies to military affairs and while heading the cabinet delegated real power in the field of foreign affairs to the foreign minister.<sup>11</sup> The views of both al-Amri and al-Ayni carried special weight, not only by virtue of their formal positions in the government but also because of their own political influence. Al-Amri's record of opposition to the Imamate and his role in the defence of the revolution, especially during the critical siege of Sana'a in 1967/78, accorded him prominent political status. In general, his views were taken to reflect those of the military. Al-Ayni owed his influence to his active role in opposition to the Imamate and also to the fact that he was widely respected among his fellow intellectuals and closely associated with the Ba'athists, inside and outside Yemen, in addition to having family links with influential shaykhs.<sup>12</sup> Of all the prime ministers of the war period, Muhsin al-Ayni was the most involved in foreign affairs. His education at Cairo University and at the Sorbonne during the 1950s and his travels before and after the revolution, in addition to his early experience of foreign affairs as the YAR's first foreign minister, added to his skill and interest. In the two governments he formed in November 1967 and February 1970, he personally took charge of the foreign affairs portfolio.<sup>13</sup>

The foreign affairs portfolio was customarily given to an important member of the cabinet because of its crucial nature. Sometimes, as in the case of al-Sallal's cabinet of October 1967 and al-Ayni's two cabinets, the portfolio was retained by the premier himself. Dr. Hasan Makki, who as a well-known politician and prominent intellectual played an active role in the formulation of both foreign and domestic policy, was the only minister to assume the foreign affairs portfolio three times, in 1964, 1966 and 1967. Because of the complexity of foreign relations, the position was invariably given to those who had some expertise in this area. Except for Shaykh Abdulkawi Hamim, President al-Sallal and Mustafa Yakub, all foreign ministers were graduates of Arab and foreign universities.<sup>14</sup>

### The Political Élite

One particular feature of decision-making in Yemen was that individuals from outside the decision-making structure indirectly participated in the formulation of the state's policies. These included individuals who either sought to influence decisions or who were "co-opted" into the process by the Government itself. The first category included a number of tribal shaykhs who, because of the indispensable role of their tribes in support of the army during the war, came to exercise direct influence on the decision-making centre. Tribal shaykhs like Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar and Sinan abu Luhum, began to hold important positions within the central government, compared with the situation before the September 1962 Revolution when they could only exert influence on the Government policies from outside.<sup>15</sup> Their influence was greatly enhanced in the post-November régime as a result of their interference during the 1968 intra-

Republican struggle in support of the Government and its conservative policies. Among these shaykhs Abdallah bin Husayn was the most influential, because of his position as the paramount shaykh of the powerful Hashid tribal federation. These had provided most of the tribal support to the régime and made his opinion indispensable in the country's political decisions. The fact that he had some influence among some elements and tribal factions on the Royalist side added to the significance of his role during the search for reconciliation in the last three years of the war. Following his election to the Chairmanship of the National Assembly (*al-Madjlis al-Watani*) in April 1969, he began to play a more active role in foreign policy matters, and participated in official delegations sent abroad.

Like the tribal shaykhs, the army insisted on playing a role in deciding the country's policies. The differences within the army, and the opposition by some officers to General al-Amri after 1968, led some officers to bypass their high command and express their opinion directly to the Presidential Council. These inclinations were encouraged by the leadership which showed particular interest in ascertaining the various views within the army.<sup>16</sup>

Among members of the political élite were prominent social figures including Ulama (Islamic clergy), and intellectuals who were "co-opted" to the decision-making process on the Government's own initiative. In important foreign policy issues, consultations were usually widened to include not only members of the decision-making élite but also selected public opinion leaders.<sup>17</sup> While such a process was not clearly defined in the pre-1967 era, al-Iryani's government promoted this type of "public participation" in policy-making. Al-

Iryani viewed these consultations as a means of providing him with new perspectives as well as mobilising support for his policies.

### Public Pressure

In Yemen, as in many other third world countries, the influence of public opinion on foreign policy is minimal. Usually decisions are reached in the light of discussions and debates which take place at the top of the government's structure and are only later communicated to the public. Lack of political participation by the public during the 1960s was partly due to the unsophisticated nature of the public resulting from the high level of illiteracy. In 1955, literacy among Yemenis was estimated to be as low as 2.5 per cent and by 1972 this figure had risen to no more than 15 per cent. In addition, the public mass media was in its infancy and contributed little to the understanding of foreign policy issues. During the war there were three radio stations, situated in Sana'a, Ta'iz and Hudaydah, but their transmissions reached only half of the main urban centres. The circulation of daily newspapers was limited to 5,000 copies, of which more than two thirds were local rather than national. While the local radio stations paid due attention to foreign news, the press generally gave no coverage to foreign policy issues.<sup>18</sup>

The virtual absence of public pressure was, in short, a reflection of the backward nature of the socio-political organisation of Yemeni society. No political parties or permanent interest groups existed which could aggregate and articulate the interest of the various segments of society. At the beginning of the 1960s branches of pan-Arab parties like the Ba'ath, the Movement of Arab Nationalists

(*Harakat Al-Kawmiyyin Al-Arab*) and the Communists, sprang up in Yemen, but because of limitations emanating from the socio-political setting their following was restricted, a fact which made them more of political groups than political parties. At the time of the September Revolution their core membership did not exceed 40, and at the end of the 1960s the number was still no more than a few hundred.<sup>19</sup>

Despite repeated official emphasis on the need to establish a mass political organisation to ensure public participation in the formulation of YAR policies, only one serious attempt was made towards that end. Mainly due to the demands made by the war on the Republican governments, the issue of political organisation was not among its priorities. Indeed, the government adopted the Egyptian method of mobilising the masses only whenever a demonstration of public support was needed.<sup>20</sup> Under the influence of Egypt's example, al-Sallal's government even passed a law on 23 May, 1963 banning the establishment of political parties. The only political organisation, *al-Ittihad al-Thawri al-Sha'abi* (the People's Revolutionary Union) was established in January 1967. Being an official creation however, it could not claim to represent the mass of the people and it was abandoned after the overthrow of al-Sallal's government in the November 1967 coup. Its main achievement was the organisation of demonstrations in October 1967 against the Khartoum Agreement. The ban on political parties was upheld after the November 1967 coup. The August 1968 clashes between the followers of Ba'ath and followers of the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN) mobilised public opinion against party politics and gave the government the pretext to oppose such political activities. Throughout the post-November 1967 era al-Iryani continued to oppose such activities on the grounds that they would involve incessant friction between parties and open the door to foreign intervention.<sup>21</sup>



Until 1966, only limited activities by the then pro-Egyptian MAN had been tolerated, and even after the November coup it was only the Ba'athists who were able to exert anything like an influence on government policies, and only then indirectly through selected individuals in the government.<sup>22</sup>

Legislative constraints on government policies were almost non-existent. Despite several attempts in the pre-1967 era aimed at establishing a representative body, the Consultative Assembly (*Madjlis al-Shura*) was never established. On 15 March, 1969, after more than eight years, the National Council was established to function as a temporary representative body. However, since its entire membership (45) was nominated by the Republican Council and because of its limited legislative powers, the *Madjlis* could have no real influence on policies.<sup>23</sup>

This does not entail that public opinion did not have any influence at all on the policy-making process. Precisely because of the need for national consensus and cohesion in face of Royalist challenge, and due to continued intra-Republican friction, the decision-makers were even more sensitive to public attitudes, especially the views of the military and the tribes. Al-Sallal and his successor al-Iryani were, to varying degrees, aware of the prevailing socio-political climate, formulating their decisions to suit it on several occasions. For instance, in May 1965, because of popular support for the Khamir Conference, al-Sallal was obliged to approve the resolutions of the conference which included reconsideration of some of his long established policies.<sup>24</sup> In addition, al-Iryani admitted that it was due to pressure from the military and intellectuals that in November

1967 he rejected the Arab Tripartite Commission, against his own inclination.<sup>25</sup>

The two effectively organised socio-political institutions, the army and the tribes, were the only pressure groups capable of affecting the policy-making process. The priority given to defence during the Republican-Royalist war effectively put the military in charge of the country's affairs. Army officers held important portfolios in most of the cabinets during that period. In addition al-Sallal and his successor al-Iryani always ensured the support of the military before making any choices relating to major issues. The military did not, however, possess the exclusive power enjoyed by their counterparts in other countries of the Middle East, mainly because it did not have the monopoly on coercion in Yemeni society. As all Yemeni tribes were armed collectively they were much more powerful than the army.<sup>26</sup> In the final analysis, the military could not by itself ensure the defence of the revolution which it had initiated and had to rely on Egyptian military support, as well as that of the tribal forces. Its preoccupation with defence, and the inclination of the post-November moderate leadership to curb its role in politics, had made the army's participation in the government rather inconsistent. This was reflected in the fact that whereas the officers occupied 30 per cent of the seats in the pre-November 1967 cabinets, the proportion subsequently fell to 20 percent.<sup>27</sup> The army only intervened directly in the decision-making process where the decisions under considerations had a direct bearing on defence.

The other powerful element in Yemen were the tribes who collectively had always played an important role in the political life of the country. During the war, the power of the tribes was further enhanced

by the competition for their support between the Republicans and the Royalists and the money and weapons their shaykhs had received as inducements. The shaykhs' influence traditionally lay in their role as a pressure group influencing policies from outside the government and it was not until after the November 5 coup that they were incorporated into the ruling establishment.<sup>28</sup> However, even after they were given important positions in the al-Iryani government, lack of political experience limited their direct participation in the formulation of the state's policies. In general, the shaykhs had little interest in matters outside their own tribal domains and had little experience in technical matters. Their participation in the formulation of the country's foreign policies was therefore both minimal and indirect.

### NOTES ON CHAPTER III

1. Adeed Dawisha, *The Middle East*, op. cit., p.62.
2. Abdul Malik Sa'id, *Talawwur Tadjribat al-Tandhim al-Siyyasi fi al-Djumbhuriyyah al-Yamaniyyah Ba'ad Thawrat Aylul 1962*, University of Rabat, Morocco, 1989, pp.32-3.
3. See text of the Third Interim Constitution in *Nusus Yamaniyyah*, op. cit., pp.73-80.
4. See Abdallah al-Baradduni, *al-Yaman al-Djumbhuri*, Matba'at al-Katib al-Arabi, Damascus, 1983, pp.589.
5. Personal interviews, see also A. al-Baradduni, *al-Yaman al-Djumbhuri*, op. cit., p.575.
6. *ibid.*, p.584.
7. John Peterson, *Yemen: The search for a Modern State*, op. cit., p.107; also see *The Economist*, October 1969.
8. Personal interviews.
9. *The Times*, November 7, 1967.
10. Personal interview with Dr. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, Sana'a, December, 1989.

11. This conclusion was inferred from an interview with Mustafa Yakub, the YAR foreign minister during al-Amri's cabinet of 1965, Bonn, 1988.
12. See Abdallah al-Baradduni, *al-Yaman al-Djumburi*, op. cit., p.587.
13. For composition of the YAR cabinets see *Sidjil Wathaik bi Tashkil al-Wazarat fil Jumhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah ala Mada Ishrin A'aman li-Thawrat Siptimbir al-Madjidah: 26/9/1962 - 26/9/1982*, al-Maktab al-Kanuni li-Riyasat al-Djumburiyyah wa Madjlis al-Wuzara, Hudaydah, Dar al-Misbah lil Tiba'ah.
14. Muhsin al-Ayni received a university degree in Law from Cairo University, 1957; Hassan Makki obtained a university degree in Economics and Commerce from the University of Bologna, Italy, 1959-60; Abd al-Rahman al-Baydani held a Ph.D. in Economics and Administration from the University of Bonn, Germany, 1961; Muhsin al-Sirri received a university diploma in Banking and Commerce from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, 1961; Muhammad Sallam obtained a B.A. degree in Biology from Temple University, U.S.A., 1958; Yahya Djaghman received a university degree from Boston University, U.S.A., in Political Science, 1962; and Ahmad Barakat received a university diploma in Petroleum Reservoir Engineering from Imperial College, London, 1969.
15. John Peterson, *Yemen: The Search for a Modern State*, Croom Helm, 1982, op. cit., pp.105-106.
16. See for example Chapter 7, p.183.

17. David McLintock, *Foreign Exposure and Attitudinal Change: A Case Study of Foreign Policy Makers In the Yemen Arab Republic*, The University of Michigan, Ph.D., 1973, p.48.
18. David McLintock, *Foreign Exposure and Attitudinal Change: A Case Study of Foreign Policy Makers In the Yemen Arab Republic*, *ibid.*, p.24; Abdallah al-Zain, *Al-Yaman wa wasa'il al-'Ilamiyyah 1872-1974*, Cairo, *Matba'at al-Tawbaji al-Tijariyyah*, 1st edition, 1985, pp.205-267.
19. Personal interviews.
20. Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, *op. cit.*, p.116.
21. Robert Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic: The Politics of Development 1962-1986*, Westview Press, 1987, p.33.
22. David McLintock, *Foreign Exposure and Attitudinal Change: A Case Study of Foreign Policy Makers In the Yemen Arab Republic*, *ibid.*, p.47.
23. S.H. Amin, *Law & Justice in Contemporary Yemen: People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic*, Royston Limited, 1987, p.51.
24. From an interview with Colonel Ali al-Sallal, dated 1989. See also Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, *op. cit.*, p.296.
25. Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, *op. cit.*, p.477.

26. Personal interviews.

27. See *Sidjil Wathaik bi Tashkil al-Wazarat fil Jumhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah ala Mada Ishrin A'aman li-Thawrat Siptimbir al-Madjidah: 26/9/1962 - 26/9/1982*, op. cit., pp.22-32.

28. Robert Stookey concluded that one of the main innovations of the conservative post-November 5 régime was the recruitment of tribal shaykhs into positions of authority (see Stookey, 'Social Structure and Politics in the YAR', part 2, *Middle East Journal*, vol.28, no.4, 1974, p.410).

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES



The foreign policy pursued by any state is the end result of interaction between values, images and capabilities. Whereas a state's values will determine what is desirable, the capabilities, as perceived by decision-makers, will determine what is feasible.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the revolutionaries who overthrew the Imamate in Yemen, their first policy statement declared their main objective to be the establishment of a Republican régime. Other objectives were defined in the Declaration of the Aims and Principles of the Revolution, but it was implicitly assumed that only under a Republican régime could these other objectives be realised.<sup>2</sup>

The Royalist counter-revolution, which sprang up in the first two weeks of the revolution, continued for more than seven years; it threatened the very existence of the Republic and made security a priority over all other objectives. The YAR's foreign policy objectives during the period under consideration were determined by the interaction of three elements all clearly related to the security situation. These were: the perceived intentions and strengths of the anti-Republican forces including Saudi Arabia; the opportunities and constraints inherent in the shifts and changes of regional and international relations; and the Republic's own estimated capabilities. YAR foreign policy during the period under examination could be divided into three distinctive periods. The first period was characterised by the confrontational policies adopted as a response to the aggressive postures of the Royalist forces, both militarily and politically. This period began on 10 November, 1962 with the signing of the Mutual Defence Pact and lasted until November 1967, which represented a turning point in the YAR foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> However, only the part of this phase that began in August 1966 will be reviewed. The second period extended from November 1967 to September 1968 and

was dominated by the Royalist siege of Sana'a which for a while imposed a confrontational stance on the moderate leadership and frustrated its reconciliatory aims. In the third period, which lasted until March 1970, the Royalist military threat had largely subsided giving the YAR decision-makers an opportunity to shift attention to objectives other than the security of the régime.

However, before dealing with the evolution of YAR foreign policy, it is important to examine in more detail the differences between the rival Republican factions, the radicals and the moderates already touched on in Chapter II. Throughout the period 1963-1965 controversy raged over the basic issue of how best to ensure the survival of the Republic, especially the extent to which it should depend on the help of the UAR.

### Revolutionary Vs. Moderate

Despite their divergent backgrounds and political experience, the post-revolutionary élite was agreed upon the threat of external intervention against the revolution, especially from Saudi Arabia and Britain. Some, including the Free Officers, based their assumption on memories of the previous revolts of 1948 and 1955, but Kadi al-Iryani, who was one of the Free Yemenis, was actually told of the Saudi opposition to a Republican revolution in Yemen personally by Prince Faysal one year before the September 1962 revolution.<sup>4</sup> Anticipating an intervention from Saudi Arabia and Britain, almost all nationalist factions, and notably the Free Officers who initiated the coup, had been in contact with the UAR prior to September 1962 in the belief that the latter, because of its commitment to the Arab revolutionary

cause and its capabilities, would be the only Arab state willing and able to support the revolution. Consequently al-Sallal's telegram to President Nasir on 29 September, 1962, in which he requested Egypt's aid, was agreed to by almost all members of the post-revolutionary élite.<sup>5</sup>

In the initial stage of the war, that is until the end of 1963, no one in the YAR publicly expressed any dissenting views regarding the way the war with the Royalists was being conducted. As the Royalists stepped up their military activities, so the Republicans became increasingly preoccupied with the fighting. At that stage the Republican leaders of all political persuasions were fully aware of the necessity of ensuring sufficient and long-term Egyptian assistance and put pressure on Nasir to commit ever more troops to the defence of the YAR.<sup>6</sup> However, there were early signs of differences of opinion within the Republican leadership as to the strategy best fitted to deal with the Royalist opposition. Ever since the first waves of the Royalist offensive in the first two weeks of October 1962, the main tactical objective, both militarily and politically, was to cut off all external aid to the Royalists, especially that from Saudi Arabia. But while President al-Sallal and his deputy Dr. al-Baydani opted for an aggressive posture and in early October began to make threats against Saudi Arabia, supposedly aiming at deterring it from continuing to supply aid to the Royalists, Kadi al-Iryani and his two moderate colleagues Ahmad Nu'man and Muhammad al-Zubayri were already urging President Nasir to send a Republican delegation to Riyadh to allay Saudi fears.<sup>7</sup>

The subsequent controversy on the role of the intervening Arab states, the UAR and Saudi Arabia, which dominated the Republic's politics, was

clearly linked to the YAR leader's perceptions of the vulnerability of their position and the need for external assistance. However, the revolutionaries had been aware of the dangers of external aid since the foreign support received by Imam Ahmad during the two previous revolts of 1948 and 1955 had proved so detrimental.<sup>8</sup> Following the 1948 attempt there were doubts in some minds as to the usefulness of external aid to future revolutions. In 1953, while still in jail for his part in the 1948 revolt, al-Sallal expressed his conviction that due to unfavourable internal conditions the revolutionaries could not depend on their own resources for the protection of a future revolt. The realistic course of action, according to him, was to ensure the aid of sympathetic Arab régimes.<sup>9</sup> However, the leaders of the Free Yemeni Movement attributed the failure of the 1948 revolt partly to the reliance of the revolutionaries on help from Arab régimes which never materialised. As a result these leaders concluded that the Yemenis should from now on determine their own destiny, relying on their own abilities and resources.<sup>10</sup>

In mid-1963, the first notes of dissension were heard among Republican leaders on the subject of Egyptian aid. Some, including al-Sallal, supported the Egyptian military presence and called for unlimited reliance on the UAR; others, including the Free Yemenis, among them al-Iryani, al-Zubayri and Nu'man, felt the time had come for self-reliance<sup>11</sup>. This concept was used by the Third Force to effect the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Yemen, but was conceived differently by the moderate Republicans who insisted on a continued but limited Egyptian military presence. The concept of self-reliance was interpreted differently by the moderate Republicans who were committed to the survival of the Republic. In the resolutions of the Amran and Khamir Conferences, which were dominated by the moderates,

self-reliance was expressed in two interconnected measures: a peaceful settlement of the war on the basis of negotiation among the Yemenis themselves and simultaneously the establishment of a popular army to shoulder the main responsibility for the defence of the Republic.<sup>12</sup> By pursuing these dual aims the moderates hoped to achieve two basic objectives at the same time, namely the maintenance of the Republic and the restoration of national unity.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of forming a tribal army to decrease dependence on Egyptian aid was opposed by al-Sallal who claimed that it was unrealistic and even dangerous to rely on undisciplined and untrained tribesmen for the defence of the Republic. In his opinion, the existing Yemeni army and the Republican tribes combined could not hope to overcome the externally-backed Royalists and Egyptian aid was indispensable. Later, in September 1966, he said that "whoever claimed that we could depend on ourselves in these circumstances, when all these reactionary and international imperialist forces were surrounding us with all their power, was wrong and sought to deceive us and to liquidate our glorious revolution."<sup>14</sup> Al-Sallal viewed the UAR military aid to the Yemeni Republic as a manifestation of the "revolutionary" ties which bound not only the two régimes in Egypt and Yemen but all Arab revolutionary governments. Within a few days of the overthrow of General Kasim's régime in Iraq on February 1963, al-Sallal had taken the initiative in calling for a revolutionary alliance consisting of the UAR, Iraq, the YAR and Algeria. A month later he sent a cable to the delegations of the UAR, Syria, and Iraq, who were engaged in talks about possible unity, endorsing *a priori* their resolutions.<sup>15</sup> The rationale behind such a policy was the need to form an effective revolutionary alliance that could cancel out the reactionary alliance and enhance the security of the Republic at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

The moderate leaders, who in 1963 began to express doubts as to the wisdom of al-Sallal's policy *vis-a-vis* the UAR, had never been against the Egyptians or their military presence in the Republic. In principle, their perception of the UAR was based on practical rather than ideological considerations. They accepted that the Egyptian military presence was a deterrent to Saudi and British intervention. Indeed, during the peace negotiations at the Erkuwit and Haradh Conferences (November 1964; November-December 1965) the two moderate leaders Nu'man and al-Iryani, much like their colleagues, insisted that the UAR forces should not withdraw from Yemen until external aid to the Royalists was terminated.<sup>17</sup> In May 1965, Premier Ahmad Nu'man stated that these forces would not withdraw from Yemen until external aid to the Royalists was terminated.<sup>18</sup> However, Western sources suggested that attempts on the part of the Nu'man Government to obtain alternative Arab aid were motivated by the moderates' desire to reduce the YAR's reliance on the Egyptian forces and curb the UAR influence in Yemeni politics.<sup>19</sup> Kadi al-Iryani, who was a member of almost all the delegations sent for that purpose, including the delegation which toured several Arab countries in June 1965, made a point of saying that although aid was indeed sought to strengthen the YAR's position it was not the intention to replace the Egyptian troops with other Arab forces. The moderates, he later asserted, opposed the replacement of one external influence by another and, more importantly, were convinced that among the Arab states only the UAR under President Nasir was capable of helping the Yemeni Republic.<sup>20</sup>

Another underlying factor which influenced YAR policies was divergent opinion as to the motives of the ruling élite of Saudi Arabia in taking a role in the war. As early as the beginning of October, 1962, al-Baydani and the Republican radicals believed the Saudi monarchy was

bent on the destruction of the Yemeni Republic and that there could be no compromise between the two ideologically opposed régimes.<sup>21</sup> The religiously-oriented moderates, including Nu'man and al-Iryani, on the other hand, did not perceive Saudi Arabia as an ideological foe but rather as an aggressive neighbour with whom the Yemeni Republic could co-exist given the right atmosphere. Despite the Saudis' hostility towards the Yemeni Republic, they maintained it was still possible to assure the Saudis of the Republic's good intentions and thus ensure the termination of the aid the Saudi monarchs were supplying to the Yemeni Royalists.<sup>22</sup> Seizing the favourable conditions following the Khamir Conference, Premier Nu'man in May and June 1965 made determined efforts to talk directly to King Faysal but was forced to resign before actually achieving this objective.

#### The Policy of Confrontation (September 1966 - November 1967)

The confrontation between Saudi Arabia and the UAR came to a head between the end of 1966 and the middle of 1967. President Nasir's decision in the spring of 1966 to keep the Egyptian forces in Yemen and the implementation of the "long breath" strategy contributed to keeping Royalist attacks during that period to a minimum.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, Saudi Arabia and Britain stepped up their talks on arrangements for South Yemen after the British withdrawal scheduled for 1968.

Many observers, including Yemeni officials, believed that YAR responses to these and other external moves were influenced by the UAR which had already had a major hand in the formulation of the Yemeni Republic's policies.<sup>24</sup> This Egyptian influence notwithstanding,

President al-Sallal was never optimistic about the chances of a peaceful settlement to the war in Yemen and immediately upon the establishment of a new cabinet resumed his hard-line policies. Basically, al-Sallal and his colleagues were convinced that although the Royalist military pressure had diminished, this recent phase of Arab confrontation had constituted a new type of threat to their core value of security. In two key speeches, on the fourth anniversary of the revolution (25 September, 1966) and on the inauguration of the PRU on 17 January, 1967, al-Sallal stated that the Republic was facing an alliance between reactionary and imperialist forces headed by Saudi Arabia and Britain respectively. These hostile forces, he said, were devising new plots against the YAR. In the past, the YAR had been able to defeat these forces and achieve political stability and economic prosperity, but only with the help of the UAR.<sup>25</sup> In view of the new challenges and lack of sufficient national capabilities, it was still imperative to continue to rely on UAR aid. Therefore, the basis of YAR foreign policy in the coming period was "we march side by side". Other objectives outlined in these speeches were as follows:

1. to counter the Royalist-Saudi alliance by encouraging Saudi opposition groups;
2. the promotion of an Arab revolutionary bloc against the Arab conservative alliance;
3. to force an unconditional British withdrawal from South Yemen, and foil any plans designed to replace the British by a Saudi or any other external power there;



4. to consolidate relations with the socialist bloc countries, especially with the USSR, so as to ensure continued military supplies and political support from these states.

In the context of this broad strategy the YAR joined the UAR and the other revolutionary states in working against the Saudi-proposed Islamic Conference. This was described by al-Sallal as "a regrouping of the forces of reaction which were collaborating with the forces of imperialism in the last-ditch defence against the progressive revolutionary march of the liberated Arab countries and plotting against the Arab peoples so as to include them in the sphere of Western influence".<sup>26</sup> In January 1967, like the UAR, the YAR had announced its rejection of Jordan's proposal for the reconvening of the Arab summit "after it became evident that this invitation was a new reactionary ploy and that the Arab summits which were originally designed to bring the Arab forces together in the face of Israel are instead being used by the reactionary forces and thus in favour of Israel."<sup>27</sup>

The YAR leaders perceived the deterioration of their relations with several countries in the context of the prevailing polarisation of forces in the area and their identification as revolutionaries. The withdrawal by Jordan and Tunisia of their recognition of the YAR in February 1967, the closure by the British of South Yemen's borders with the YAR in August 1966, the crisis in YAR-USA relations in April 1967, and the execution by Saudi Arabia of seventeen Yemeni emigrants in March 1967, were all interpreted as part of a "reactionary-imperialist conspiracy" against the revolutionary Yemeni Republic.<sup>28</sup>

Egypt's defeat by Israel in the June War of 1967 aggravated al-Sallal's sense of insecurity. The withdrawal by the UAR of some of its forces from Yemen in the first days of the war was followed shortly by an increase in the number of Royalist attacks. Al-Sallal objected to the complete withdrawal of the Egyptian forces scheduled for implementation under the Khartoum Agreement (August 1967), claiming that the Yemeni army was still incapable of defending the Republic on its own.<sup>29</sup> Almost all of the YAR leaders believed that the anti-Republican forces would seize on the UAR withdrawal and launch an all-out offensive against the Republic, an eventuality which launch an all-out offensive against the Republic, an eventuality which

#### The Prelude to Reconciliation (November 1967 - September 1968)

In this period, YAR foreign policy was characterised by a dichotomy between the reconciliatory policies announced by the government and the confrontational posture it was forced to follow. The moderate leadership which took over as a result of the 5 November, 1967 coup, sought to bring about a peaceful end to the war through reconciliation with the Royalists, something it had been working on since the Khamir Conference of 1965. In its first policy statement, it emphasised reconciliation as the core of its policies, both domestic and external. More specifically, it aimed at achieving reconciliation with the Royalist tribes, within the Republican framework, and at arriving at an accommodation with Saudi Arabia.<sup>31</sup> The underlying assumption was that with the conclusion of the Khartoum Agreement and the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces, Saudi Arabia might be ready to come to terms with the moderate Republican government. However, the

Royalist siege of Sana'a frustrated these policies and forced the YAR to concentrate instead on defence.

The Royalist attempt to capture the capital city was perceived by the YAR leaders as posing an unprecedented threat to the survival of the Republican régime. Clearly, the balance of forces had shifted in favour of the Royalists who brought up 5,000 trained troops to lay siege to the city and still had 50,000 tribesmen in reserve.<sup>32</sup> Just as the Republican leaders had predicted, the Royalist offensive was launched when the Republicans were having difficulty filling the military vacuum left by the departing Egyptian forces and were at their most vulnerable. The Republican sense of vulnerability was enhanced by an awareness of the strong external backing available to the Royalists while even the Arab revolutionary régimes hesitated to commit themselves to the support of the YAR.<sup>33</sup> In December 1967 and January 1968, YAR forces captured weapons, maps and documents which pointed to the implication in the Royalist campaign of a number of foreign governments, including the USA, Iran and Saudi Arabia.<sup>34</sup> Consequently the YAR leadership was convinced that the Royalist attack was part of a conspiracy aimed at the very existence of the Republican régime. In mid-January 1968, Muhsin al-Ayni expressed the feeling of the Republican leaders when he said that:

"what happens now in Yemen is, in my view, the second phase of the imperialist-Zionist aggression which was initiated on the fifth of June..... There are now two battles the Arabs have to wage in their struggle against imperialism and its agent Zionism. These are the battles for Palestine and the battle for oil. The aggression against Yemen is directly linked to the oil and the Arabian Peninsula as a whole.... The

aggressors who wage their war against the Republic in the north will move their aggression against the revolution in South Yemen. Ultimately, they aim at controlling the entire Arabian Peninsula."<sup>35</sup>

In the struggle for survival, the YAR sought assistance from governments willing to provide it with military, economic and political support. As a result, relations became closer with Syria, Algeria, Iraq, China and, most importantly, the USSR which became the main source of vital military supplies.<sup>36</sup> However, relations with the USA deteriorated further as the YAR believed the former was actively involved in backing the Royalists.<sup>37</sup> The security imperatives had seemingly superseded the need to maintain a balanced non-aligned approach in the country's foreign relations. Even the more basic goal of Yemen's reunification was temporarily set aside for the sake of survival. On 30 November, 1967, the YAR recognised the newly established PRSY in spite of its previous insistence on a complete merger between the two parts of Yemen immediately after the independence of the south. This change of position was partly due to the YAR's immediate need for intra-Yemeni co-operation against the Saudis and the Royalists.<sup>38</sup>

Despite their preoccupation with defence, al-Iryani and the other members of the post-November governing élite continued their long established policy of trying to dissuade Saudi Arabia from maintaining its aid to the Royalists. As it became clear that King Faysal was supporting the Royalist bid for an outright military victory, the Republicans had no alternative but to follow a strategy that combined military steadfastness and political pressure. Most of the YAR's diplomatic activities, including the visits made by Premier al-Amri to

several Arab capitals in January and July 1968, were aimed at either obtaining military and economic aid or mobilising Arab support against the Saudis' continued intervention on the side of the Royalists.<sup>39</sup>

### The Policy of Reconciliation (September 1968 - March 1970)

With the collapse of the Royalists in late 1968 and their subsequent political disintegration in early 1969, the immediate threat to the Republic receded. The defeat of the left, in August 1968, removed the main internal opposition to the post-November policies. Both these developments created favourable conditions for the government to resume its reconciliatory policies, temporarily suspended during the Royalist offensive, and to rearrange its political priorities.

By November 1968, the YAR leaders were convinced that the threat to the survival of the Republican régime had finally subsided. This perception rested mainly on the fact that the Royalists were retreating to remote areas while Republican military capabilities continued to improve. The Republican army had, during the siege of Sana'a and the subsequent battles in 1968, increased to about 10,000 men and was better equipped and trained than before.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, a large number of pro-Royalist tribes deserted the Imam during the last quarter of 1968 and the first three months of 1969 and declared their allegiance to the Republic. Kadi al-Iryani, in a speech in December 1968, referred to these developments as decisive landmarks in the struggle to consolidate the Republic and announced the beginning of a new era in which concern for security would be replaced by concern for the well-being of the Yemeni people, defined in terms of economic prosperity and social justice.<sup>41</sup> The peaceful

settlement of the war, and an intensive programme of economic development, were perceived as twin objectives fundamental to the future of the Republican régime. Indeed, each depended on the other in the sense that peace would create the necessary conditions for economic prosperity which in turn would enhance the legitimacy of the régime. Yemeni sources believed that emphasising economic development at that stage, when the war had not officially ended, was partly a result of the need to replace the political tension that resulted from the intra-Republican clashes of August 1968 with more agreeable concerns, and at the same time diverting the attention of the anti-reconciliation forces away from the government's attempts to conclude the hostilities.<sup>42</sup>

However, the three YAR leaders knew it would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve their objectives without outside help. By May 1969 it was clear to al-Iryani that the Royalists were no longer capable of mounting a military challenge to the Republican government, but at the same time he was fully aware that the end of the war would only come when external aid to the Royalists was terminated. Meanwhile, it was evident that the country lacked both the resources and expertise to engineer its own economic development. By late December 1968, al-Iryani concluded that the accumulated effect of the war had further weakened what was basically a very weak economy and admitted that the country was becoming increasingly dependent on foreign aid.<sup>43</sup> These and other concerns determined both the content and orientation of YAR foreign policy during the rest of the war period. As declared in official statements and implied in diplomatic moves, the foreign policy objectives were now as follows:

1. to achieve reconciliation with Saudi Arabia as the state with the greatest influence over the outcome of the war;
2. to search for 'strings-free' foreign economic aid;
3. to establish relations with the principal Western states while maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries;
4. to encourage foreign investment to make up for insufficient local investment;
5. to generate support for the government's policies and at the same time neutralise any opposition to them from other states.

The YAR's pursuit of a *modus vivendi* with Saudi Arabia turned out to be somewhat one-sided. The negative Saudi response to the repeated conciliatory gestures of the YAR leadership was disconcerting for them, especially in the light of their perception that the defeat of the Royalists left King Faysal with no other alternative but to accept the *de facto* situation and come to terms with the Yemeni Republic. Even in late 1969 when the Saudis openly sponsored yet another Royalist offensive, the Republican leaders tried to keep the situation under control. They avoided any escalation of the fighting and at the same time maintained contact with King Faysal.<sup>44</sup> These and other attempts to placate Saudi Arabia clearly reflected an awareness on the part of the post-November Yemeni leadership of the fact that the war would only end if King Faysal terminated his aid to the Royalists.<sup>45</sup>

An equally cool response from the main Western states did not discourage the YAR leaders from pursuing their efforts to establish relations with these states. Not only al-Iryani but also the three other premiers of the time, al-Amri, al-Ayni and al-Kurshmi, made repeated calls for the opening of diplomatic relations with the West<sup>46</sup> but generated no positive response from the USA, France or Britain. However, the resumption of relations with West Germany in July 1969 generated optimism and contributed to a certain rapprochement between the YAR on one hand and the West and Saudi Arabia on the other.<sup>47</sup> It also encouraged further contacts with the principal Western states.

/// These determined efforts by the YAR leadership were motivated by the ///  
need for the West's economic aid and their desire to achieve more  
balanced relations with the Western and Eastern blocs in general and  
with the USSR and the USA in particular.



#### NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

1. Karen Dawisha, *Soviet Policy Towards Egypt*, Macmillan, 1979, p.151.

2. The aims and principles of the September 26th Revolution were as follows:

First: To free the people from despotism, colonialism and all its vestiges; to set up a democratic and just order and abolish all class distinctions and privileges.

Second: To establish a strong national army for the defence of the country and the protection of the Revolution and its achievements.

Third: To raise the economic, social, political and cultural standards of the people.

Fourth: To create a democratic and just society based on the concept of cooperation between the people, its order and structure rooted in the true spirit of Islam.

Fifth: To strive to achieve a national unity within the framework of comprehensive Arab unity.

Sixth: To respect the Charter of the United Nations and other international organisations; to work for peace; to adhere to the principles of neutrality and non-alignment; to strive towards the establishment of world peace and to

consolidate the principles of peaceful coexistence among all peoples.

The basic foreign policy objectives are included in the First Policy Statement (see *Nusus Yamaniyyah*, op. cit.).

3. See Mansur al-Zandani, *Ilakat al-Djumbhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah bil Dawlatayn al-Udmayayn*, op. cit., p.106.

4. In his replies to the Yemeni Center for Studies and Research, al-Iryani mentioned that during his visit to Saudi Arabia as head of the Yemeni pilgrimage group in 1961, he met Crown Prince Faysal. In reply to al-Iryani's insinuations about a possible political change in Yemen, King Faysal said the Yemenis could choose a successor to the then ailing Imam Ahmad but Saudi Arabia would not tolerate a change of the system and would even go to war to prevent such a move. (See *Wathaik Ula 'An al-Thawrah al-Yamaniyyah*, published by the Yemeni Centre for Studies and Research, op. cit., p.157).

5. Sources agree that almost all anti-Imam nationalists including leaders of the Free Yemen Movement were in touch with the UAR before the Revolution which clearly suggested they looked to it as the only possible source of support for the future regime in Sana'a. In his replies to the writer's inquiries al-Sallal mentioned that "the decision to request the UAR's assistance was agreed to by all nationalist actions, including those who later on expressed opposition to the Egyptian presence."

6. In his excellent study *al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, p.502, Ahmad Yusuf concluded that until 1965, the YAR leaders strongly pressed for the continuation of the Egyptian military presence.
7. From the replies of Kadi al-Iryani to a questionnaire by Markaz al-Dirasat wal Buhuth al-Yamani in *Watha'iq Ula 'An al-Thawrah al-Yamaniyyah*, Beirut, Dar al-Aadab, 1985, pp.157-158.
8. Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.300.
9. Al-Sallal's replies to Muhammad Nu'man's questionnaire, in Muhammad Ahmad Nu'man *Min Wara al-Aswar*, Beirut, Dar al-Katib al-Arabi, (no publication date), pp.86-94.
10. Al-Zubayri, *Shai'ran wa Munadilan*, co-authored by a group of Yemeni writers, Beirut, Dar al-Awdah, 1977, p.241; J. Leigh Douglas, *The Free Yemeni Movement 1935-1962*, Beirut, The American University of Beirut, 1987, p.219.
11. See Chapter II "Historical Context", pp.42-45.
12. See texts in Ahmad J. Afif, *Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.339-352.
13. Robert Stookey in his book *Yemen: The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic*, pp.235-236 had overlooked the moderates' insistence on the Republican régime and referred only to their objective of national reconciliation; see also Abd al-Malik Sa'id *Tatawwur Tadjriubat....* op. cit., p.58.

14. *Al-Thawrah*, September 26, 1966
15. *Al-Wakai al-Arabiyyah*, January-March 1963, pp.118-119; Ahmad Yusuf, *al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.205-206.
16. From al-Sallal's replies to the writer's enquiries.
17. Ahmad Yusuf, *al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.295.
18. *Al-Ahram*, May 10, 1965.

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19. Some sources believed that a basic objective of the Nu'man government was to decrease dependence on the UAR and have it deal with the Yemenis as equals. See Ahmad Yusuf *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.292.

20. From al-Iryani's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated December 1989.

21. See al-Sallal's replies in an interview with a Danish reporter, *al-Thawrah*, No. 135, al-Baydani speech in October 3, 1962, in SWB, ME/1063/A/3.

22. Al-Iryani believed if it had not been for al-Baydani's threats to bomb Djedda and Riyad, the Saudis might have given up the *de facto* situation and recognised the YAR especially if a Republican delegation was sent to Riyad to allay the Saudi fears. *Watha'ik Ula...* op. cit., p.157. In his reply to the writer's inquiries, al-Iryani added that President Nasir, after the June 1967 war, admitted that had he listened to the Republican moderate leaders

in this respect, the UAR would not have needed to send about 70,000 troops to Yemen.

23. Ahmad Yusuf, *al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., pp.442.
24. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, Vol. XV. July 30 - August 6, 1966, p.21542 C. Even Yemenis who express sympathetic views towards the UAR intervention in Yemen confirm this fact. For example, Colonel Nadji al-Ashwal in his book *al-Djaish wal Harakah al-Wataniyyah fil Yaman*, p.276 mentioned that the UAR, in its bid to ensure the security of its forces in Yemen, had controlled the country's affairs in all respects - political, economic as well as military.
25. Text of these two speeches in *Al-Thawrah*, September 26, 1966 and *Al-Thawrah*, January 27, 1967.
26. See al-Sallal's speech on the 4th anniversary of the Revolution, in *Al-Thawrah*, September 26, 1967, op. cit.
27. *Al-Ahram*, January 25, 1967.
28. The statement of al-Sallal on the execution of Yemenis by Saudi Arabia in *Al-Thawrah*, March 20, 1967 and the closure of borders. See the statement of the Information Minister in *Al-Thawrah*, September 1, 1966, concerning withdrawal of the Tunisian recognition, refer to the Interior Minister's statement in ME/2395/A/1-2.
29. See Chapter V. on the Khartoum Decision, p.106.

30. These views were also expressed by both al-Sallal and al-Iryani in their replies to the writer's enquiries, op. cit.

31. *Al-Hayat*, 7 November, 1967.

32. *Time*, 15 December 1967 (See Chapter 6).

33. See Chapter 6, p.141.

34. See al-Amri's statement in *The Times*, December 14, 1967.



35. *Sawt al-Urubah*, January 17, 1968.

36. See Salah al-Rwayshan, *Evolution of the YAR Foreign Policy: 1967-1984*, p.23.

37. Mansur al-Zandani, *The YAR Relations with the Two Superpowers*, op. cit., p.189.

38. See Chapter VI on the PRSY.

39. This conclusion is based on YAR official statements.

40. Edgar O'Ballance, *The War In The Yemen*, op. cit., p.199.

41. *Al-Thawrah*, No. 447

42. Personal interviews

43. *Al-Thawrah*, No. 450.

44. See Chapter VIII on Reconciliation, pp.206-207.
45. *The Economist*, April 11, 1970.
46. In their endeavour to reorientate the YAR foreign policy to the concept of the 'balanced approach', the post-November 1967 leadership sought to re-establish relations with the West. The Premier of the first cabinet, Muhsin al-Ayni, announced in the first few days of his government the intention to re-establish the diplomatic relations with the U.S.A. and West Germany. (see *al-Hayat*, November 12, 1967); al-Amri also urged re-establishment of these relations (see ME/2644/A/11); Al-Kurshmi announced the YAR's readiness to re-establish relations with the U.S.A. (see Mansur al-Zandani *Ilakat al-Djumhuriyyah ...*, op. cit., p.192).
47. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, *Tatawwur al-Awdha al-Iktisadiyyah wa al-Idjtimaiyyah fi Shatrain al-Yaman wa Mustakbal al-Wahdah al-Yamaniyyah*, a paper presented at the 12th seminar on Diplomacy at Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1984, published by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p.103.

CHAPTER V

THE DECISION TO REJECT THE KHARTOUM AGREEMENT

/// (31 AUGUST, 1967) ///



Following the Arab-Israeli war in the spring of 1967, the accommodative approach adopted by the UAR during the Arab gatherings in Khartoum during that summer was opposed by the YAR leadership, as it entailed concessions to the conservative Arab régimes which were perceived as harmful to the very existence of the Yemeni Republic. On the last day of the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference held in Khartoum from 1-5 August, 1967, the YAR foreign minister expressed reservations about the UAR's initiative to reactivate the Djedda Agreement of 1965 on Yemen. Later, on 31 August, when President Nasir and King Faysal concluded the Khartoum Agreement on Yemen, the YAR president announced his government's rejection of that Agreement.

This went down in history as the first and only time President al-Sallal's government had not only publicly taken a stand in Arab fora independently of its ally, the UAR, but had also adopted a position in opposition to Cairo's wishes. The consequences of this contributed significantly to the failure of the Saudi-Egyptian plan for the settlement of the war in Yemen. It also led to the estrangement between al-Sallal's government and the UAR which contributed to the downfall of the former on 5 November, 1967.<sup>1</sup>

The decision-making activities covered three months, from the first week of August 1967 until 5 November, 1967 when al-Sallal's government was overthrown. As the decision was taken within a very short time, most of these activities fall into the pre-decisional and the implementational stages.

## The Operational Environment

One single element in the external environment had an immediate effect on several of the components which governed the range of political choice. The Arab defeat in the Six-Day War against Israel in June 1967 led, among other things, to the withdrawal of UAR forces from Yemen, a move which in turn had important repercussions for two of those components, the security situation in Yemen and the YAR's political structure. The latter in turn had implications on the decision-making structure. However, the Egyptian-Saudi accord on Yemen concluded during the Arab summit conference held in Khartoum in late August and the beginning of September 1967 constituted the stimulus for the decision under consideration.

## Implications of the Arab-Israeli War, June 1967

In 1967, the Arab defeat in the war with Israel represented a turning point in the politics of the region as well as for intra-Arab relations as well. The Arab solidarity which prevailed during and after the war ended the sharp polarisation of the Arab states between radical and conservative régimes, a situation which had persisted since the mid-1950s. For the next decade or so, intra-Arab relations were dominated by efforts aimed at forging a common diplomatic and military strategy to cope with the disastrous consequences of the 1967 war. Notwithstanding the demise of the sharp polarisation, the June defeat discredited the Arab revolutionary régimes, especially in Cairo and Damascus, while strengthening the hand of the conservative régimes.

In so far as the war changed the pattern of intra-Arab relations, it also changed the balance of forces between the leaders of the two hitherto opposing camps, namely Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The UAR, the leader of the revolutionary camp, was the worst affected by the war, not only in prestige but also in capability. Its armed forces were shattered, and its economy, as a result of the closure of the Suez Canal and the loss of the Sinai oil wells, was on the verge of collapse. At the same time Saudi Arabia, the leader of the conservative camp, was now in a more advantageous position than ever before. Its special relationship with the USA became of particular value in the light of the latter's influence over Israel; and increasing oil wealth gave the Saudis a special weight in the Arab world. The disparate position of the UAR was soon reflected in its Arab policy. In a bid to achieve a united Arab front against Israel and to obtain badly needed financial aid during the Arab meetings in the summer of 1967, the UAR adopted a conciliatory policy, and its initiative during the Khartoum Arab foreign minister's meeting to reactivate the 1965 Djedda Agreement with Saudi Arabia on Yemen was the most dramatic illustration of that policy. By this move, the UAR not only gave King Faysal a free hand in the Gulf but also forfeited its guardianship of the Arab revolution in Yemen and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> This change in the pattern of Arab politics was viewed by the YAR with the utmost concern. In the throes of Arab preoccupation with the confrontation with Israel, the war in Yemen was sliding into the background. The YAR themselves feared that the enhanced influence of the conservative régimes and the diminishing power of the revolutionary governments, including that of the UAR, might encourage the former to seize on the situation and intensify their aggression against the Yemeni Republic. For that reason, during the summer of 1967, the YAR leaders were adamant in their calls for the

strengthening of solidarity between the Arab revolutionary régimes and emphasised the commitment of these régimes to the survival of the Yemeni Republic. In a press interview during a visit to Cairo in the first week of August 1967, Major General Abdallah Djuzaylan suggested that the protection of the Yemeni revolution was no less a national duty to Arab revolutionaries than the war against Israel.<sup>3</sup>

### The Security Situation

The impact of the June war on the situation in Yemen was reflected in the withdrawal by Egypt, during the month of June, of almost half its 30,000 troops for deployment along the Suez Canal. This sudden withdrawal left a military vacuum, for the Yemeni forces were unable to replace the departing Egyptian forces. The degree to which the Republicans had depended on UAR military aid became immediately clear when in the second part of June the Royalists took advantage of the partial Egyptian withdrawal and mounted a successful offensive which left them in control of important towns along the west coast, as well as Harib and Marib in the east.<sup>4</sup> Although most of these Royalist gains were lost when the Republican forces, once more with the help of Egyptian reinforcements, mounted an effective counter-offensive in July, the inability of the Republican forces to stop the Royalists on their own had awakened Republican fears of the consequences of an eventual Egyptian withdrawal.

Ever since the UAR took over the main responsibility for the war in early 1963, Republican military strategy was based on this massive Egyptian support. Partly because of this reliance not much was done to increase the capabilities of the Republican army which at that

stage had a total strength of less than 7,000 poorly-equipped and ill-trained troops.<sup>5</sup> When in June the UAR first started trimming its forces in Yemen, President Abdallah al-Sallal, who at that time could not contemplate the possibility of an Egyptian withdrawal, objected personally to the Egyptian Ambassador in Sana'a.<sup>6</sup> But when during the Arab foreign ministers meeting in Khartoum (August 1-5) the UAR made very clear its intention of withdrawing from Yemen, the YAR leaders began seriously to contemplate what it would mean to carry on the war with no or only limited Egyptian support. The prevailing feeling among the YAR leaders was that because of the popular support for the Republic, the régime could defend itself with just limited external aid. As a result of a Yemeni initiative, a Soviet military team paid a visit to Sana'a in August and a plan for rearming the Republican army was agreed.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the YAR leaders pleaded for a continuation of a limited amount of Egyptian aid. During a visit to Cairo in the first week of August 1967, Major-General Djuzaylan tried to convince President Nasir of the ability of the Republican forces to defend the Republic if support was reduced to just a few squadrons of the Egyptian air force. The same argument was put by al-Sallal to Nasir during the former's stopover in Cairo on his way to the Khartoum summit. Although President Nasir had made it clear the UAR initiative on the reactivation of the Djedda Agreement was forced on him by the imperatives of the post-June conditions, the YAR leaders insisted that some degree of UAR aid was vital to the survival of the Republic.<sup>8</sup> The YAR statement on August 13 made it clear that part of the reason for rejecting the UAR initiative was its insistence on a continuation of Egyptian aid.

## Political Structure

Regardless of the complexity of relations between the al-Sallal régime and that of Nasir, the fact was the latter had given the former its unreserved support. This was illustrated when on 12 August, 1966, the UAR Ambassador in Sana'a intervened to force the return of President al-Sallal despite strong opposition from Vice-President al-Amri and his supporters. Later, in mid-September, when al-Amri and most of the YAR leadership went to Egypt in order to protest to President Nasir, they were arrested by the Egyptian authorities; some were put in jail and others were put under house arrest. The detention of these opposition leaders enabled President al-Sallal to form a new cabinet and resume his hard-line policies, and this served the interests of the UAR at that stage of intra-Arab relations. The majority of members of the new cabinet were either individuals loyal to al-Sallal personally or supportive of his pro-Egyptian policies.<sup>9</sup>

This situation was related to the decision under discussion in two ways. Firstly, pro-Egyptian ministers advocated acceptance of the Khartoum Agreement during the cabinet debate on the issue on September 2 upon the return to Sana'a of President al-Sallal. It was reported that these were arrested in early October for helping the entry into Yemen of the Arab Tripartite Commission, contrary to the government's formal position.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, the stability of al-Sallal's government was contingent upon the continued detention in Cairo of the moderate leaders, including Nu'man, al-Iryani and al-Amri. All reportedly had prestige and popular following sufficient to overthrow al-Sallal if allowed to do so, without Egyptian interference.<sup>11</sup> The withdrawal of Nasir's support to al-Sallal would have exposed the latter to the pressure of a very strong opposition. Some believed that the release

in late October 1967 of the moderate Republicans from detention in Cairo was due, partly at least, to Nasir's frustration over al-Sallal's refusal to cooperate with the Tripartite Arab Commission.<sup>12</sup>

### The Khartoum Agreement

From 1-5 August, 1967, the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference was convened in Khartoum to discuss means of co-ordinating Arab action to cope with the consequences of the June war. The UAR president was already trying to reconcile his differences with the conservative Arab governments, not only with a view to obtaining much-needed financial aid but also for the sake of forming a common Arab front against Israel. Efforts to convene an earlier Arab summit in 1966 had been hampered by the prevailing Saudi-Egyptian conflict mainly over Yemen, but Nasir and all the other Arab leaders were aware that unless reconciliation between Cairo and Riyadh was now achieved, Arab solidarity would remain an impossible endeavour. He used the opportunity of the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference to mend his differences with King Faysal. On 3 August, the second day of the conference, the UAR Foreign Minister, Mahmud Riyad, forwarded a UAR proposal providing for the settlement of the Egyptian-Saudi conflict over Yemen. Item 6 of the plan proposed an immediate reactivation and full implementation of the Djedda Agreement on Yemen, signed by President Nasir and King Faysal on 24 August, 1965. That Agreement envisaged, in addition to withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and a termination of Saudi aid to the Royalists, the formation of a national caretaker government and the holding of a plebiscite for the Yemenis to decide on the future régime.<sup>13</sup> The one difference between the Djedda Agreement and the new plan lay in the proposal that

implementation of the Agreement should now be assigned to three Arab states rather than to the two contestants themselves, i.e. the UAR and Saudi Arabia.<sup>14</sup>

King Faysal was undoubtedly pleased with President Nasir's initiative. The proposal was in line with the declared Saudi objective of securing the withdrawal of the UAR forces from Yemen, but the Saudi leader adopted a cautious view and preferred to wait for more specific details. Therefore, no action on the Egyptian proposal was taken at the Khartoum ministerial conference. The task of hammering out the details of the eventual agreement between King Faysal and President Nasir fell to the Sudanese Premier Muhammad Mahjub and, during visits to Djedda and Cairo on 20 and 23 August respectively, he managed to secure the approval of the two Arab leaders on the draft of a new accord. Details of the proposed agreement were discussed later when the Egyptian president and the Saudi King came to Khartoum to take part in the Arab summit (29 August - 1 September, 1967). The summit itself was made possible by the rapprochement between the UAR and Saudi Arabia brought about by the Egyptian initiative during the Khartoum ministerial meeting. During a private two-hour meeting held in the house of the Sudanese Premier during the early hours of 31 August, between the Egyptian president and the Saudi King, and with the Sudanese Premier's participation, the details of the proposed agreement were hammered out. The accord, which became known as the Khartoum Agreement, provided for the formation of a committee consisting of three Arab states with the purpose of:

1. Ensuring the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and the simultaneous termination of Saudi military assistance to the Royalists.



2. Helping the Yemenis to achieve unity and stability in accordance with their own wishes.
3. Consulting with Saudi Arabia and the UAR in the implementation of its mandate.<sup>15</sup>

In accordance with the accord, the UAR chose Iraq for membership of the commission and Saudi Arabia chose Morocco, while the Sudan was added to serve as the third member. This selective membership became in itself another reason, albeit a less problematic one, for the difficulties which confronted the commission in the implementation of its task. The Iraqi foreign minister, Adnan Khairallah, promoted Republican interests while Dr. Laraki, the Moroccan Foreign Minister, became the champion of the Royalists' cause.<sup>16</sup>

The war in Yemen was not on the agenda of the Arab summit, but all the participants welcomed the Saudi-Egyptian accord as a basis for the regeneration of Arab solidarity. Syria and Algeria, who advocated a "steadfast" policy against Israel after the June 5 war, were critical of the predominantly conciliatory tone of the conference and received the accord with a certain coolness. As with previous attempts at settlement of the war in Yemen, the Yemeni leaders were not involved. President al-Sallal was not invited to take part in the talks and was not even consulted on the agreement which clearly was of immediate concern to him and his delegation. President Nasir and King Faysal were, nevertheless, fully aware of the YAR's opposition to the reactivation of the Djedda Agreement, a position not made secret by the Yemeni leaders during the Khartoum ministerial meeting or afterwards. To get around the YAR's opposition, the new accord, based as it was on the 1965 Djedda Agreement, neither explicitly referred to

the issue of the referendum nor did it fix a date for the Egyptian withdrawal. When announcing the details of the Agreement, the Sudanese Premier explained that al-Sallal had not been consulted because the Agreement dealt with the Egyptian-Saudi involvement in Yemen and thus did not concern him.<sup>17</sup>

### Perceptions of the Decision-Makers

Following the imprisonment in Cairo (September 1966) of the "moderate" leaders, al-Sallal's leadership had continued unchallenged. He enhanced his position by forming, on 18 September, a new cabinet comprised mostly of elements either loyal to him or supportive of his pro-Egyptian policies. Except for Major-General Abdallah Djuzaylan who became Deputy Premier and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, and Brigadier Abd al-Latif Daifallah, who assumed the Public Works Ministry, none of the cabinet members enjoyed an independent power base other than some loyalties in the army. Like Dayfallah, Djuzaylan owed his position to his own revolutionary credentials and personal influence within the army rather than to any loyalty to al-Sallal. As one of a group of officers who received their military training in Egypt in the middle 1950s, Djuzaylan played an important role in preparation and implementation of the September 26 Revolution and was favoured by the junior officers to replace al-Sallal once the régime was firmly established.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps this was at the root of the personal differences which developed later between the two men and which led to Djuzaylan's brief exile in Cairo in early 1963. His return to the top of the government's structure was urged by al-Sallal who, driven by necessity, rediscovered the common radical orientation which bound him with Djuzaylan against the overwhelming moderate

opposition. As a vice-premier and deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Djuzaylan played an important part in formulating the decision to reject the Khartoum Agreement, although the crucial role was that of al-Sallal.

Like al-Sallal, Major-General Djuzaylan was a radical nationalist who believed in the necessity of ensuring continued UAR military aid and saw Egyptian support as being within the context of a revolutionary alliance. Even after Egypt's defeat in the June 1967 war, both men believed that the UAR, because of its revolutionary duties towards the Yemeni Republic, was still capable of helping the YAR. According to the "progressive" Yemeni view, the victory of the Yemeni revolution was an achievement for the Arab revolutionary movement as a whole, to which President Nasir's Egypt had already contributed substantially. The fact that the Arabs had lost a battle in the war with Israel made it even more important to preserve the revolutionary gains in Yemen, and this left President Nasir with no alternative but to continue backing the Yemeni Republic.<sup>19</sup>

Following the announcement in early August 1967 of the UAR's initiative on Yemen, the YAR leadership was still hopeful that, despite the severe setback suffered in the Six-Day War, Nasir would still appreciate the importance of continuing aid to the Yemeni Republic. This view was partly a result of a misconception on the part of the leadership in Sana'a. They interpreted Nasir's overtures to the conservative Arab régimes, including the initiative on Yemen, as a temporary manoeuvre dictated by the difficulties faced by Egypt; once this situation was alleviated Nasir would return to his revolutionary policies and reassert his commitment towards the Yemeni Republic. This view was expressed by Djuzaylan during his visit to

Cairo in the first week of August 1967 when he said: "Those who spread doubts about the continuation of the UAR backing to the Yemeni Revolution are labouring under an illusion. Similar doubts were voiced after the Djedda Agreement was concluded only to be confounded by subsequent events. Current talks about the Agreement might reawaken doubts but facts will once again prove they are mistaken."<sup>20</sup>

President al-Sallal's reaction to the announcement of the Saudi-Egyptian accord was coloured by the way the news of the accord was conveyed to him. All accounts confirm the fact that the Yemeni president first heard of the accord on the morning of 31 August through the local media while still in his hotel suite in the Khartoum. He was obviously shocked and felt bewildered by the news. According to him it came as a complete surprise, especially since in his meeting with the Egyptian president in Cairo only a few days earlier, the latter had not given any indication whatsoever of such a possibility.<sup>21</sup> Foreign Minister Muhammad Sallam told the writer that the fact that the Agreement was negotiated in secrecy was sufficient to raise Yemeni suspicions about the intentions of their Egyptian ally.<sup>22</sup>

President al-Sallal's response to the news was spontaneous but well measured. He did not rush to denounce the Agreement but did not go to the morning session of the summit conference, making it known that he protested strongly to an Agreement concluded about Yemen by others and in total disregard for him as "President of that country".<sup>23</sup> He certainly projected a feeling of injured pride. The YAR was considered by many as a client of the UAR whose affairs could be manipulated to suit Cairo's objectives. Al-Sallal entirely rejected such an attitude and sought to make it clear that he was totally

opposed to an act taken by external powers to decide the destiny of Yemen while its representatives, who were only a few metres away, were completely ignored.<sup>24</sup> President Nasir was quick to appreciate al-Sallal's rage and the same morning sent his secretary to arrange an appointment so that he could explain things. In his memoirs, the Sudanese Premier mentioned that Nasir urged him to see al-Sallal and explain to him that the Agreement constituted no interference in the internal affairs of Yemen but was rather a solution to the differences between the UAR and Saudi Arabia. President al-Sallal refused to accept this argument.<sup>25</sup> He also remained unconvinced by the explanation given by Nasir at their meeting the same day. In his replies to the writer's inquiries, al-Sallal blamed King Faysal and the Sudanese Premier who, in his view, had plotted the deal and talked Nasir into it.<sup>26</sup>

President al-Sallal was known for his courage but also for his disregard for diplomatic niceties. He distrusted King Faysal and believed the king had taken advantage of Nasir's difficulties to dictate the terms of the Khartoum Agreement in a blatant act of blackmail. Thus when the Yemeni president appeared at the afternoon session of the summit, he reportedly could not control his emotions. He suddenly interrupted the debate and referred to King Faysal who was also taking part in the meeting in rather unflattering terms.<sup>27</sup> While al-Sallal's reaction revealed some of his personal predispositions, his perception of Saudi intentions was influenced by past experience. As one of the participants in the 1948 and 1955 anti-Imam revolts, he had become convinced that the Saudi monarchy, which had played a major part in the failure of the two revolts, would do all it could to destroy the September 1962 revolution so as to ensure that Yemen remained under its exclusive influence. He believed the Saudi monarch

would not stop interfering in Yemen and the Agreement was only another ploy on the king's part to get the Egyptians out of Yemen so that he could impose its own will on the YAR.<sup>28</sup> When Nasir sent his envoy on the morning of 31 August to arrange the meeting between the two presidents, the envoy asked al-Sallal why he felt bitter about the accord. Al-Sallal replied, "You do not understand the Saudis. We know them very well. Our life with them as neighbours has been an uninterrupted chain of bitter experiences. We, therefore, understand the implications of what was agreed upon. As we know the aims of the Saudi régime very well, we know that they will not for a moment desist from doing their best to affect a change in Yemen in order that Yemen comes under their exclusive influence. As long as this is achieved, they do not mind whether the rulers in Yemen are Republicans or Royalists."<sup>29</sup>

#### The YAR Reaction To The Egyptian Initiative

As we have seen, the Egyptian initiative came as an unpleasant surprise to the YAR leaders. President al-Sallal had had no prior knowledge of the Egyptian intention to put forward such a proposal, and on 4 August he had sent his deputy, Major-General Djuzaylan, to Cairo to seek, among other things, further clarification from President Nasir.<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Sallam, the YAR foreign minister, had been completely taken by surprise when the Egyptian proposal was originally announced during the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference. He sought instruction from Sana'a and made no comment on the issue during his interventions in the deliberations of the conference.

The Egyptian proposal to reactivate the Djedda Agreement awakened al-Sallal's fears, and since the partial withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Yemen in June he had become suspicious of Egyptian intentions. Even before he was in possession of all the facts, al-Sallal found it necessary to respond to the situation since his Foreign Minister was in Khartoum awaiting instructions. However, al-Sallal had no difficulty in making his own decisions. In view of the diminishing role of the UAR in YAR politics in the aftermath of the June war and the fact that the opposition leaders were still detained in Cairo, al-Sallal could act without major political constraints.

Moreover, the suspension of the Republican Council since September 1966 had left the Cabinet as the only functioning authoritative institution in the Republic, and since he was both President of the Republic and Premier at the same time al-Sallal could take decisions without constitutional constraints.

There is no information concerning the procedures al-Sallal followed in formulating his government's response to the Egyptian initiative, but he clearly opted to temporarily maintain the long-established policy which rejected any attempt to question the legitimacy of the Republican régime. On 5 August, foreign minister Sallam made a statement in Khartoum expressing reservations on the UAR initiative. He specifically objected to the idea embodied in the Djedda Agreement to the effect that a plebiscite be held to determine the future form of government for Yemen. Such a proposal, Sallam said, would be an unwarranted interference in Yemen's internal affairs, adding that the Yemeni people had by virtue of the September 1962 revolution already chosen a Republican régime.<sup>31</sup> Although this stance surprised those observers who had believed the YAR government to be entirely submissive to the UAR.<sup>32</sup> Sana'a did not contemplate an actual break

with its ally. President Nasir, for his part, was anxious to emphasise his continued support of the YAR when he received Djuzaylan and Muhammad Sallam on 8 August. There are conflicting accounts as to what precisely was discussed at that meeting. According to one source, President Nasir explained to the two Yemeni envoys the need to form a united Arab front against Israel, an objective which could only be achieved through a settlement of the UAR's differences with Saudi Arabia. But he assured the two Yemeni officials that this would in no way be at the expense of the Yemeni Republic. Furthermore, he pointed out, serious talks about the implications of the UAR initiative should wait until the Saudis formally made their reply.<sup>33</sup>

It would seem however that the Egyptian assurances were not sufficient to calm the Yemeni leaders. In particular, al-Sallal remembered that the UAR had in the past made compromises detrimental to his government for the sake of a settlement of its conflict with Saudi Arabia over Yemen. In the second week of August, al-Sallal met both Djuzaylan and Sallam who briefed him on their respective missions. It was during this meeting, which was attended by Colonel Ali al-Sallal, the son and trustee of the president and the then Ambassador to Moscow, that the government response was formulated. On 13 August, the cabinet was convened to consider the report of the Vice-Premier Djuzaylan on his meetings with the UAR officials in Cairo and the report of the Foreign Minister Sallam on the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference in Khartoum. After a brief discussion which consisted mostly of enquiries from cabinet members, President al-Sallal made a statement on the Egyptian initiative in which he said that:

"On behalf of the Yemeni people and government, I declare that the YAR in no way accepts anything that infringes directly or



indirectly its independence and sovereignty. I further declare that the Yemen Arab Republic was not a party to the Djedda Agreement which was concluded between the two Arab states, the UAR and Saudi Arabia, and is, therefore, not bound by it. It certainly will neither approve of it nor recognise it. All that is said about a national plebiscite is considered open interference in our independence and a flagrant attack on our sovereignty as well as a violation of the bases of international law."<sup>34</sup>

During August, the YAR leadership undertook measures to improve its defences. Contact was maintained with the UAR mainly through the latter's embassy in Sana'a which continued to insist on the importance of the YAR-UAR alliance. In reply, the YAR government made it clear it appreciated the need for concerted Arab action to cope with the consequences of the June war and expressed support for the Arab summit to be held in Khartoum later in the month. In his visit to Cairo in the first week of August, Djuzaylan said that for the sake of Arab solidarity, the YAR would not object to the reconsideration of the Yemeni conflict at the proposed conference.<sup>35</sup> However, the UAR ambassador in Sana'a was told the YAR would insist on two essential preconditions: first, the Republican régime should not be compromised in any way; second, the members of the Hamid al-Din family should not be allowed back into Yemen.<sup>36</sup>

In his attempts to oppose the Egyptian initiative, al-Sallal sought as much internal support as possible. It is not known whether the popular reaction to the idea at that early stage was spontaneous or had been officially promoted. In any event, the overwhelming majority of Yemenis were against any attempt that would compromise the

Republican régime. On 13 August, a deputation of shaykhs, merchants and intellectuals met al-Sallal to express their loyalty to the Republican régime and their readiness to defend it in every way possible.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, al-Sallal's government sought political support and military aid from other sources abroad to make up for the eventual Egyptian withdrawal. While attending the conference of Arab Finance, Economy and Oil Ministers in Baghdad (15 August, 1967), the YAR finance minister delivered a written message from al-Sallal to his Iraqi counterpart explaining the YAR views on the Egyptian initiative. At a meeting with the YAR minister, President Abd al-Salam Arif gave a somewhat ambiguous answer when he said that "Our efforts to end Arab disputes, including the dispute over Yemen, do not in any way mean the liquidation of the Yemeni revolution." <sup>38</sup>

In another direction, al-Sallal sought military aid from the USSR, to be delivered direct instead of being channelled through the UAR as previously. Indeed, Djuzaylan's above-mentioned visit to Cairo was reportedly only a stopover, for in fact the Vice-Premier was on his way to the Soviet Union to request military hardware for the YAR army. The trip to Moscow did not ultimately take place but the Soviets responded positively to the YAR request.<sup>39</sup> Some sources believe the deal was calculated by al-Sallal to put pressure on Nasir not to go ahead with his intention to reactivate the Djedda agreement.<sup>40</sup>

#### How The Choice Was Made

The announcement on 31 August, 1967, of the Saudi-Egyptian accord on Yemen presented the Yemeni delegation with a typical crisis situation. Firstly, the accord was directly related to the future of the

Republic, the supreme concern of the Yemeni régime. Secondly, it came as a surprise to the Yemeni delegation. Finally, the Yemeni delegation felt the time available for response was restricted.

The YAR's governing élite had expected that the matter of the Egyptian initiative was bound to be raised during the Khartoum summit, but they had not anticipated an agreement being arrived at without their prior knowledge, let alone their participation. Before the delegation left for Khartoum for the summit conference, the government had reflected on the possibility of such an eventuality but had felt reassured by the apparent Egyptian desire to remain in touch with Sana'a. It was agreed, nevertheless, that should the Yemeni issue be discussed at the conference in any way that infringed on the country's sovereignty or threatened the Republican régime, the YAR delegation would withdraw immediately.<sup>41</sup> This was exactly what happened, for when the Nasir-Faysal accord was announced in the morning of 31 August, President al-Sallal refused to attend the conference. President Nasir met with al-Sallal in an attempt to allay his fears but the meeting reportedly turned into a very frank exchange of views. Nasir was provoked when al-Sallal told him that the Yemeni Republicans expected Egyptian military aid to continue until the Republic could defend itself. Apparently, Nasir expressed impatience with the Yemeni Republicans who, as he put it, were insisting on an indefinite Egyptian military presence in Yemen instead of trying to become more self-reliant. The Yemeni president was surprised by the change in tone but portrayed no resentment and later resumed participation in the conference.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the resentment he privately felt at the treatment he personally had received from his friend President Nasir and his outrage at what he regarded as the blatant disregard of the YAR's

independence and integrity, al-Sallal was keen not to alienate the Egyptian president. He made no personal comment on the YAR official position towards the Saudi-Egyptian accord which was to be announced later on the same day. Following his meeting with Nasir, which no one else attended, al-Sallal met with members of his delegation. These included officially authorised decision-makers such as his deputy Abdallah Djuzaylan and the Foreign Minister, Muhammad Sallam, together with certain trusted colleagues such as the Minister for the Economy, Abd al-Ghani Ali, and the Head of National Security, Muhammad al-Salami. No alternative action was considered, since the decision to categorically reject the Egyptian initiative which formed the basis for the proposed agreement had already been made. The only question they had to debate was one of procedure - whether to announce the YAR's position immediately or at a later stage. It was agreed that it was important to make the announcement at once since a silence would be misinterpreted as tacit approval.<sup>43</sup> A press release was duly issued and rather unexpectedly was broadcast by Radio Algeria instead of the Egyptian media which usually carried news concerning the YAR. The statement did not explicitly reject the Khartoum Agreement, in deference to the conciliatory atmosphere which was deemed necessary for the success of the summit. Instead it repeated the position previously adopted towards the original Egyptian initiative. It announced that:

"The Yemeni people would reject any plan of mediation designed to encroach on their freedom and the gains of the revolution, but the Yemeni people would welcome measures to strengthen brotherly relations between the Arabs..... Yemen was not a party to the Djedda Agreement of 1965 between the UAR and the Saudi Kingdom and therefore we refuse to return to those

agreements. Recourse to these agreements would be considered unreasonable, especially as we already rejected those agreements. Any attempt to encroach on the independence and sovereignty of the Yemeni Republic will be considered as blatant interference in the country's internal affairs."<sup>44</sup>

### The Implementation

In a sense, rejection by the YAR delegation of the Khartoum Agreement marked the beginning of the implementation process. It must be clear that the Yemeni delegation to the Khartoum summit did not express any objection to the Saudi-Egyptian disengagement from Yemen as that was clearly a matter for the two Arab states to decide. But the Yemeni delegation objected to certain aspects of the Agreement which violated the standard legal norms regulating inter-state relations. The first concerned the contractual obligations entered into by the YAR and the UAR; the other was linked to the sovereignty and independence of the Republic, a founding member of the Arab League. The YAR leaders insisted on the upholding by the UAR of its obligations to help defend the Yemeni Republic, in implementation of the Mutual Pact signed between the two countries on 10 November, 1962 and the Co-ordination Agreement of April 1964. The terms of the Pact allowed for its termination only after each party had given one year's notice. The second, the Agreement, was to remain in force until unity between the two countries was achieved.<sup>45</sup> In his meeting with Nasir on the day the Khartoum Agreement was concluded, al-Sallal explained that withdrawal of Egyptian troops at a time when the Republican army was not ready to take full responsibility for defence would endanger the Republic. He argued for limited Egyptian military aid until the YAR

could rely on its own army. Nasir for his part made it clear he had not alternative but to comply with the terms of his agreement with King Faysal. He suggested that instead of pressing for a continuation of Egyptian aid, al-Sallal should take positive measures to increase the YAR's defence capabilities immediately upon returning from Khartoum, and he promised to instruct the departing Egyptian forces to leave their weapons for the benefit of the Yemeni army.<sup>46</sup>

Another valid point raised by the YAR in their opposition of the Khartoum Agreement was the illegality of the mandate given to the Tripartite Arab Commission to, among other things, help the Yemeni people decide their future. This clearly cast aspersions on the legitimacy of an established and internationally recognised régime. The YAR delegation to the summit conference vigorously opposed any such interference and Foreign Minister Sallam announced in Khartoum that his government would not allow members of the Commission to enter Yemen in connection with this mission.<sup>47</sup>

The first practical measure to implement the rejection decision was taken immediately following the delegation's return from Khartoum. On 2 September, 1967, the cabinet held a meeting in which the Khartoum resolutions were briefly examined. The Saudi-Egyptian accord on Yemen was discussed and, although some ministers known for their pro-Egyptian views were receptive to the Agreement, the cabinet unanimously approved the position already adopted by al-Sallal. A new statement elaborating on that position was also approved. The statement was issued in the name of President al-Sallal and, unlike the statement at the summit, it addressed the Khartoum Agreement directly. In the statement, the president referred to the "recent UAR-Saudi joint statement" and declared that:

1. On more than one occasion the Yemeni Government has declared its opposition to the Djedda Agreement.
2. The Yemeni Government and people consider the Djedda Agreement an interference in Yemen's internal affairs.
3. The Yemeni Government and people do not consider themselves bound by the above mentioned joint statement, which they consider a continuation of the interference in Yemen's internal affairs.

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4. The statement has been issued at a time when the Yemeni people stand ready to participate in all efforts leading to the removal of the effects of the (Israeli) aggression.... The joint statement came as an attempt to belittle the effects of the aggression.
  5. The Yemeni Government appealed to friendly countries to avoid involvement in this attempt.<sup>48</sup>

The month of September was a period used for digesting and reflecting on the Khartoum Agreement and preparing for its consequences. By rejecting the Agreement, al-Sallal knew he would have to bear the full brunt of the fight against the Republic without military support and against the wishes of almost all other Arab states. Already the Foreign Minister had solicited the view of the YAR's close friends, including the Arab revolutionary régimes and the USSR. Except for Syria, all advised acceptance of the Saudi-Egyptian plan.<sup>49</sup> As the issue pertained to the very existence of the Republic, the president undertook wide consultations which included not only the army and

tribal leaders but also representatives of the various other segments of society. The immediate dilemma was whether to co-operate with the Tripartite Arab commission as Nasir was urging or maintain the position already announced at the Khartoum conference and refuse to have anything to do with it. Bearing in mind the need to avoid antagonising Nasir, al-Sallal was hesitant but almost all of those consulted were adamantly against any dealings with the Commission.<sup>50</sup>

Notwithstanding the Yemeni opposition, the Tripartite Commission commenced its work by overseeing the implementation of the respective undertakings of the UAR and Saudi Arabia, a task which was merely a formality given the political will that underlined the accord. However, its attempts to carry out its mandate with regard to helping the Yemenis reach settlement of their internal conflict were hampered by the negative approach adopted by the YAR's government. The Commission commenced its operations by first meeting with the Yemeni Republicans detained in Cairo with a view to ascertaining their views on a possible national conference. For the same reason, the commission later met with the dissident Republicans in Beirut, as well as the representatives of the Third Force.<sup>51</sup>

The Commission also attempted to obtain al-Sallal's permission to visit Yemen and ascertain the views of the various political forces within the country in preparation for a national conference to be convened later on. Inevitably, al-Sallal was reluctant to co-operate with the Commission. After several unsuccessful attempts, however, the Acting Foreign Minister of Iraq, who was a member of the Commission, announced on 1 October, 1967 that al-Sallal had sent a telegram agreeing to receive the Commission in Sana'a and co-operate with it in pursuance of "a just solution which will bring unity to



Yemen and consolidate the achievements of the revolution".<sup>52</sup> It appears from the vague reference to the "achievements of the revolution" that al-Sallal's agreement to co-operate with the Commission was conditional on any future national reconciliation moves taking place within a Republican framework. Some sources believed that al-Sallal gave way only under strong pressure from the UAR.<sup>53</sup> According to official Yemeni sources, a debate was still going on within al-Sallal's government regarding conditional co-operation with the Commission, when members of the Commission unexpectedly arrived in Sana'a on 3 October on a chartered Egyptian plane, accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the UAR armed forces, Muhammad Fawzi. Many Yemenis were against the Khartoum Agreement and the arrival of the Commission in total disregard of their feelings was seen as provocative<sup>54</sup>. While members of the Commission sheltered in the headquarters of the Egyptian forces in Sana'a, thousands of Yemenis took to the streets of the capital in protest.

During the violence which ensued, around thirty people were killed; unfortunately most of the victims were Egyptian servicemen. There are conflicting stories about al-Sallal's role in these demonstrations. Some suggested that the demonstrations were sanctioned by the president in an attempt to prove that the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces would result in chaos and turmoil in the country.<sup>55</sup> Others blamed the Egyptians for rushing the Commission into Sana'a knowing full well that the Yemeni people were hostile to it.<sup>56</sup> In any event, immediately after its arrival in Sana'a al-Sallal reportedly informed the Commission that for his part he wished to receive them but the army and the police could not ensure their safety.<sup>57</sup>

## Feedback

The decision to reject the Khartoum Agreement had important consequences for both the internal and external environment. Domestically, the decision had clear implications for YAR capabilities, since under the terms of the agreement, the UAR had to terminate not only military aid but also political support in order to assume, with Saudi Arabia, a neutral position. During the implementation of the agreement most of the Egyptian forces, estimated at about 25,000, were recalled from Yemen and by the end of October the remaining 10,000 troops were being hastily withdrawn.<sup>58</sup> This severely restricted the military capability of the YAR since the indigenous army was understaffed, poorly trained and ill-equipped, and it came at a time when the Royalists were massing on the unprecedented scale for an all-out offensive.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, in the aftermath of the killings of the Egyptian soldiers in Sana'a on 3 October, the UAR decided to withdraw all its 1200 teachers and technical experts from Yemen, this badly affected the public services, especially in the educational field.<sup>60</sup>

Politically the decision itself did not harm existing relations between the YAR and the UAR, because the Yemeni leadership realised that President Nasir had been supportive of the Yemeni Republic and had been forced into the agreement. But Egypt's eagerness to impose the Tripartite Commission on the YAR certainly had negative consequences for Nasir's relations with al-Sallal's régime, and the subsequent killing of Egyptian soldiers during the events in Sana'a on 3 October greatly offended Nasir. Some believe that this led Nasir to speed up the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen; others go so far as to suggest that the Egyptian president was so outraged that he

encouraged the return of the Yemeni opposition leaders still detained in Cairo and, thereby, the overthrow of al-Sallal (certainly, al-Sallal suspected as much).<sup>61</sup>

The decision had other far-reaching consequences for the régime. While it improved the popular support for al-Sallal, it also resulted in important changes in the structure of the government. Many Yemenis who resented the régime's erstwhile submissiveness to the UAR welcomed al-Sallal's patriotic stand, and almost all Republicans supported the government's rejection of an accord which clearly jeopardised the Republican system. The public showed its rejection of the Agreement in various ways. Demonstrations were held in several provincial towns and indicated by their spontaneity that five years after the revolution the Yemeni people still opted for the Republican régime in defiance of hostile propaganda. However, these demonstrations revealed a divergence of views on how best to achieve an effective resistance to the many challenges the Republic was to face as a result of the Khartoum Agreement. The only political party, *al-Ittihad al-Sha'abi al-Thawri* (the PRU), held a popular rally in Sana'a after which a number of resolutions were adopted. These expressed support for the Government's decision, advocated mass mobilisation to enhance the Republic's defence, and called the people "to be united in a single rank under our President Abdallah al-Sallal and support his reply to the Sudan agreement."<sup>62</sup> Tribal leaders and representatives of Yemeni youth held separate rallies in Sana'a on 10 October in support of the government position. Unlike the PRU, however, these called in addition for the introduction of political reforms to strengthen the Republic.<sup>63</sup> A statement issued on behalf of the Yemeni People's Democratic Union, the Yemeni Youth Democratic Union, the Yemeni Workers Federation, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the

Student Federation supported the government's position but also called for political reforms.<sup>64</sup> Earlier the army had similarly declared its support for President al-Sallal's policy but demanded major reforms, including formation of a new government.<sup>65</sup> All these pressures led to the formation on 12 October of a new cabinet which included some supporters of the opposition and excluded elements known for their pro-Egyptian views.

Aware of the fact that with the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces the Republic had become more vulnerable to the Royalists than ever before, and conscious of the public demand for political change, al-Sallal felt the time had come to widen the régime's support base by settling his differences with the opposition. On 19 October he appealed to the Republican leaders abroad to return to their country in order to work together in preserving the revolution and the Republic.<sup>66</sup> Undoubtedly al-Sallal's decision to reject the Khartoum Agreement was also decisive in Nasir's decision to release the jailed moderate Republicans. They were released on 26 October. They met with al-Sallal at Hudaydah and as a result a number of political reforms were agreed upon, with a view to forming a united front. A statement was issued on 30 October affirming that the Yemeni problem was to be solved by the Yemenis themselves, an explicit confirmation of the on going boycott of the Arab Tripartite Commission.<sup>67</sup> But most of the task of coping with the consequences of the Khartoum Agreement was left to al-Iryani and the moderate leadership who replaced al-Sallal's government in the aftermath of the November 1967 coup.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V

1. In his replies to the writer dated July, 1989, al-Sallal said that his rejection of the Khartoum Agreement had caused problems for him and led eventually to the 5 November coup against him.
2. Abbas Kelidar, "Shifts and Changes in the Arab World", *The World Today*. December 1968, pp.505-506.
3. Ruz al-Yusuf, 14 August, 1967.
4. Edgar O'Ballance, *The War in the Yemen*, op. cit., pp.182-183.
5. *ibid.*, p.184
6. *The New York Times*, 30 June, 1967.
7. See SWB, ME/2554/A/16; *Al-Hayat*, 16 September, 1967.
8. From al-Sallal's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated June, 1989; March 1990.
9. See *Al-Ahram*, 19 September, 1966.
10. Press reports indicated that pro-Egyptian cabinet ministers were arrested following the 3 October, 1967 events. Reliable Yemeni sources indicated that some of these had left Yemen during these events with the help of the Egyptian army command in Sana'a.

11. *Time*, 20 October, 1967.
12. The prevailing Yemeni view is that President Nasir was profoundly concerned about the survival of the republican régime in Yemen after the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces. He believed al-Sallal's adamant refusal of the Khartoum Agreement was an unrealistic policy, for al-Sallal in Nasir's view was neither capable of coping with the situation on his own nor was he able to unite all the Republican factions in defence of the Republic. Consequently, Nasir decided to release the moderate Republicans from the Egyptian jails so that they be able to take part in that crucial period of the YAR's history. (See Ahmad Afif, *Al-Harakah*, op. cit., pp.156-157.
13. See text in SWB, ME/2534/A/A.
14. *The New York Times*, 4 August, 1967.
15. For text of the Agreement see *Arab Political Encyclopedia: Documents and Notes, Sixteenth Year, July-December 1967*, p.55.
16. *The New York Times*, 28, December, 1967.
17. *The New York Times*, 1 September, 1967.
18. Abdallah al-Baradduni, *Al-Yaman al-Djumhuri*, op. cit., p.569.
19. From Djuzaylan's interview with the writer in Cairo, April, 1989.
20. *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 14 August, 1967, op. cit.

21. From al-Sallal's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated July, 1989.

22. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated July, 1989.

23. *Al-Hayat*, 2 September, 1967.

24. From al-Sallal's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated February, 1990, op. cit.

25. Muhammad Mahdjub, *Democracy on Trial*, Deutsch, 1974, p.165.

26. From al-Sallal's replies to the writer's questions, February 1990, op. cit.

27. One of al-Sallal's aides told the writer that when the President resumed his seat at the summit conference on the afternoon session of 31 August, he interrupted the debate and angrily told the Arab leaders "You will not be able to achieve anything positive while this (referring to King Faysal) is in your midst". Al-Baydani made a similar claim, *Thawrat al-Yaman*, op. cit., p.727.

28. Ahmad Yusuf, *Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman*, op. cit., p.471.

29. The Radio & TV Magazine (Cairo) in Abdallah al-Thawr, *Thawrat al-Yaman.*, op. cit. p. 181.

30. Djuzaylan has stated that he was carrying a verbal message from President al-Sallal to President Nasir. In his reply to the writer's enquiries (August, 1989) he also mentioned that he conveyed to President Nasir the feelings of full understanding of the YAR regarding the imperatives for the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and the confidence in the abilities of the Yemeni people to defend their Republic.

31. *The New York Times*, August 6, 1967.

32. *The New York Times*, August 6-7, 1967.

33. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated June 1989, op. cit.

34. *Al-Kitab al-Sanawi*, 1976. Ministry of Information - Sana'a pp.25-28

35. *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 14 August, 1967, op. cit.

36. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated March 1989, op. cit.

37. *Summary of World Broadcast*, ME/2544/A/11, BBC, London.

38. SWB, ME/2546/A/6.



39. The Arab and Western press reported this projected visit had taken place. (See *al-Hayat*, 4 August, 1967; *The New York Times*, 8 August, 1967). In his interview with the writer, Djuzaylan mentioned that in fact he intended to visit Moscow but the Soviets insisted on having prior knowledge of the requests he would put forward to the Soviet leaders. His refusal to do so led to the indefinite postponement of the visit.

40. *The New York Times*, 8 August, 1967.

41. From Sallam's replies to the writer's inquiries dated February, 1990, op. cit.

42. Abdallah al-Thawr, *Thawrat al-Yaman*, op. cit., p.182.

43. Personal interviews.

44. SWB, ME/2558/A/5; Al-Thawr in his book *Thawrat al-Yaman*, p.182, mentioned that al-Sallal had initially agreed to the Khartoum summit resolutions including the resolution on the formation of the Arab Tripartite Commission to implement the Saudi-Egyptian accord on Yemen. This the writer could not comprehend, especially that the matter was not among the issues debated and decided upon by the conference.

45. See *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 16-23 March, 1963, pp.19300-19301 & ME/2560/A/8.

46. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated July 1989, op. cit.; Nadjji al-Ashwal, *Al-Djaish wal Harakah al-Wataniyyah*, op. cit., p.287.

47. *The New York Times*, 1 September, 1967, op. cit.

48. A press release issued by the YAR in Beirut, and reported by the Middle East News Agency on 5 September, 1967, al-Ahram's CSS files, Cairo. Also see SWB, ME/2560/A/8,

49. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated July 1990, op. cit.

50. From Ali al-Sallal's article in the *Army Weekly*, 26 September, 5 October, 1989.

51. *Akhir Sa'at*, 11 October, 1967.

52. *Al-Nahar*, 3 October, 1967.

53. *Al-Hayat*, 4 October, 1967.

54. See Ali al-Sallal's article in the weekly 26 September, 5 October, 1989, op. cit.,: President al-Sallal in his replies to the writer's enquiries dated February, 1990 repeated these same views.

55. From a news report, Associated Press, Beirut, 5 October, 1967.

56. Ali al-Sallal's article in the weekly 26 September, 5 October, 1989, op. cit.

57. *Al-Hayat*, 6 October, 1967.

58. *Observer Foreign News Service*, 25 October, 1967, op. cit.

59. All Yemeni sources consulted by the writer agreed that the withdrawing Egyptian troops did not leave their weaponry to the Yemeni army as promised by President Nasir. Djuzaylan told the writer that had the necessary military equipment been available to the Yemeni army, the Khartoum Agreement would not have been implemented.

60. See *Akhir Sa'at*, 11 October, 1967, op. cit. Syria had offered to alleviate the difficulties by providing Yemen with teachers for all secondary schools, but the offer was apparently not taken up by al-Sallal. (see ME/2600/A/6),

61. Sources differ on whether Nasir played a role in the overthrow of al-Sallal. One source suggested Nasir had sought to get rid of al-Sallal because of the latter's adamant refusal to accept the idea contained within the Khartoum Agreement to the effect that a widely-based government was to be established in which all Yemenis (including the Royalists) could participate (see *al-Safa*, 7 November 1967). Al-Sallal has in his above-mentioned replies to the author implicitly suggested this was the case.

62. For the text of the resolution see SWB, ME/2560/A/8-9.

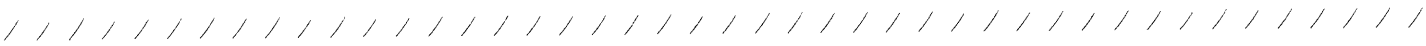
63. See SWB, ME/2592/A/1,2.

64. SWB, ME/2609/A/8-9.

65. SWB, ME/2600/A/6; *al-Hayat*, October 5, 1967.

66. See SWB, ME/2600/A/6, *op. cit.*

67. See *al-Hayat*, 31 October, 1967.



CHAPTER VI

THE DECISION TO RECOGNISE THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF SOUTH YEMEN

/// (30 NOVEMBER, 1967) ///

Among vital foreign policy issues, the reunification of the southern and northern parts of the country has been at the top of Yemen's agenda ever since the south became independent in November 1967. A constant element in Yemen's foreign policy throughout the Mutawakkilat Imamate and into the period of the YAR, reunification represented a common aspiration for the Yemeni people. The reunification of the country in May 1990 nullified the division between the northern and southern parts of Yemen and affirmed the reality of a united Yemen.<sup>1</sup> As early as October 1962, the YAR had announced that the people of South Yemen must be allowed to decide on the issue of merging with the north and followed this by calls for decolonisation of these territories and self-determination for the people. The YAR recognised the South Yemeni people as partners working for the country's unity in rejection of the Imam's dynastic claims to sovereignty.

Yet, on 30 November, 1967, the YAR government decided to recognise the newly independent PRSY. The decision meant recognition for the first time by the northern government of the existence of two separate entities in Yemen. Although this gesture had serious implications as far as Yemen's eventual unity was concerned, its immediate effect was to contribute to the legitimation of the PRSY, which was admitted to the Arab League on 12 December, 1967 and to the UN two days later. Furthermore, it enhanced the security of the YAR and consolidated the position of the Republicans who were in the throes of the Royalist siege of Sana'a during the winter of 1967/1968.

The following investigation will look at how the decision to recognise the PRSY was arrived at in November 1967. The YAR leadership was so preoccupied at that time with the crucial battle with the Royalists that it was only able to give attention to the question of the

independence of the People's Republic of South Yemen when it became a really pressing issue (just a few weeks before it was actually declared).

### The Operational Environment

Consequently, the two major environmental elements which impinged on the decisional setting at the end of 1967 were the Royalist siege of Sana'a and the national aspiration for the reunification of north and south. The commencement of independence negotiations between the National Front and the British Government in mid-November 1967 constituted the stimulus for the decision.

The Royalist siege of Sana'a which lasted seventy days (27 November, 1967 to 8 February, 1968) was the most influential environmental factor. The Royalist offensive had in fact started with the capture of the northern town of Sadah on 17 September but it was not until 24 November when the Royalists cut the road connecting Sana'a with the city of Ta'iz that, with the capital under siege, matters became really serious. In the early stages of the siege, many inside and outside Yemen believed the Republic would not survive now that the Egyptian forces had withdrawn. This impression was reinforced by the numerical superiority of the attacking Royalist forces over the defending Republican army.<sup>2</sup> Although the Royalist offensive came as no surprise, the Republican government was still unprepared for it. During the month of November, the post-November 5 leadership had made serious attempts to defuse the tension by initiating contacts with the pro-Royalist tribes aimed at achieving national reconciliation within the Republican framework. These endeavours were opposed by Saudi

Arabia which insisted that any reconciliation should come through the Arab Tripartite Commission and be contained within the framework of the Khartoum Agreement. Tension between Sana'a and Riyadh was running high but while the controversy absorbed much of the Republican's energies, Saudi Arabia had been active in ensuring the flow of supplies to the Royalists for their biggest offensive to date against the YAR.

The new leadership in Sana'a was busy trying to obtain political and military support to replace the UAR aid which had been terminated as a result of the Khartoum Agreement. During the period 26 November to 10 December, Premier Muhsin al-Ayni visited almost all the Arab countries in Africa seeking their support to convince Saudi Arabia to change its hostile attitude towards the moderate régime in Sana'a. Dr. Muhammad al-Attar, the Minister of the Economy, visited Syria and Iraq at the same time in an attempt to obtain military and economic aid. The result of these contacts was disappointing. Most of the countries hesitated to provide help, probably due to the post-June 1967 regional politics or perhaps because of other pressures. At that time even Syria, Iraq and Algeria were reluctant to send assistance.<sup>3</sup> President Nasir, who was torn between his support of the Republican cause and his commitment towards the Khartoum accord, subsequently sent vital supplies of ammunition to the YAR, concealed in fruit cases.<sup>4</sup> Initially, even the Soviets hesitated to continue the flow of military supplies, being naturally suspicious of the new régime which manifested a conservative character both in orientation and in the individual personalities of its leadership.<sup>5</sup>

An inevitable sense of isolation compounded the problems of the YAR leadership and led them to feel more vulnerable to the Royalist



assault. Their anxiety over the survival of the Republic coloured their perception of the situation in the south and dominated the debate on the issue of recognition of an independent South Yemen.

### Yemeni Unity

Along with the survival of the Republic, the liberation of the South Yemeni territories was, as already noted, the main objective of YAR foreign policy. The revolutionary government considered these territories, which became British Protectorates following the latter's occupation of Aden in 1839, an integral part of "natural" Yemen. In its first statement on 27 September, 1962, the new régime identified the liberation of these territories as a primary objective of the Revolution.<sup>6</sup> This policy assumed a greater urgency once the British government had adopted a hostile posture towards the Republican régime and put its weight behind the Imam's government-in-exile. Following the closure of the British Embassy in Ta'iz in February 1963, the YAR government began openly to encourage the nationalist forces in the South already working against the British occupation. The first military operation was launched on 14 October, 1963 by the National Liberation Front (NLF). In the following years the armed struggle was intensified as both the NLF and FLOSY (the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen) gained in strength and experience.<sup>7</sup>

In the summer of 1967, the liberation struggle in South Yemen had almost achieved its objectives. Until then, the British government, which in February 1966 had announced its plans to withdraw from South Yemen by 1968, was working to ensure that its client, the South Arabian Federation, would be in control by the time the British forces

left. These plans were frustrated by the nationalist forces who intensified their military operations in the countryside and gradually increased their hold on the territories. As a result, in June 1967 the British government began to pull some of its troops out of the hinterland and concentrate them instead in Aden. When military operations were later intensified in Aden itself, the British government decided to withdraw them from the country altogether. Most of the British forces, which had numbered 12,000 in early September, were withdrawn during that month; by early November there were only 3,000 troops left. At the same time, the South Arabian Federation was crumbling in the wake of the spreading influence of nationalist forces, particularly those of the NLF. In the first week of September the National Liberation Front was in control of twelve of the sixteen up-country federal states. On 5 September, the British High Commissioner in Aden admitted that the structure of the South Arabian Federation had broken down and that he was ready to negotiate with the nationalists.<sup>8</sup>

The YAR government viewed these developments with satisfaction. The capture of the hinterland and the seizure of the Emirate of Bayhan by the NLF in mid-September had not only quickened the British withdrawal but had also eventually denied the Royalists the opportunity of using the territories adjacent to the borders as a support base.<sup>9</sup>

However, the successes against the British and the South Arabian Federation were marked by the power struggle taking place between the two competing nationalist organisations, namely the National Liberation Front and the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen. In the competition for takeover from the collapsing federal government the NLF, by virtue of the support it had built up in the countryside,

was able during the summer of 1967 to overthrow the rulers of the up-country emirates, while FLOSY maintained influence mainly in and around Aden. Political differences between the two groups had developed into a series of confrontations in January and June which were a source of deep concern for both the UAR and the YAR. Both countries had co-ordinated their policies towards South Yemen in such a way that the Sana'a government had been sponsoring the liberation movement there in a more comprehensive manner, leaving Cairo to effectively direct and supply the armed struggle against the British forces.<sup>10</sup> Although there was an apparent unease among the YAR leaders over Egypt's lack of enthusiasm for Yemen's reunification, al-Sallal had no problem in accepting President Nasir's increasing interest in influencing the situation in South Yemen. In early September, when the fighting between the two groups resumed on the outskirts of Aden, President Nasir managed to bring the leaders of the NLF and FLOSY to Cairo for negotiations under the auspices of the Arab League, with the aim of resolving differences and forming a coalition government that would assume authority after the British withdrawal.<sup>11</sup> Because the resulting agreement was rejected by the radical left in the NLF, another round of negotiations was held in late October, again under the auspices of the Arab League. A new agreement was announced on 1 November but this was ignored when the forces of the two groups became engaged in what proved to be the final battle in a small town outside Aden. On 7 November the situation was settled after the South Arabian Army intervened in favour of the NLF. This military victory was followed on 11 November by a telegram from the NLF leadership to the British government in which the latter was asked to enter into independence talks with the organisation as sole representative of the South Yemeni people.<sup>12</sup>

The NLF's attempt to exclude FLOSY from the independence talks did not go down well in Sana'a which had shifted its political support to FLOSY following the NLF's rejection of the November 1966 merger agreement. The new leadership in Sana'a did not intervene in the power struggle between the two rival groups as it was fully occupied with its own mounting problems. However, relations between the YAR leaders and the NLF fell short of what was expected from two sides supposedly seeking unification. The NLF, much like FLOSY, called for the unification of the two parts of Yemen. But while FLOSY was unreservedly calling for an immediate merger with the north once the British withdrew, the NLF was giving every indication that it wanted to establish a state of its own. Reunification of Yemen, the NLF insisted, was possible only on "a sound and popular basis". As the prospects for independence became brighter, the NLF leadership made it clear it was aiming at establishing an independent state in the south and negotiate reunification with the north at a later stage.<sup>13</sup> During the negotiations the NLF rejected a proposal put forward by FLOSY for the establishment of a merely provisional executive body in South Yemen after the British withdrawal to handle the immediate unity negotiations with the North Yemen Republic.<sup>14</sup>

Before leaving for independence talks some weeks later, Kahtan al-Sha'abi, the NLF leader, stated that his organisation was committed to the ultimate unity of Yemen, but it could only be brought about in the long term after due preparations and when stability in the north had been achieved.<sup>15</sup> The implications of the independence of South Yemen and the achievement of reunification figured prominently in the debate among the decision-making élite on the issue of recognition.

## The NLF-British Independence Talks

By mid-November 1967 developments in the South had reached a point where the YAR decision-makers had to consider a formal response. After the NLF had established supremacy, in the first week of November, attention focused on the independence negotiations. Britain, which wanted to hand power to an effective government, was now willing to negotiate independence with the NLF. On 13 November, the British government agreed to the NLF proposals. Talks between a British delegation and an NLF team were held in Geneva from 21 to 29 November. At the end of these talks a memorandum was signed stating that Britain would relinquish its sovereignty over Aden and that South Yemen would become independent as of 30 November, 1967.<sup>16</sup>

Although the NLF had on occasions acknowledged YAR interests in the issue, there is no indication that Sana'a was consulted by the NLF leadership during the run-up to independence. Giving priority to the British withdrawal and fully preoccupied with its internal problems, the post-November leadership in Sana'a made no public response to the developments in the South. A year later, in early 1969 when relations between the two Yemeni Republics had greatly deteriorated, the YAR leadership complained that the NLF-British talks had confronted them with a situation which was contrary to YAR foreign-policy objectives in two respects. First, the idea of independence for the South was inconsistent with their long-cherished plan for the immediate reunification of North and South Yemen following the British withdrawal. Secondly, the exclusion of FLOSY from independence talks was unacceptable to the YAR leadership who considered the former fully entitled to be party to the political future of South Yemen having been a partner in the liberation struggle.<sup>17</sup>

## Perceptions of the Decision-Makers

The decision was taken by the moderate government, whose structure was not yet fully stabilised. The approach of independence for South Yemen coincided with the overthrow of President al-Sallal on 5 November. Although a Republican council and a new cabinet were announced on the same day the coup was carried out, membership of the former was completed only on 22 November. On that date General al-Amri replaced Muhammad Nu'man, who had resigned a few days earlier from membership of the Council as a protest against the government's uncompromising attitude towards the national reconciliation proposed by the Khartoum Agreement.<sup>18</sup>

Officially, the ultimate decision-making unit, comprised of Premier al-Ayni, Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Makki, the Occupied-South Affairs Minister Abdul Uthman and the three members of the presidential council, namely Kadi al-Iryani, Shaykh Muhammad Ali Uthman and Lieutenant-General Hassan al-Amri. In practice, however, al-Iryani, Chairman of the Republican Council, became the principal decision-maker as had been the case with his predecessor President al-Sallal, though for different reasons. Because of their frequent trips abroad to gather support for the new régime, both al-Ayni and Makki were absent for most of the policy-making. Lieutenant-General al-Amri was fully occupied in organising the defence of Sana'a as he was also the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in addition to being a member of the Republican Council. Muhammad Ali Uthman no doubt had his views but always left the decision-making to al-Iryani who was perhaps the one figure acceptable to all the main political forces within the post-November coalition.

The individual roles played by the members of the decision-making élite in shaping inter-Yemeni relations were influenced by their views on Yemen's unity. Almost all of them were outside the government during the last and crucial stage of the developments in the South. However, it was widely believed that they resented the UAR's direct involvement in the liberation movement in the south. They were also reportedly opposed to Cairo's encouragement of the independent armed struggle movement there, fearing it might result in the establishment of a separate state.<sup>19</sup>

Muhsin al-Ayni was probably the YAR leader who had made the most consistent efforts in this area of north-south relations, especially during his brief tenure as foreign minister in the first Republican cabinet and again during Nu'man's 1965 cabinet. Al-Ayni's belief in Yemeni unity was partly rooted in the formative period of his intellectual development. He was one of the famous group of forty students sent by Imam Yahya to Lebanon in 1947 for their education. There he was influenced by the growing Arab nationalist agitation for the three "pillars" of Arab resurgence or Ba'athism, namely freedom, socialism, and Arab unity. The latter entailed integration of small entities to form larger entities as a first step towards comprehensive Arab unity. His belief in the unity of Yemen was strengthened by his brief political experience when he took refuge in Aden between 1958 and 1960. There he joined the nationalist struggle from within the TUC in which he represented the Ba'ath branch in both parts of Yemen.<sup>20</sup> His intellectual orientation as a Ba'athist, his belief in Yemen's natural unity, and the relationship he formed with some prominent members of the TUC, who later became the leaders of FLOSY, undoubtedly influenced his opposition to the establishment of an independent state in South Yemen exclusively controlled by the NLF.

When it became clear in early November 1967 that the NLF was going to negotiate with the British government for independence, the YAR leaders including al-Ayni tried to shift attention to the issue of Yemen's reunification. During the visit to Cairo of a YAR delegation headed by Premier al-Ayni on 10-12 October, the NLF leaders who were preparing for independence talks in Geneva, met the North Yemeni officials on their own initiative. At that meeting al-Ayni and his economic minister, Dr. al-Attar, urged the NLF leaders, who included al-Sha'abi, Adil Khalifah and Abd al-Fattah Ismail, to seize upon the pending withdrawal of the British and work for the immediate reunification of the two parts of the country. According to al-Ayni prevailing conditions in Yemen were ideally conducive to such a step. He argued that:

"the two impediments, the Imamate and colonialism, are about to vanish. What then could obstruct unification? Sure there are problems; in the north they are manifested by the remnants of the Hamid al-Din family, in addition to pending issues with Saudi Arabia. In the South, there are the remnants of the Sultans and the stooges of the colonialist administration. A united Yemeni people should be able to face up to these problems.

Soon the Egyptians will leave and the Yemenis in the North will shoulder complete responsibility. In the South, the British will leave too and the Yemenis will shoulder the responsibility. In such a situation, the state, the institutions, the economy and foreign relations will be started anew. Why not start a new society together?



This (independence eve) is the opportune hour to achieve unity. If we allow this chance to slip out of our hands, and two governments, separate institutions, and divergent foreign relations to be established, it will be very difficult to achieve unity afterwards. Separation will be perpetuated, and there will be interests, internal as well as external, that will prevent unity or hamper it at the least."<sup>21</sup>

Kadi al-Iryani viewed the situation from a more pragmatic perspective. Like the other Republican leaders, he cherished the goal of restoring Yemen's unity and shared with Muhammad Ali Uthman and al-Amri, the other two members of the Republican Council, resentment at the NLF's seemingly separatist tendencies. But during the debate which took place within the political circles in Sana'a in the second half of November, al-Iryani came out strongly in support of those who advocated recognition of an independent state in the South. He based his argument on the need to secure a reliable support base in South Yemen at a time when the Royalists were tightening their siege of Sana'a and supporters of the Yemeni Republic, including the Arab revolutionary régimes, were uncertain about the future of the YAR. In the event of the Royalists breaking into Sana'a, al-Iryani advised the Republicans to move to Ta'iz, the second capital of the YAR; there they would be able to reorganise themselves, benefiting from the would be independent state of South Yemen which would serve as a support base for the North.<sup>22</sup>

In thinking along these lines, al-Iryani was clearly falling back on past experience. In the early 1950s al-Iryani had attributed the failure of the 1948 revolt mainly to the unreceptive attitude of the northern tribes who had helped Imam Yahya to put down the revolution.

He advised that for any similar revolt to succeed, it should establish itself in the southern part of the country where the people were more receptive to change. From its southern base, the revolutionary government would be able to fight a protracted war against its enemies in Sana'a. Such a strategy would deplete the energy of the Royalists in Sana'a while at the same time giving the northern population time to get used to the idea of a more progressive régime.<sup>23</sup>

### The YAR's Reaction To The NLF-British Independence Talks

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As previously mentioned, the new government assumed power on 5 November, 1967, only three weeks before it had to take a final decision on the situation in the south. At that stage the new leadership was completely overwhelmed by the pressing need to mobilise support for its policy of reconciliation while strengthening the Republican defences in face of the attacking Royalists forces.

Most of the crucial pre-independence developments in South Yemen had taken place during the summer of 1967 while al-Iryani and his moderate colleagues were still detained in Cairo and could not respond to these events. However, by the time the last round of negotiations had taken place between the NLF and FLOSY in the last week of October 1967, al-Iryani and his colleagues were already preparing to return to Yemen with every indication that they were going to play an important role in the political future of the country. At that juncture and on their own initiative, members of the NLF delegation met with al-Iryani and asked him to help persuade the YAR to support the aspirations of the South so that, according to their argument, Britain would have no excuse to delay independence. When urged by al-Iryani to work for an

immediate merger with the northern Republic instead, the NLF leaders said they preferred this issue to be decided later by the new state so that there could be no doubt as to the choice of the South Yemenis in the matter.<sup>24</sup> Al-Iryani was not pleased to hear that but, like other Northern Yemeni leaders, was preoccupied with the situation back in the north and did not want to make any specific suggestions that might look like an attempt to impose certain views on the South Yemenis. Before leaving for Sana'a, he expressed the simple hope that the ongoing negotiations between the two rival South Yemeni groups would succeed and that they would bear in mind the unity of Yemen in all their endeavours. He added that developments had given him the impression that an independent South Yemen could in the near future prove a valuable "support base" for the revolution in Yemen as a whole.<sup>25</sup>

The impending independence of the South had become a pressing issue for Sana'a only a few days before the event had taken place. Due to their preoccupation with the increasing political and military pressures, the new leaders in Sana'a could not give their full attention to that issue. Even when it became quite clear, after the NLF and the British government agreed in mid-November to begin independence talks in Geneva, the YAR leadership did not respond quickly. The issue was never considered by the cabinet or the Republican Council in their meetings. Instead, members of the decision-making élite exchanged views on the subject in informal settings. There was a feeling that the developments in the South were beyond Sana'a's control and everyone in the leadership was aware that the NLF was determined to establish its own independent government there. This fact was brought home to al-Iryani and al-Ayni by the NLF leaders themselves during their talks with the latter in Cairo in late

October and mid-November respectively. Nevertheless, in the second half of the month, al-Iryani undertook wide consultations with members of the governing élite and leaders of public opinion with the intention of ascertaining their views on what the proper response to the imminent establishment of an independent NLF government in South Yemen should be. All agreed that, because of the YAR preoccupation in defending itself against the Royalist offensive, there was very little Sana'a could do to change the situation. However, with regard to the issue of recognition of an independent government, there was considerable difference of opinion. Proponents of recognition, mostly intellectuals, believed that failure to recognise the South would be interpreted by the British as an indication of the YAR's intention to annex the South and would make them delay their withdrawal. The prospect of the British staying in Aden, or a possible arrangement between London and Riyadh, was fraught with very serious implications. After all, they argued, it was Sana'a which had called for self-determination for South Yemen. The opponents of recognition, on the other hand, were convinced that to confirm the legitimacy of the NLF government would be to give up forever the North's long-standing claim of sovereignty over the southern territories. Among those who held this view were the tribal shaykhs, the more conservative elements, some Ba'athists and the supporters of FLOSY inside the government.<sup>26</sup>

### How The Choice Was Made

The Royalist siege of Sana'a not only had a bearing on the decision that was finally agreed but also on the method by which that decision was eventually made. During the last week of November 1967 when the siege began to affect life in the capital, the government machinery was virtually paralysed. The Royalist forces were already shelling Sana'a from the north, west and south. Buildings, housing and state agencies were especially targeted and later President al-Iryani's house was shelled. Due mainly to these extraordinary circumstances, the cabinet could neither meet in regular sessions nor use its headquarters. In most cases the ministers concerned were assembled at the invitation of the Premier or his deputy in the house of a member of the cabinet. Al-Iryani made a point of consulting the individuals concerned whenever possible. Anyone who had an interest in the issue had to convey their point of view to al-Iryani either directly by seeking a meeting or indirectly through a member of the government. Al-Iryani managed somehow to consult almost all members of the governing élite, which included the other two members of the Republican Council, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Minister for the Affairs of the Occupied South, in addition to Shaykh Abdallah ibn al-Ahmar and some other tribal shaykhs and senior army officers.<sup>27</sup>

It was also as a result of the Sana'a siege that when the issue of recognition became most pressing, both Premier al-Ayni and Foreign Minister Dr. Makki were abroad searching for economic and military aid and political support. Muhsin al-Ayni began by visiting Cairo on 26 November, and at the time the decision was being considered he was paying a visit to Tunisia. The Foreign Minister Dr. Makki was on an

official visit to the USSR. Under the circumstances, Kadi al-Iryani had practically taken command of the government in their absence.

In his consultations al-Iryani could not discern a universally acceptable course of action. He concluded that the YAR had one of three options:

- a. use force to prevent the NLF from establishing an independent state;
- b. confine itself to making its point by denying recognition to the would-be state;
- c. grant recognition to that state once it was proclaimed.

The first option seemed unrealistic to al-Iryani because, under the circumstances, the YAR did not have the military capability. In addition, al-Iryani felt that even if annexation by force were possible, it would damage the prospects of a lasting unity between the two parts of Yemen. The second alternative was similarly ruled out because in his view such a negative stance was totally inappropriate with regard to such a vital issue. More importantly, the NLF would have viewed non-recognition as a serious challenge to its legitimacy and this could have lead to hostilities.

With so little time and so few options al-Iryani settled for the third alternative, the one which would, apart from anything else, meet immediate security needs and preserve prospects for future reunification of the two parts of Yemen. Recognition of the southern Republic would after all only be an acknowledgement of a *de facto*

situation, but al-Iryani knew that it would earn Sana'a the gratitude of the NLF and oblige it to provide vital help if the battle for Sana'a did not go the Republican's way. Moreover, the NLF would find it difficult later on to withdraw from its commitment to the eventual reunification of Yemen.<sup>28</sup>

In line with his declared policy on decision-making, al-Iryani let the other members of the decisional unit know of his preferences but refrained from pressing his point of view. Until about the 27th of November, there was no clear-cut position within the decision-making elite. While General al-Amri was unenthusiastic, Muhammad Ali Uthman, the other member of the Republican Council, was against recognition.<sup>29</sup>

At that time the military was fully preoccupied with the defence of Sana'a and less interested in political issues. It was known that the MAN had overwhelming support within the army at that time and would, if needed, come out in support of recognition. In any event, al-Iryani consulted the senior officers but was told the army trusted him and would leave the matter to his own discretion.<sup>30</sup>

During the last week of November as the independence talks in Geneva between the NLF and the British delegation were being finalised, it became imperative for al-Iryani to reach a decision. At last he placed his political weight decisively behind recognition, arguing that failure to do so on the part of the YAR would provide an excuse to those states which were basically unreceptive to the NLF to delay recognition themselves - a situation faced by Kuwait after it obtained independence in 1961. Furthermore, al-Iryani stressed the importance of the time factor, arguing that since independence of the south was inevitable, it would be wise to be the first to recognise the new state, especially as some countries had already indicated their

readiness to acknowledge the new Republic as soon as it became independent.<sup>31</sup> It appears that this argument was not accepted unanimously, but there were no strong objections either. Members of the governing élite who had objected to recognition opted for silence for the sake of solidarity in the face of the Royalist onslaught. Thus the YAR became the first country to recognise the PRSY. Formal recognition was preceded by a telegram sent by Chairman al-Iryani to Kahtan al-Sha'abi, the president of the newly independent People's Republic of South Yemen, in the early morning of 30 November, 1967 in which he congratulated the people of the South on achieving independence and wished the government there the best of luck.<sup>32</sup>

### Implementation

The unilateral nature of al-Iryani's role reflected the peculiar characteristics of the decision-making process in Yemen during that stage of the war. The Chairman of the Republican Council not only dominated the policy-making process but because of the disruptive conditions of the war was also able to effect the implementation himself. While the consultations were being finalised on 28 September, al-Iryani personally ordered both the Information Ministry and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs not to release any statements on the subject of the YAR's attitude to the political future of the South. They should, instead, confine themselves to welcoming the imminent withdrawal of British forces and the independence of South Yemen.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, on 29 November, 1967, on the eve of the PRSY's independence, in its commentary Radio Sana'a hailed "the victory of the 14th October revolution which was staged by the people of the South.... Independence was also a splendid victory for the 26th



September revolution which had shown the revolutionary path to the people of the South." In the same news bulletin, it was announced that the Civil Service Authority, on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Republican Council, had declared Thursday 30 November an official holiday on the occasion of the independence of the South.<sup>34</sup>

It was not out of keeping with the way foreign policy is conducted in third-world countries that al-Iryani sent the congratulatory telegram to the president of the newly independent South Yemen without the knowledge of his fellow members of the governing élite. Both the Republican Council and the Cabinet were informed later in the day when the two councils held a joint emergency meeting to consider the events. At the meeting presided over by al-Iryani, it was decided to abolish the Ministry for Occupied South Yemen Affairs and replace it with the Ministry for Yemeni Unity Affairs which was to "strengthen fraternal understanding between brothers in the North and South."<sup>35</sup> On the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, acting on personal instructions from al-Iryani, issued the following statement:

"The Government of the Yemen Arab Republic, in line with its policy which is based on respect for the wishes of the people of the South and their right to self-determination, has decided to recognise their new régime. It considers independence and the withdrawal of the forces of occupation a step that will enable the Yemeni people in the North and in the South to achieve unity. It also considers that this decision will open the door to discussions with the new régime, on all common issues in accordance with the interests of all Yemeni people."<sup>36</sup>

## Feedback

In the final analysis, the decision was a strategic one in the sense that it was an irrevocable act pertaining to a high-policy goal. The decision was conclusive and described as representing the then immutable position of the YAR towards the situation in South Yemen. On the motivational level, however, the decision was taken in response to what the YAR decision-makers considered an urgent, but far from permanent, state of affairs.

The decision had immediate implications for both the internal and external environment. The military capability and political position of the Yemeni Republic was strengthened by the good relations between the NLF government in Aden and the Sana'a government, brought about by the latter's recognition of the PRSY. In the military context this was demonstrated by the fact that during late 1967 and the first half of 1968 PRSY troops and YAR forces were able to launch joint operations against enemy forces (i.e. the ex-rulers of the south and the Royalists) across the eastern borders.<sup>37</sup> In addition, during the second week of November 1967, the NLF in Aden sent the YAR army a limited but much needed shipment of ammunition.<sup>38</sup> Politically, the creation of another Yemeni state strengthened the position of the YAR at a time when, following the withdrawal of UAR forces, it had been left to face the military and political pressures of the anti-Republican forces largely on its own. During the crucial period of the siege of Sana'a, the leaders of South Yemen affirmed their solidarity with their brothers in the North and in early February 1968 Kahtan al-Sha'bi even threatened to intervene directly in support of the YAR.<sup>39</sup> Although actions by the NLF fell short of fulfilling the YAR's hopes of actual unification, they encouraged belief in a viable

and very necessary inter-Yemeni alliance. However, on 1 August 1968, only days before the bloody events which marked the beginning of the rift between the two Yemeni Republics, al-Iryani was still calling for immediate unity which, in his view, was made more vital by the fact that the two Yemeni Republics were facing the same enemy.<sup>40</sup>

By recognising the PRSY, the North Yemeni leaders had been forced to abandon the principle of the indivisibility of Yemen - a basic foreign policy principle consistently upheld since the North became independent in 1918. Dr. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani described the decision as "the most important event in the nation's history, surpassing in its significance even the British occupation of Aden and/or the latter's agreement with Turkey in 1914 on the delineation of the borders which were to separate the [Yemeni] south from the north."<sup>41</sup> The division of Yemen into two states had acquired international legitimacy by the admission of the PRSY firstly to the membership of the Arab League on 12 December, 1967 and then to the United Nations on 14 December, 1967 - with no opposition or reservations on the part of the YAR.<sup>42</sup> Both Yemeni Republics continued to insist that the existence of two governments in Yemen was only temporary and for this reason no diplomatic relations between the YAR and the PRSY were established. Instead co-ordination committees were established in Aden and Sana'a. However, apart from these manifestations of unity, the two Republics pursued their own interests. According to YAR observers, the NLF leaders made it quite clear days after independence that any dealing between the two Yemeni Republics had to be conducted on that basis. In fact, members of the official delegation who arrived in Aden on 7 December to convey the YAR leadership's congratulations on independence were surprised by the formal way they were received by the NLF government and the formal

manner in which talks between the two sides were organised. They were allegedly also stunned when, contrary to the spirit of the visit and the prevailing cordial atmosphere, the PRSY Interior Minister Muhammad Ali Haytham, expressed his government's displeasure at the alleged presence of anti-NLF groups in the YAR.<sup>43</sup> These were taken by the YAR leaders as an early indication of unfriendly intentions on the part of the NLF government. A year later, in February 1969, when the differences between the two Yemeni governments had come out into the open, the YAR leaders began to admit that their decision to recognise the PRSY had been based on a misconception. They maintained that the decision had been made on the understanding that the NLF government would take steps towards reunification almost immediately. No steps had been taken; in fact the PRSY had begun to consolidate separation. As Kadi al-Iryani explained in his speech delivered in the same month:

"when independence came [to the south], we in the North pondered whether to recognise a second state on the soil of the same country or alternatively to delay such a step. As you know, our delay would have led to the delay of the British withdrawal from our country. In addition we believed our brothers who, in their charters, were affirming that the first thing they would do [upon independence] was to announce unity of the natural Yemen. For this and the need to deny the British any opportunity to delay their withdrawal, we recognised the new Government [in Aden]."<sup>44</sup>

## NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

1. Following the first clashes between the two Yemeni republics across common borders in September-October, 1972, an agreement was signed in Tripoli (Libya) in March, 1973 which laid down the basic principles for eventual reunification. The "Tripoli Charter" was not immediately implemented, but recurrent hostilities, especially the 1979 cross-borders fighting, enhanced the conviction that only with reunification would intra-Yemeni problems be solved. On 22 May, 1990, the two Yemeni republics were eventually reunited and became "The Republic of Yemen".
  
2. Dr. Makki, the then YAR Foreign Minister mentioned that during the initial stage of the siege all states including the UAR and the USSR believed the fall of the capital to the Royalists was inevitable. Such an impression led some members of the Egyptian embassy in Sana'a to circulate notes to other embassies stating that with its troops already withdrawn, the UAR was not responsible for their safety and are thus advised to leave the city. See Makki's account in *Hisar Sana'a: Shahadat lil Tarikh (The Sana'a Siege: Testimonies for History)* compiled by the Yemeni Centre for Studies and Researches (Sana'a) Dar al-Fikr lil Tiba'ah wal-Tawzi'i wal-Nashr, Damascus, 1989, pp.227-228.
  
3. From an interview with Hassan Makki on the Sana'a siege. In *Hisar Sana'a: Shahadat lil Tarikh*, op. cit., p.231.
  
4. op. cit., p.227; Colonel Hussin al-Daf'i, the then Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces mentioned that ammunition sent by Nasir numbered 5 million shells, op. cit., p.291.

5. From the statement by Ali Lutf al-Thawr, op. cit., pp.63-64.
6. As mentioned in the first policy statement, the Revolution's first objective was 'eradication of the absolute individual rule (in the north) and elimination of foreign influence (in the south).' See the YAR first policy statement in *Nusus Yamaniyyah*, compiled by Ali al-Ulufi, op. cit., p.23.
7. For an account of the revolution of the armed National Movement in South Yemen see Ahmad al-Misri, *Al-Nadjm al-Ahmar Fawk al-Yaman, Tadjribat al-Thawrah fil Yaman al-Dimukrati*, Beirut, Muassasat al-Abhath al-Arabiyyah, third edition, 1988, pp.123-179.
8. Muhammad al-Hibshi, *Al-Yaman al-Djanubi Siasiiyyan wa Iktisadiyyan wa Idjtima'iiyyan Munthu 1937 Wahatta Kiyam Djumhuriyyat al-Yaman al-Djanubiyyah al-Sha'abiyyah (Southern Yemen, Politically, Economically and Socially Since 1937 Until the Establishment of the People's Republic of South Yemen)*, Beirut, Dar al-Tali'ah lil Tiba'ah wal Nashr, 1968, p.584.
9. See *Al-Hayat*, 27 September, 1967.
10. Yemeni sources agreed that the Egyptians took the prime responsibility of arming and training the guerilla movements in the south and established a liaison office for that purpose in the city of Ta'iz, close to the borders with the south. They added that the Egyptians conducted their operations in this respect mostly independently of the Yemeni authorities (see Muhammad al-Aswadi, op. cit., p.106-107). Two YAR foreign ministers, al-Ayni and M. Yakub, told the writer that they had on occasions to draw

the attention of the UAR government to the necessity of using the name "occupied South Yemen" instead of the term "occupied South Arabia" used constantly by Cairo.

11. *The Economist*, 4 November 1967, Ahmad al-Misri, *Al-Nadjm al-Ahmar Fawk al-Yaman ...*, op. cit., p.282.

12. *ibid.*, p.302.

13. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, *Tatawwur al-Awda ...*, op. cit., p.96.

/// // // // // Ali Salim al-Bid, the first Defence Minister of the PRSY and current Deputy-Chairman of the Presidential Council of the Republic of Yemen, told the writer that reunification of Yemen was indeed not at that stage among the political priorities of the NLF.

14. Ahmad, al-Misri, *Al-Nadjm al-Ahmar Fawk al-Yaman*, op. cit., p.293.

15. *Akhir Sa'at*, 22 November, 1967; some believe part of the then apparent lack of enthusiasm from within the NLF leadership for immediate unification with the north was due to the assumption of power in Sana'a by the conservative Republicans on 5 November, 1967. A unification under these circumstances would, this argument went, retard the progressive developments in South Yemen.

16. Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, op. cit., p.221.

17. See the YAR statement on the differences with the PRSY in *Al-Thawrah*, 14 February, 1969.





28. From Kadi al-Iryani's unpublished replies to the YCSR's enquiries,  
op. cit.

29. From al-Ayni's replies to the writer's inquiries.

30. From the writer's interview with Colonel Muhammad al-Iryani,  
London, November, 1988.

31. Personal interviews. No information was available regarding the  
states to which al-Iryani was referring, but *al-Ahram* the Egyptian  
newspaper reported on 27 November, 1967 that the UAR would  
recognise the South Yemeni state once independence was announced.

32. SWB, ME/2638/A/3.

33. Personal interviews.

34. SWB, ME/2636/A/1-3 supplemented by personal interviews.

35. *ibid.*

36. From files of the YAR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

37. Fred Halliday, *Revolution and Foreign Policy: The Case of South  
Yemen*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.111.

38. Contrary to Western reports of the arrival to the YAR of a few hundred NLF fighters to fight on the side of the republican army against the Royalist forces during the Sana'a siege, North Yemeni officials affirm that only followers from the FLOSY army, Djaysh al-Tahrir, took part in the fighting. (See Makki's interview with the Egyptian magazine *al-Musawwar*, 15 December, 1967). However, the PRSY Government, according to Shaykh Sinan Abu Luhum, sent 25,000 rifle bullets. (See *The Weekly*, 26 September, 1990, 19 April, 1990).

/// /// /// 39. *Al-Hayat*, 6 February, 1968. /// /// ///

40. *Al-Thawrah*, 2 August 1968.

41. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, *Tatawwur al-Awda*, op. cit., p.97.

42. SWB, ME/2646/A/2; *al-Hayat*, 15 December, 1967, supplemented by personal interviews.

43. From al-Iryani's unpublished replies to the YCSR, dated 1988.

44. *Al-Thawrah*, 21 February, 1969.

CHAPTER VII

THE DECISION TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

(JULY 1969)

The defeat of the Royalists' final offensive in mid 1968 was followed by the suppression of the radical Republicans. There ensued a period of tranquillity in Yemen lasting exactly one year which made it possible for the post-November leadership of the YAR to effect certain changes in the country's foreign policy, starting with resumption of relations with West Germany. It took nearly six months of negotiation, both direct and indirect, between the YAR and the FRG, before a decision was finally taken in May 1969 to restore the broken diplomatic links between the two countries. It was well worth the effort, as far as the YAR was concerned, because Bonn was prepared to make certain economic concessions in exchange for the resumption of relations.

Unlike the other cases covered by this study, this decision came as a result of a pre-planned strategy and not as a response to external stimuli. The feedback effects were manifested by the enhancement of the economic capabilities of the YAR as well as the régime's political credibility. As a result of the decision, the international environment had also become relatively more favourable towards YAR foreign policy objectives.

### Operational Environment

As the decision to resume broken relations with West Germany was mainly a response to internal needs, two of the three environmental factors which directly, but differently, influenced the decisional setting were internal, namely political stability and the economic crisis. The third was related to one of the main objectives of the country's foreign policy, namely the achievement of balanced relations

with East and West. On the other hand, the readiness of West Germany to provide aid *quid pro quo* for recognition constituted the stimulus for the decision.

### Internal Political Stability

The Royalist encirclement which threatened Sana'a in the winter of 1967/68 had relaxed by September of the latter year. A subsequent offensive, at the beginning of October, which was organised and led by al-Badr himself, succeeded in once more encircling Sana'a, but had collapsed by the end of the month. This proved to be the last serious military effort by the Royalists and in the following months the Republican forces took the initiative and carried out a series of mopping-up operations in the northern territories. Consequently, the Royalist hold on these territories was greatly reduced and by May 1969 the Republican forces were in control of up to two thirds of the country and most of the population.<sup>1</sup> As an indirect result of these Republican victories many tribes deserted the Royalists and declared their allegiance to the Republican government instead. On 25 July 1969, the last of the Hamid al-Din commanders in Yemen, Amir Abdallah ibn Husayn, was assassinated in the main northern city of Sadah by its own citizens, an event which effectively marked the end of the Royalist counter revolution in Yemen.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period, and especially during January 1969, the government, in accordance with its policy of reconciliation, encouraged the return to Sana'a not only of Royalists but of dissident Republicans who shared the government's belief that the war should be settled by reconciliation with the Royalist side. This policy

inevitably triggered fierce opposition from the radical Republican forces, mainly followers of MAN who controlled the most effective units in the army: the shock troops and the parachute regiments in addition to the Popular Resistance Forces (PRF) (*Kuwait al-Mukawamah al-Sha'abiyyah*). During 1968, this opposition from the left became an open challenge to the government. However, in two crucial confrontations the government asserted its authority and eliminated the left-wing pressure on the decision-making centre. On one occasion, in March 1968, government troops were able to foil an attempt by the PRF in Hudaydah to seize an arms shipment. On another occasion fierce battles were fought in Sana'a itself between followers of the MAN and troops associated with the Ba'ath and loyal to the government. In these battles, which took place over three days (23-25 August, 1968), the government again prevailed but at some material and political cost.<sup>3</sup> In January 1969, government troops killed the leader of the opposition forces within the army, Major Abd al-Rakib Abd al-Wahhab, who had returned back from Algeria where he had been in exile for his part in the August fighting. Capitalising on these incidents, the government took a number of measures to ensure the suppression of further opposition from the left for some time to come.<sup>4</sup>

These dual achievements, i.e. military victory over the Royalists and the suppression of the left, removed any formidable political constraints and enabled the post-November government to put its moderate policies into practice.

## The Economic Crisis

A combination of political and environmental factors led to a serious deterioration in the economic situation during the latter half of the 1960s. The drought which began to hit the country in 1966 worsened during 1967 and in 1968 it crippled the agriculture which at that time was contributing 80% of the Gross Domestic Income.<sup>5</sup> Matters were made worse by the increasing cost of the war which, since the withdrawal of the UAR forces in late 1967, the Government was having to meet from its own meagre resources. As will be seen later, the Kurshmi Government which was formed on September 2, 1969 was left to tackle this difficult situation.

What concerned the YAR leadership in late 1968 was the lamentable lack of vital foreign aid which the government needed to embark on its programme of economic development. Since the defeat of the Royalists in October, Kadi al-Iryani the Chairman of the Republican Council and Premier al-Amri had both been proclaiming a new era of peace and economic development, but they were painfully aware that the foreign aid, on which the country had always depended in the past for the implementation of development plans, was no longer easy to get. Since the YAR severed relations with West Germany in 1965 and with the USA in 1967, Western aid had been suspended. In 1968 only Algeria and Romania were providing limited aid to the YAR in the form of commodity credits while the bulk of Soviet aid came in the form of military supplies.<sup>6</sup>

The resumption of Western aid was clearly dependent upon the resumption of diplomatic relations and since the YAR had initiated the break in the first place it was logical that it had to take the

initiative in bringing about their restoration. Immediately after they came to power in November 1967, the moderate leaders called for the re-establishment of relations with the USA, West Germany and other Western countries. Mainly in deference to Saudi Arabia with which they had common economic interests, none of those countries responded at that stage.<sup>7</sup> In early May 1969, al-Iryani made it clear that the YAR wanted an immediate resumption of cultural and economic relations with West Germany and the USA. Diplomatic relations, he said, could follow later when the time was right.<sup>8</sup>

However, during the negotiations between Sana'a and Bonn the question of diplomatic relations became a bargaining matter when the FRG made their resumption a condition of economic aid in any quantity. During the pre-decision negotiations with the FRG, the direct relevance of this factor became evident when the resumption of diplomatic relations was linked to the amount of West German aid. Later, in a radio interview on 7 February, 1970, Ahmad Barakat who succeeded Djaghman as foreign minister in the Kurshmi cabinet attempted to rationalise the decision by stating that the restoration of relations with West Germany was motivated by the need for economic aid.<sup>9</sup>

### The "Balanced Approach" Policy

One of the basic principles of YAR foreign policy had been to remain resolutely "non-aligned" and not to be drawn into the ongoing power struggle between the superpowers, the USA and the USSR, or their respective blocs. Ideally, this meant the establishment of balanced relations with both blocs; but the hostile attitude of the West towards the Yemeni revolution and the positive attitude of the



socialist states meant that balance was far from easy to achieve. Socialist countries had been among the first twenty countries to recognise the YAR in the first two weeks of its inception, and close relations between the Yemeni Republic and members of the socialist bloc had continued uninterrupted ever since. In mid-1969 the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and China had embassies in Sana'a, while the GDR and Romania had consulates. However, only three Western countries (the FRG, USA and Italy) had ever recognised the YAR, and Italy alone had maintained uninterrupted relations with Sana'a throughout the war period. Italy was therefore the only Western country with an embassy in Sana'a which looked after the interests of the USA, FRG and the UK within Yemen.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequent non-alignment was made even more difficult during the Royalist offensive in late 1967 and 1968 as the YAR had become almost completely dependent on military supplies from the Soviet Union and, to a much lesser extent, China. Although this was a measure of survival on the part of the YAR, Saudi Arabia used it as a pretext to justify its continued hostility to the Republican régime in Sana'a. In December 1967 and January 1968 Saudi Arabia expressed concern about the allegedly inevitable Communist penetration into the Arabian Peninsula through Moscow's aid to the Yemeni Republic.<sup>11</sup> An American source believed that the Saudis' cool reception of repeated overtures from the YAR during 1969 was explained by the apparent close relations between Sana'a and Moscow.<sup>12</sup>

Estrangement from the West deprived the YAR not only of much needed economic aid but also technical assistance. Prior to the breakdown in relations between Sana'a and the two Western countries, the YAR had received aid from the USA and FRG to an estimated value of \$42 million

and DM20 million respectively. This was less than the aid received from the USSR and China whose aid to the YAR was valued at \$100 million and \$46 million respectively.<sup>13</sup> During the last three years of the 1960s the flow of foreign aid to the YAR virtually ceased as a result of the regional and international realignment taking place in the Middle East. While most Western countries were still refusing to re-establish relations with Sana'a, by the beginning of 1969 the USSR was engaged in scaling-down its relations with the YAR and instead cultivating its relations with the new and more reliable ally in the south, namely the PRSY.

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The need to achieve balanced relations with both East and West was uppermost in the minds of the YAR leaders and constituted part of the operational environment at the time the decision to re-establish diplomatic relations with the FRG was made. In January 1970, al-Iryani alluded to the bearing this imperative had on the decision when he said that YAR foreign policy over the previous months had implemented one of its basic elements, namely non-alignment and positive neutrality.<sup>14</sup>

The Mutual Overtures

During 1968, the efforts made by the FRG to resume relations with Arab countries, in exchange for economic aid, constituted the stimulus for negotiations. The framework for a mutually beneficial arrangement between the YAR and West Germany was already in place and in fact dated back to the first three years of the revolution. It was after the GDR had recognised the YAR on 5 October, 1962 that the FRG, in a bid not to be outdone by Berlin and to forestall any reciprocal

recognition by Sana'a, uncharacteristically broke with its Western allies and became the first Western state to recognise the YAR on 23 October, 1962.<sup>15</sup> By doing so, it was made difficult for the YAR to respond to the GDR's gesture without being ready to sacrifice its relations with Bonn, especially as the FRG was already providing economic aid to Yemen. At that time, West Germany was fully committed to denying international recognition to its rival state and had actually severed relations with governments which failed to comply with its policy. This policy had its roots in the policy expressed in 1957 by the FRG Foreign Minister Walter Hallstein, when he said that governments which recognised the GDR were in effect recognising the post-war division of Germany and must, therefore, be considered to be committing "an unfriendly act" against West Germany.<sup>16</sup> In the circumstances, because of its economic needs and the need to secure the recognition of as many Western governments as possible, the YAR was aware that its interest lay in maintaining good relations with Bonn.

In the first three years of its existence the YAR had benefited from the competition between the two German states, with each trying to increase its influence in Yemen as well as in the rest of the Arab world at the expense of the other. Although denied full diplomatic recognition, the GDR was at first satisfied with consular representation in the YAR.<sup>17</sup> However, as relations between Sana'a and Bonn began to deteriorate following reports of the FRG's intention to recognise Israel in 1965, the GDR seized on the situation to ingratiate itself with the Arab world, including Yemen. In mid-April 1965 it was no coincidence that Paul Shulz, the Deputy Prime Minister of East Germany, made an official visit to Sana'a just as the West German experts were leaving Yemen in the aftermath of the violent

anti-FRG demonstration in Ta'iz a month earlier.<sup>18</sup> On 14 May, 1965, Premier Ahmad Nu'man formally announced the severance of diplomatic relations with the FRG in response to the latter's recognition of Israel.<sup>19</sup> The GDR wasted no time in granting the YAR two loans, the first of \$5 million in April 1965 and the second of \$2.7 million in June 1967.<sup>20</sup>

In 1969, when relations were restored between the YAR and West Germany, it was on a Yemeni initiative. According to official Yemeni sources, the YAR governing élite was aware at that time that the FRG offering economic aid to Arab countries in exchange for the resumption of diplomatic relations and they decided to benefit from the opportunity.<sup>21</sup>

### Perceptions of the Decision-Makers

The decision was taken amid conditions of internal political tension which was reflected in the instability of the government. Following the ejection of the left from the post-November government in the aftermath of the 1968 upheavals, General al-Amri formed two cabinets dominated by the conservatives, the first on 14 September, 1968 and the second on 3 April, 1969. But al-Amri's influence and his role in formulating state policies were undermined by opposition from within the army, as well as differences with al-Iryani over issues which included the prospect of reconciliation with Saudi Arabia.<sup>22</sup> Al-Amri tendered his resignation on 8 July, 1969, one week before the decision *vis-à-vis* the FRG was announced, although by that time it had already been adopted. These developments inevitably strengthened al-Iryani's position at the centre of the decision-making system. Most

specifically, the mounting tension within the régime increased the need for his skill in keeping the peace between the various Republican factions at a time when the return of the dissident Republicans had consolidated the dominance of the conservatives over the decision-making process.<sup>23</sup>

Notwithstanding these cabinet changes, the membership of the decision-making élite remained almost the same and comprised of al-Iryani, Muhammad Ali Uthman, al-Amri, and a number of others who had no formal decision-making authority, namely Shaykh Abdullah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar and Ambassador Muhammad Ahmad Nu'man. The latter was the son of Ahmad Nu'man; he had taken part in the Free Yemeni Movement alongside his father and played an active part within the circle of the moderate Republicans in the pre-1967 era. He was among the dissident Republicans who had returned to Yemen at the beginning of 1969 and had quickly assumed a very important role in the formulation of the country's foreign policy as an advisor to the Republican Council (*al-Madjlis al-Djumhuri*).

Al-Iryani's view of West Germany's readiness to provide economic aid was naturally affected by his awareness of Yemen's economic needs. Ever since the Royalist threat had waned in mid-1968, he had concentrated his energies on the resumption of relations with the West and reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, believing that in this direction lay the only path to a peaceful settlement of the war and the achievement of economic prosperity which had constituted the *raison d'être* of the September revolution.<sup>24</sup> Al-Iryani had always been moved by the harsh economic conditions prevailing in Yemen and saw the improvement of these conditions as one of the main tasks of the revolution and the principal mission of the régime. He constantly

drew the attention of those Yemenis who called for a revolutionary anti-West policy to the bleak realities of life for the Yemeni people. As a country having neither the capability nor the motivation to take an active part in either the regional or the international power struggle, the YAR should seek balanced relations with the big powers. Attempts, he said, should instead be made to convince the two superpowers, the USSR and the USA, of Yemen's determinedly non-aligned position. This way, the YAR would secure its independence and obtain badly needed economic assistance.<sup>25</sup>

Pragmatism was among al-Iryani's personal attributes. In late 1968 when the West German government made it clear that it was ready to exchange economic aid for the resumption of diplomatic relations, he concluded it was unrealistic and unfair that the Yemenis should maintain the stance taken up by the Arabs against the FRG in 1965, while other Arab states with much healthier economies had practically abandoned that policy. In fact, at a press conference on 18 March, 1969, al-Iryani complained that while the YAR had continued faithfully to observe the agreed policy in the name of Arab solidarity, other Arab countries were receiving German economic and cultural aid. He observed that, apart from being unfair to Yemen, the policy itself was also damaging to the Arab cause which it was intended to serve. In a press interview on 17 July, his reply to Arab criticism (mainly Syrian) of the decision encapsulated his point of view. He commented on the much vaunted Arab unanimity over the boycott of West Germany by saying:

"In fact, there is no Arab unanimity. Several Arab states did not sever relations with West Germany from the start. The fraternal Jordanian government, which is directly concerned

with the issue for which the boycott decision was taken, has resumed relations with West Germany. The boycott by the states which has so far put the decision into effect has been nominal. These states withdrew their Ambassadors but kept embassy officials, counsellors, attaches, secretaries and so forth in place. Above all economic relations with West Germany were maintained and West Germany continued to offer loans, projects and aid to these states. Only Yemen applied a boycott that was firm, final and almost total. We can say, then, that our attitude is not a departure from Arab unanimity because there is no Arab unanimity."

As to the claim that the Yemeni decision was harmful to the Palestinian cause al-Iryani said:

"Everything helpful to an Arab country is helpful to every other Arab country and finally to Arab issue number one - the Palestinian issue... If recognition of Israel by West Germany was the reason for a decision to boycott West Germany - although not all Arab states applied the decision - logic tells us that we should boycott all States which recognise Israel, including the major powers in the West and East..... Finally I would like to say that the boycott policy does not serve the Palestine question. The contrary is true. Instead of leaving the field open for Israel alone, it will be better for us if we are challengers who work for our own interests and against those of Israel."<sup>26</sup>

## The Decisional Process

The strategic decision taken on 19 May, 1969 to resume diplomatic relations with the FRG was preceded by a tactical decision, made three months earlier. Even before the May decision was made, relations in other non-political areas were resumed. This made it difficult to distinguish between the various stages of the decision-making process. In the following investigation, implementation refers to actions taken after the formal announcement was made on 15 July, 1969.

## The Pre-Decisional Activities

Most of the procedures and activities which preceded the decision concentrated on encouraging universal support for the move. This seems to suggest that there was no consensus inside the decision-making élite, in addition the issue was considered to be a highly sensitive one. Although no written sources were available to the researcher, talks and interviews with the decision-makers themselves indicated that from the procedural point of view, the pre-decisional process was divided into two stages. From November 1968 when the idea first surfaced, until February 1969, consultations on the issue were mainly confined to the members of the Republican Council, Premier al-Amri, Shaykh ibn al-Ahmar and Foreign Minister Yahya Djaghman. In the second stage, which began in earnest in April, the consultations involved persons outside the decisional core.

Apparently it was al-Iryani who originally told the other Council members of the West Germans' readiness to negotiate a reconciliation. With regard to much needed foreign aid from any source (a resolution was already embodied in the government's manifesto) no objection was



raised. The immediate recognition by both the Yemeni and West German sides of the mutual advantages made it difficult to ascertain, in the absence of documents, which party took the initiative. For the Yemenis, the issue was not the resumption of diplomatic relations with Bonn *per se* but the extent of aid the country would receive in exchange for resuming relations with the FRG. To explore the possibilities, Yemeni and West German diplomats had a series of informal meetings in Rome, Geneva and then later in Sana'a and Bonn.<sup>27</sup> West German officials also began to make open contact with the Yemeni authorities as early as January 1969. This process apparently began with a visit to Yemen, in the second week of January 1969, by a West German delegation consisting of representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of the Economy. On 17 January, Yahya Djaghman, the YAR's Foreign Minister, welcomed "the desire expressed by West Germany" to resume aid to the YAR in the field of agriculture.<sup>28</sup> On 12 March there followed a meeting between the Under-Secretary of the YAR's Foreign Ministry, and Dr. Landau, head of the FRG Interests Section at the Italian Embassy in Sana'a, where the former was informed that West Germany agreed to resume technical aid in the area of communications in accordance with the 1961 agreement between the two countries. Later, on 17 June, Dr. Landau informed the Foreign Minister that his government had decided to send a hundred tons of wheat to Yemen as a gift. West Germany was then asked to provide a workshop to maintain telecommunications equipment, three experts in electricity and experts in the postal field.<sup>29</sup>

There was nothing sinister in the mutually beneficial resumption of bilateral relations, but al-Iryani, like other members of the decision-making élite, realised it would be seen as an indication of the régime's foreign policy reorientation. The leadership was aware

of the bitter opposition of certain leftist-oriented groups to the re-establishment of relations with the West, especially at a time when the political rifts of August 1968 were not totally healed. Because of the sensitive nature of the issue, President al-Iryani began consultations with representatives of the various segments of public opinion. These contacts were intensified after the furore associated with the establishment of the National Council (*al-Madjlis al-Watani*) was settled in March 1969. In these consultations, the position of the intellectuals who represented the various political groups was far from coherent. While some expressed support for the Government's policy of putting the country's need for practical foreign aid before anything else, others opposed it as another fateful step in the direction of the West. Among these detractors were certain of the Ba'athists, followers of the newly formed Revolutionary Democratic Party (*al-Hizb al-Dimukrati al-Thawri*) and supporters of the pre-1967 régime.<sup>30</sup>

The most powerful pressure groups, the tribal shaykhs and the army, were also involved in the consultations. The influential shaykhs, including ibn al-Ahmar, were generally supportive of the government since this particular issue did not directly involve their interests, but, at the other extreme, the army was the group most interested in the issue. A group of leftist officers in the High Command told al-Iryani personally that they were definitely against the proposed move. They claimed that the resumption of relations with West Germany would alienate the Soviet Union, the major supplier of military hardware, and thus weaken the army. Some of them threatened violent action if the government went ahead with its plans.<sup>31</sup> Although this fierce opposition caused some concern to the members of the Republican Council it was clear this group had little support within the army,

certainly not among the middle-ranking and the junior officers. By then the Government had taken effective steps to ensure the loyalty of the army, especially in the aftermath of the August 1968 events which were seen as a challenge to the authority of the political leadership. Among these measures was General al-Amri's creation of new units, like al-'Asifah, under the command of loyal officers. These arrangements proved effective in this case, as the majority of the officers decided to support the Government. There is no precise information as to whether it was al-Iryani's intervention that silenced the leftist officers' opposition, but certain sources have suggested that he somehow encouraged the loyal officers to speak their minds against, and override, their leftist colleagues.<sup>32</sup>

There was additional pressure on the government from external sources. The Soviet Union was understandably not pleased with the seemingly pro-West orientation of the YAR government and viewed the resumption of Sana'a's relations with the FRG with suspicion. The Soviets did not express any open opposition to the resumption of relations with the FRG, but actively urged a similar posture towards the GDR. Encouraged by this support from the USSR, the GDR began pressing once more for recognition by the YAR. On 29 February, 1969, it made a formal request for full recognition, saying in its petition that such an action was unlikely to jeopardise relations with Bonn, since the latter had recently established relations with certain other states which recognised Berlin.<sup>33</sup> Later, on 17 June, the GDR made another request to the YAR urging that it too should follow the example of other Arab countries which had recently recognised the GDR.<sup>34</sup> Although no formal response came from Sana'a, the GDR and USSR kept pressing for full recognition even after the resumption of YAR-FRG relations were announced. It was reported that, in their bid to force

recognition of the GDR, the Soviets had hinted that spare parts for Russian-made weapons would in future only be available from the GDR.<sup>35</sup>

### How The Choice Was Made

Although al-Iryani and other members of the decision-making élite had, in the case of this decision, had enough time for deliberation, their options were narrowed by the absence of alternatives. The only offer on the table was the West German proposal which, as framed by the FRG Foreign Office, sought restoration by the YAR of its diplomatic relations with Bonn (severed since 1965) in exchange for Bonn's resumption of economic and technical aid, in addition to an initial credit of DM 15,000,000 million to cover the costs of several developmental projects.<sup>36</sup> Although East Germany spread a rumour of a competitive offer of aid in exchange for full recognition by the YAR of the GDR, no offer was officially made. Republican Council members agreed that they should accept the FRG offer, seeing no reason why it should have an adverse effect on the YAR's relations with the socialist countries. With regards to any East German offer, the prevailing opinion in the government was that the GDR aid project would, in the light of past experience, probably be of little use.<sup>37</sup>

It was then clear that no better alternative was available, however the YAR decision-makers seem to have sought to maximise the benefits by dragging things out and asking for improvement in the West German offer. This was confirmed by al-Iryani who stated afterwards that the government had decided "some time ago" to resume relations with Bonn but had delayed announcement of the decision "until talks were completed."<sup>38</sup> A Western source believed that the YAR government had

finally seized upon West Germany's severance of relations with the PRSY two weeks earlier to restore its own relations with the FRG.<sup>39</sup> On 2 July, 1969, the FRG announced the freezing of relations with the PRSY as a reaction to the latter's recognition of the GDR a few days earlier.<sup>40</sup> In the circumstances, observers believed that West Germany must have included the DM 10 million it had previously allocated to South Yemen in the package of economic aid it offered to the North.<sup>41</sup>

The exact date on which the government adopted the decision to resume relations with the FRG is yet to be ascertained, but Yemeni sources believe the action took place in late May or at the beginning of June 1969. Although the emphasis was on economic aspects, al-Iryani and other members of the decision-making élite linked the decision to the overall orientation of the country's foreign policy and thus deliberations on the final choice were kept within this inner circle. According to an official, the decision was taken by the Republican Council on the basis of a consensus and was handed down to the government. Instead of discussing the issue, the cabinet simply endorsed the decision without inviting any further deliberation. During the meeting in question and according to the same source, when General al-Amri, the Premier, noticed that the issue was next on the agenda for consideration he told cabinet members that there was no need for further discussion because the decision had already been taken. As a result a study on the issue, prepared at the request of the cabinet by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not considered.<sup>42</sup>

## Implementation

It took nearly two months for the decision to be made public. The delay may have been on the German side, although the Yemeni Information Minister Husayn al-Magbali announced on 18 June that the YAR would not lay down any conditions for the resumption of relations with the FRG.<sup>43</sup> Later, the Foreign Office in Bonn announced that the final agreement was only hammered out between June 29 and July 3 during the visit to Sana'a of Herr Walter Gehlhoff, a senior Foreign Office official. On 15 July, a formal announcement was made simultaneously in Sana'a and Bonn which stated that:

"The Government of the YAR and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have agreed to restore diplomatic relations. This decision will come into force as of today and the ambassadors will be exchanged as soon as possible. The two governments have also decided to co-operate closely in the economic and technical fields. The two governments are convinced that resumption of diplomatic relations and their mutual co-operation will enhance the friendly relations between their people."<sup>44</sup>

Unusually for such a formal announcement, the statement went on to refer in some detail to the various aspects of the proposed German aid, and there emerged a disparity regarding the total value of aid promised. According to the statement, Bonn was offering help by resuming those development projects which had been suspended in 1965, together with an initial credit of DM 15 million.<sup>45</sup> But in his attempt to justify the decision in a press interview on 9 July, al-Iryani mentioned that the total value of aid was £15 million, over

three times as much and the equivalent of YR 165 million.<sup>46</sup> This suggested a problem in communication between the Republican Council Chairman and his aides, if not between his office and the other ministries concerned.

The first step in the implementation of the agreement was carried out on 16 July when the FRG Embassy in Sana'a was reopened.<sup>47</sup> Two weeks later, on 27 July, a West German ship arrived at Hudaydah carrying foodstuff, constituting the first instalment of the promised aid.<sup>48</sup>

During a visit to Bonn by a Yemeni delegation, which included Ahmad Barakat, the new Foreign Minister, and Yahya Djaghman, al-Iryani's Personal Representative in the new cabinet, an agreement was signed on 28 November, 1969, according to the terms of which the YAR would receive a long-term credit of DM 25 million. Part of that amount (DM 10 million) would be a commercial loan and the rest would finance projects to be carried out by West German firms.<sup>49</sup> Soon afterwards, on 2 and 3 January, 1970, two shipments consisting of ten thousand tons of wheat flour arrived at Hudaydah as another instalment of the aid promised under the agreement.

### Feedback

West German aid undoubtedly strengthened the national capability of the YAR as the projects it funded contributed to the modernisation of the country's economic infrastructure. More specifically it financed the improvement of al-Rahabah airport and the asphaltting of the Sana'a-Ta'iz highway - two vital development projects. Even more importantly, the positive impact of the FRG aid and the negligible political price the YAR paid in exchange confirmed the rationality of

their new "balanced" approach to foreign relations and specifically encouraged them to think that this policy might soon bring more aid from the West.<sup>50</sup> The political implications of the decision were later alluded to by Kadi al-Iryani in January 1970 when he assessed the performance to date of YAR foreign policy. He said that: "As a result of this independent policy, we achieved several things. We maintained friendship with our (socialist) friends while winning new friendships which would greatly benefit Yemen."<sup>51</sup> During the second half of 1969, the new, more favourable, climate encouraged the leaders of the YAR to feel that the time was right to make efforts to repeat the success of their rapprochement with the FRG by approaching both the USA and Britain with the purpose of establishing relations. Muhammad Nu'man, the roving Ambassador, visited London in the second week of November 1969 in an attempt to convince the British government to recognise the Yemeni Republic.

In the international context the benefits which resulted from the decision to resume diplomatic relations with the FRG far outweighed the negative aspects, the foremost being the reaction of the USSR and other socialist states. They suspected that the YAR was replacing its socialist friends with new "Western" friends, especially since Sana'a continued to ignore the GDR's request for recognition. Until the YAR recognised the GDR on 12 December, 1972, Moscow continued to press the issue forcefully.<sup>52</sup>

In the regional context, the decision had only a short-term effect on the YAR's relations with some Arab states. Aware of the prevailing Arab sensitivity to the resumption of relations with the FRG, the YAR government explained its motives to certain Arab governments, including Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Sudan and Syria, before the decision



was made and justified it to the remainder afterwards.<sup>53</sup> Yemen was only the second Arab state after Jordan to resume relations with the FRG and the move provoked some criticism, mainly from the left-wing press. Among the Arab governments only three showed actual displeasure - the UAR, Syria and the PRSY. Syria and the PRSY had special ties with the socialist bloc and were clearly resentful of the YAR decision. At that time the UAR was urging the Arab states to establish relations with the GDR as a reaction to Bonn's support of Israel and was disappointed with the Sana'a decision. However, while the South Yemeni Republic was too preoccupied with its own internal problems to register any protest, both Cairo and Damascus let it be known that they privately censured the Yemeni decision. The UAR did not make any criticism publicly and expressed its displeasure in a discrete manner<sup>54</sup> but, on 16 July, the Syrian Charge d'affaires in Sana'a conveyed Syria's opposition personally to the Head of the Political Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in rather harsh terms, implying that the Yemeni Republic was reneging on its "revolutionary" policy and adopting a pro-Saudi and pro-Western posture.<sup>55</sup>

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII

1. *The Sunday Times*, 16 November, 1969.
2. *The International Herald Tribune*, 29 July, 1969.
3. For a full account of this event see Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, op. cit., pp.122-124. See also Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, *Tatawwur al-Awda ..*, op. cit., p.101.

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4. See Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, op. cit., p.124.
5. Abd al-Aziz al-Maktari, "Thawrat, 26 September wa Tatawwur al-Iktisad al-Yamani", in *Thawrat, 26 September: Dirasat Wa Watha'ik lil Tarikh, Vol. II*, Yemeni Centre for Studies & Research, Sana'a, 1st Edition, 1987, pp.88.
6. See Abdallah Barakat, *Masadir Tamwil Khitat al-Tarmiyyah al-Idjtima'iyyah wal Iktisadiyyah fil Djumhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah*, Matba'at al-Katib al-Arabi, Damascus, 1986, p.724; V. Josarov and A. Seiful Mulukov, *Iktisadiyyat al-Djumhuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah*, The Yemeni Centre for Studies and Research, Sana'a, 1988, pp.180-181.
7. In addition to the substantial oil interests the US was enjoying in Saudi Arabia, Britain also had important economic ties with the Kingdom. At that time, the UK had just concluded an arms deal with Riyad worth £140 million (see *al-Anwar*, October 19, 1969).

8. *The New York Times*, 2 May, 1969.
9. See SWB, ME/3296/A/9-10.
10. For diplomatic representation in Sana'a see *The Middle East and North Africa 1969-1970*, Sixteenth edition, Europa Publications Limited, London, U.K., 1969, p.848.
11. *Al-Hayat*, 4 January, 1968.
12. F. Gause, *Saudi-Yemeni Relations: Domestic Structure and Foreign Influence*, op. cit., p.194.
13. *The New York Times*, 1 May 1966.
14. Al-Iryani's interview with the official daily *al-Thawrah*, 18 January, 1970.
15. No explicit commitment was given by the YAR not to recognise the GDR in return for the FRG recognition of the Republican régime in Sana'a. *The New York Times* has reported that Bonn made it known that it would recognise the YAR only if the latter promised not to establish diplomatic relations with the GDR. See *The New York Times*, 24 October, 1962.
16. *The New York Times*, 9 May, 1969.

17. Until the 26 September revolution, the GDR was represented in Sana'a by a commercial representative. The YAR became one of the few states to establish consular relations with Berlin in the first half of 1960s. A decision was made to that effect in November, 1965, although the YAR consulate in Berlin was not inaugurated until later, on 8 January, 1966. (Ref. unpublished documents of the YAR MOFA).

18. Diplomatic relations between the YAR and the FRG were practically paralysed after demonstrators had demolished part of the latter's embassy building which was still in Ta'iz in mid April, 1965. The demonstrations in Yemen against the FRG coincided with demonstrations in many Arab capitals as a reaction to the announced intention of the Bonn Government to recognise Israel. West German sources alleged the demonstrations in Ta'iz were incited by Egyptian and communist agents in Yemen. (Files of al-Ahram Centre of Strategic Studies, Cairo).

19. *al-Ahram*, 14 May, 1965; *al-Akhbar*, 14 May, 1965.

20. See Abdallah Barakat, *Masadir Tamwil.....*, op. cit., p.723.

21. Personal interviews.

22. *The New York Times*, 4 August, 1969.

23. Personal interview with Ali Lutf al-Thawr.

24. See al-Iryani's speech on the occasion of Iid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) December 1969, in *Al-Yaman Fi Tarik al-Salam wal Bina*, Ministry of information, Sana'a 1969, pp.39-48.
25. Al-Iryani's speech in *al-Thawrah*, 26 September 1970.
26. Al-Iryani's interview with *Al-Sha'b Daily* on 17 December, 1969, in *Al-Djumhuriyyah*, 20 July, 1969; ME/3131/A/1-4.
27. From written replies from the then Foreign Minister Yahya Djaqman to the writer's enquiries dated March, 1989.
28. From unpublished documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) - Sana'a (Political Department, 1969).
29. *ibid.*
30. Interviews with officials in the YAR MOFA, Sana'a, December, 1989.
31. Personal interviews.
32. From the writer's interview with senior officers.
33. The GDR note referred to the resumption of relations between Yugoslavia and Bonn, which were just restored after the latter severed relations with Yugoslavia following the recognition of Belgrade by the GDR in 1967. (From the files of the MOFA, Sana'a).

34. The GDR request was amongst apparently identical notes sent to all Arab Governments calling on them to follow Iraq's example shortly after the latter recognised the East German state. (From unpublished documents of the MOFA-Sana'a Political Department, 1969); ME/3102/A/11.
35. From the writer's interview with Muhsin al-Ayni, London, July, 1989, op. cit.
36. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 16-23 August, 1969, p.23508.
37. Interview with officials, who claimed that there was wide criticism of the project and disbursement of aid, a large part of which was spent on exaggerated salaries for the East German experts.
38. From al-Iryani's interview with *al-Sha'b*, 19 July, 1969, op. cit.
39. *The New York Times*, 17 July, 1969.
40. See *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 12-19 July, 1969, p.23452.
41. *Al-Nahar*, 17 July, 1969.
42. Personal interviews.
43. Me/3105/A.11.
44. For the text see *al-Djumhuriyyah*, 16 July, 1969; *The New York Times News Service*, 16 July, 1969. (Files at al-Ahram CSS-Cairo).

45. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, p.23508, op. cit.
46. Al-Iryani's interview with *Al-Sha'b*, 17 July, 1969, op. cit.
47. Until then, the Italian Embassy in Sana'a was looking after the FRG interests in Yemen while the YAR interests in West Germany were looked after by the Somali Embassy in Bonn.
48. ME/3138/A/10.
49. For texts see '*al-Ittifaqiyyat al-Dawliyyah al-Mubarammah bayn Hukumat al-Djumphuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamaniyyah wa Hukumat al-Duwal al-Shakikah wal Sadikah*, Vol. III, al-Maktab al-Kanuni li Riyasat al-Djumphuriyyah wa Madjlis al-Wuzara, Sana'a, pp. 232-233.
50. *Washington Post*, May 1970 (no specific date - from *al-Ahram* CSS - Cairo).
51. *Al-Thawrah*, 18 January, 1970, op. cit.
52. From the writer's interview with Muhsin al-Ayni, Washington, January 1991.
53. Personal interviews with the then officials (the two Foreign Ministers Djaghman and Barakat).

54. A Yemeni official who was a member in the YAR delegation to the Rabat Arab summit (September, 1969) told the writer that the then UAR Vice-President Anwar al-Sadat had, during a private meeting between the two delegations, mildly criticised the Yemenis for taking the decision without first consulting Egypt. This was despite the fact that the YAR was among other Arab Governments who were notified *a priori* of the YAR intention.

55. The Syrian Charge d'Affaires had behaved in a meeting with the Director-General of the Political Department in a provocative manner and, on a request by the YAR, was soon afterwards withdrawn by his Government. Personal interviews; unpublished documents of the YAR-MOFA (Files of Political Department, 1969).



CHAPTER VIII

THE DECISION TO ACCEPT THE DJEDDAH RECONCILIATION DEAL

(MARCH 1970)

Except perhaps for the decision to request the UAR's military assistance, this decision, made at the very end of the period, was the most important of all those made by the YAR during the 1960s, including the others covered by this study. The significance of the decision to accept their conciliation agreement concluded with Saudi Arabia in Djedda during March 1970, lies in the impact it had on the internal and external environment. The most important consequence for the Republican régime was the termination of hostile activities by the Saudi-backed Royalist elements and the recognition of the YAR by Saudi Arabia on 23 July, 1970.

Following crippling military reversals, in early 1969 the military organisation of the Saudi-backed Royalists, who had been challenging the Republican government for nearly six years, finally seemed to have disintegrated, and Saudi Arabia at last became convinced of the necessity of coming to terms with the Yemeni Republic. However, a further year passed before the terms of reconciliation were agreed and it was not until March 1970 that the Reconciliation Agreement was presented at the Djedda conference. The decision-making process took several months, from March to July 1970, with the problems of implementation taking up most of this period.

### The Operational Environment

There were a number of environmental factors which impinged on the decisional setting, three of which were particularly relevant. They were the changing position of Saudi Arabia, the West's refusal to establish relations with the YAR, and the crisis in the domestic economy. The fact that the Royalists counter-revolution had been

related to the Saudi position *vis-à-vis* the YAR, made these three components inter-related. It was the invitation to the YAR to participate in the Djedda Islamic conference that constituted the decision stimulus.

### The Saudi Position

The prospects for reconciliation between the YAR and Saudi Arabia which appeared promising in the first half of 1969 were seriously threatened when, in late October of that year, the Royalists launched a surprise military offensive aimed at regaining the northern city of Sadah. On their own, the Royalists would have been totally unable to mount such a challenge to the Republican government; events of the previous year had shown how dependent they had been on Saudi support, and when Saudi Arabia, for its own reasons, had terminated its aid to them following the collapse of the siege of Sana'a in mid-1968, the Royalists had been unable even to hold on to the territories they were controlling in the northern part of the country. In the following few months, the Republican forces had rapidly increased their hold on these territories; on 6 September, 1969 they had captured Sadah and a month later they captured Waylah and Kitaf, the last Royalist strongholds.<sup>1</sup>

Although initially Saudi Arabia did not admit that it had resumed military aid to the Royalists, the YAR leaders were convinced that the Kingdom was behind the renewed hostilities. This led to renewed tension between the two countries throughout the second half of 1969. Kadi al-Iryani tried to challenge King Faysal politically by making an unsuccessful attempt to raise the issue for debate at the Fifth Arab

Summit Conference in Rabat in December, 1969. This attempt was unsuccessful because the Arab leaders gave priority to the more pressing issues pertaining to the continued confrontation with Israel.<sup>2</sup> There was even a danger of direct military confrontation on the occasions when the battle for Sadah spilled over the border, with Yemeni planes hitting Royalist positions on the Saudi side and Saudi aircraft retaliating.<sup>3</sup>

There are different interpretations of this sudden change of the Saudi policy towards Yemen. Some suggest that the Saudi resumption of aid to the Royalists was merely a response to their underlying concern over the Republican capture of Sadah, a stronghold so close to their borders, while others believe the Saudis might have felt that a Royalist revival was still possible.<sup>4</sup> However, others believe that the Saudis merely wanted to convey a message to the Republicans to the effect that they could not stabilise their régime before a compromise of some sort had been negotiated with Riyadh and the Yemeni Royalists. More specifically, it was suggested that should Sadah fall into Royalists hands, which indeed happened in mid-February 1970, the Republicans would adopt a more conciliatory approach.<sup>5</sup>

The YAR's relations with the PRSY had also become a pertinent factor in the renewed entente between Sana'a and Riyadh. King Faysal, to whom the NLF were nothing but communists, had, during 1968, provoked a number of internal uprisings in the northern areas of South Yemen with the purpose of destabilising the régime in Aden. By November 1969, the situation had escalated into open conflict, with the Saudi and South Yemeni forces battling for control of al-Wadia'h, a point along their common borders. Despite the rift with Aden which had occurred earlier in the year, the YAR took the side of South Yemen and al-

Iryani worked with the South Yemeni President, Salim Rubi'a, to put the al-Wadia'h issue before the Rabat summit.<sup>6</sup> This infuriated the Saudis, who were seeking to win the YAR over to their side, and the announcement on December 9 by Prince Sultan, the Saudi Defence Minister, of an aerial raid by YAR planes on Saudi territories was linked to Riyadh's anger. Nevertheless, the intra-Yemeni solidarity strengthened the reconciliation between Sana'a and Riyadh. A Western source suggested that it was the realisation that it would be difficult to sustain open conflict with the YAR while attempting to overthrow the South Yemeni régime which led Saudi Arabia to come to terms with the Republican régime in Sana'a.<sup>7</sup>

The need to establish good neighbourly relations with Saudi Arabia was cited by the YAR leadership as the principal motivation for the Government's decision to accept the Djedda Accord. Indeed, upon his return from the conference it was justified by al-Ayni on those very grounds.

### Relations With The West

Another external factor which influenced the decision on the Djedda reconciliation was the YAR's interest in establishing relations with the West. For over a year, the YAR government had been seeking to establish relations with the principal Western states, for mainly economic reasons. As mentioned previously, these attempts were frustrated by the insistence of the latter that the Yemeni Republicans should first settle their differences with Saudi Arabia. However, several factors led these Western states to look more favourably on the establishment of relations with Sana'a. The resumption in July

1969 of YAR-West German relations and the promulgation in the following month of legislation encouraging foreign investment in Yemen had improved the West's image of the YAR.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the decision by Great Britain during 1968 to withdraw from the Gulf by 1971, together with the simultaneous increase of Soviet and Chinese aid to the PRSY (and through it to radical groups in the area) had led the Western governments to urge a Saudi compromise with the moderate régime in Sana'a. According to official Yemeni sources, both the USA and Italy were instrumental in convincing Saudi Arabia of the need to come to terms with the Yemeni Republic, and acted as intermediaries in the indirect contacts between Sana'a and Riyadh prior to the Djedda dialogue of March 1970.<sup>9</sup>

### The Economic and Financial Crisis

Another environmental factor was the state of the economy. The economic situation, as explained in the previous chapter, had become increasingly strained during 1969 as the financial crisis became ever more acute. In 1969, the riyal was worth less than 30 per cent of its 1964 value; by 1970, the value of exports amounted to only 7 per cent compared with imports, and government revenues covered only 56 per cent of current expenditure.<sup>10</sup>

The problem was rooted in the economic stagnation of the preceding three years and was constantly exacerbated by increasing government expenditure necessitated by the continuing war. Immediately upon coming to power on 2 September, 1969, al-Kurshmi's government adopted stringent austerity measures to cope with the situation, including the reduction of government expenditure by 60 per cent, temporary

suspension of the issue of currency, and introduction of certain new taxes. However, these measures were never implemented because of strong opposition from the armed forces and tribal armies.<sup>11</sup>

The rising cost of the war made it difficult for the government to secure even essential funds for running its daily activities and the public services were substantially reduced.<sup>12</sup> The inability of the al-Kurshmi cabinet to implement its policy while satisfying the demands of the army of the tribes led to its resignation on 2 February, 1970. Consequently, the YAR leadership became even more convinced that the only permanent solution to the problem lay in settlement of the war.<sup>13</sup> In such depressing circumstances, they were aware that the options available to the YAR were severely limited since continuation of the war was becoming financially unsustainable.

#### The Invitation To The Djedda Conference

In early March 1970, the YAR Foreign ministry received an invitation to participate in the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference due to take place in Djedda on 23 March. All Muslim states were invited to the Djedda Conference and all accepted the invitation except the PRSY and Syria.<sup>14</sup> The invitation was sent by the provisional secretariat consisting of Morocco, Senegal and Somalia, but was widely interpreted as a sign of Saudi desire to talk to the Yemeni Republicans.<sup>15</sup> It seemed that the YAR leaders were expecting the invitation since they had prior knowledge of the Saudi intention to open a dialogue and they were receptive to it. Although they set conditions for taking part in the conference, the fact that the YAR attended the conference contrary to its previous objections supports this assumption.<sup>16</sup> The conference

itself was an implementation of a decision adopted by the Islamic summit held in Rabat in September 1969 as a response to the burning of the al-Aksa mosque in Jerusalem that summer.

By that time, King Faysal appeared ready to open direct, though not official, dialogue with the Yemeni Republicans. This reconciliatory approach was conditioned by the King's increasing fears of mounting threats during 1968 and 1969 from disturbing developments in South Yemen and the Gulf as well as internal upheavals at home. For nearly seven years, the Saudi monarch has consistently maintained that the war in North Yemen was between the legitimate government of the Imam and the Republican usurpers. He refused to talk to the Republicans because, as he put it, the conflict was an internal Yemeni matter and insisted that the Republicans should talk to their Royalist countrymen instead. King Faysal maintained this position even during the time when he was engaged in indirect contact with al-Iryani. No details are available on the nature of these contacts, which Yemeni sources believe to have taken place during 1969 and the first two months of 1970. It seems, however, that the king was insisting on a Yemeni government in which the Republicans and the Royalists were equally represented. A change in the king's position was conveyed at a meeting held in Beirut in the first week of February 1970 between leading Royalists and Republican personalities. During the meeting, the Royalists disclosed that King Faysal was now ready to come to terms with the Republican government and would support a settlement within a Republican framework. Among suggestions for ways of furthering the dialogue was the proposal that a ceasefire be called while negotiations took place. But nothing came from this due to Republican outrage at the capture of Sadah by Royalist forces in mid-February, shortly after the Beirut talks had ended. Clearly the



Royalist offer reflected a change in King Faysal's attitude, and this was made even more apparent by participation in the Beirut talks of Shaykh Kimal Adham, his brother-in-law.<sup>17</sup> Thus the invitation to the Djedda Islamic Conference came as no surprise to the YAR decision-makers.

### Perceptions of the Decision-Makers

As with other decisions in this study, members of the Republican Council and member of the Cabinet were all ostensibly involved in the decision-making process. In practice, however, the decision evolved within the ultimate decision-making élite comprising, in addition to al-Iryani, the two other members of the Republican Council, Muhammad Ali Uthman and Hassan al-Amri, Premier al-Ayni as well as Shaykh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar. As chairman of the Consultative Assembly, Shaykh al-Ahmar was not a member of the formally authorised decision-making unit but he played an important part in all stages of the decisional process.

Perhaps it was no accident that the same men who, as leaders of the November 1967 government, initiated the reconciliation policy in the first place, subsequently became responsible for its implementation. Muhsin al-Ayni's tenure as prime minister lasted less than two months, from 5 November to 22 December, 1967 when he resigned the office to be appointed personal representative of al-Iryani and the country's permanent representative at the UN. He later went on to be the YAR's ambassador in Moscow. Meanwhile, al-Iryani had by force of his personality and his political skill become a driving force for the cohesion of the Republic. The confidence invested in him by his

colleagues was confirmed in November 1969 when the National Council refused to accept his decision not to stand for re-election for the chairmanship of the Republican Council. The political crisis which resulted from the resignation of al-Amri's cabinet early in July demonstrated the difficulty of finding leaders acceptable to all political factions and consolidated al-Iryani's position as a universally unobjectionable leader.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Iryani's contribution to the consolidation of the Republic was temporarily hampered in October 1969 by the resumption of Royalist military operations, which clearly marked the renewal of the Saudis' hostile posture towards the YAR. The ensuing tension between Riyadh and Sana'a was in contrast to the atmosphere which had prevailed over the previous twelve months. During that time the situation was, from the YAR leaders point of view, reassuring; not only were the Royalists rapidly disintegrating but Saudi Arabia was also giving every indication that it was ready to reconsider its policy towards North Yemen. The Saudi decision in February 1969 to allow for the first time Yemenis holding Republican passports to make their pilgrimage to Mecca was just one of these indications.<sup>19</sup> For a while the YAR leaders might have felt that there was no need to make concessions to the Royalists any more, especially since emotions were running high against the government's policy of encouraging the return of ex-Royalists. Even contacts being made with the implicit blessing of the Republican Council between Republican and Royalist personalities in Beirut at the time were threatened by inter-Republican disagreement on the issue. In July 1969, Lieutenant-General al-Amri rejected a proposal for formal but secret talks between the two sides in Athens, saying that such talks should be conducted openly.<sup>20</sup> The resumption of the Royalist offensive alerted the YAR leaders to the fact that the

military defeat of the Royalists would not in itself end the war. Negotiations would have to take place in which both the interests of the Saudis and their Royalists allies would be accommodated.

Among the members of the governing élite, al-Iryani held the consistent view on the need for accommodation with the Royalist side, meaning Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Royalists. Although he was convinced of the antagonistic Saudi attitude to the Yemeni Republic, he believed that a permanent state of hostility between the two countries was not necessarily inevitable. He believed that if it had not been for al-Baydani's provocative gestures towards Saudi Arabia and his public threats in the early days of the Revolution, the Saudis might have resigned themselves to the *de facto* situation and recognised the YAR in the early days of its inception.<sup>21</sup>

Al-Iryani's reconciliatory views towards Saudi Arabia and his advocacy of the Djedda deal were coloured by an awareness of the need to placate King Faysal and allay the king's fears of the Republican régime. This in turn was based on his astute perception of the Saudi King. The Yemeni president perceived the Saudi monarch as a stubborn and proud bedouin chief who would not concede without face-saving devices, even when he was on the wrong side. Al-Iryani's assessment of Faysal's character was formed from his meetings with the Saudi leader on several occasions. The latter's hostility to any establishment of Republican rule in Yemen had been known to al-Iryani ever since he exchanged views with the then Crown Prince Faysal in 1961.<sup>22</sup> Although King Faysal's attitude towards the Yemeni Republic appeared to alter in 1969, particularly in light of the resumption of the YAR-FRG relations in July 1969, he could not change his position easily, especially since he felt moral obligations to the defeated

Yemeni Royalists. This was confirmed when, during the First Islamic Summit Conference held in Rabat in September 1969, King Faysal rejected an attempt made by the Amir of Kuwait to initiate a dialogue between the two. The king said he would never recognise the YAR and refused even to shake hands with the Yemeni President.<sup>23</sup> The King's intransigence did not discourage al-Iryani who was intent on diluting the king's suspicion of the Yemeni Republic so that a constructive dialogue could begin between the two sisterly countries. In December 1969 he took the initiative during the Rabat Arab summit and appealed to King Faysal to spell out his misgivings of the Yemeni Republic which lay at the root of the Kingdom's continued hostility. Again the King refused to back down claiming that he had no quarrel with the YAR, adding that in order to settle the war in Yemen, the Republicans had to come to terms with their Royalist "brothers". In October 1969 he made a direct appeal to King Faysal to put an end to the Kingdom's interference in Yemen, affirming that the Yemeni revolution was a revolution for the Yemeni people who desired peace for themselves as well as for others.<sup>24</sup>

Kadi al-Iryani wholeheartedly welcomed the reconciliation proposals communicated to him by his prime minister on 25-26 March, 1970 and supported the return of the Royalists to Sana'a in the face of fierce opposition from many Republicans. This attitude towards the return of the Royalists was in keeping with his long-held beliefs. Like other early reformers of the Free Yemeni movement, al-Iryani had always advocated the sort of political change that would replace the Imam's divisive policies with those which would achieve greater national unity. The establishment of the Republic was certainly a radical change, from the tyrannical rule of the Imam to constitutional rule based on the will of the people. But national unity, long sought by

the older generation of the Free Yemeni Movement, was thought to have been eclipsed by the civil war which had divided the Yemenis into Republicans and Royalists. Al-Iryani was one of the three moderate leaders who had initiated a policy of national reconciliation early in 1963 and had never deviated from it. This policy, which took shape during the Khamir Popular Conference of 1965 and constituted the core of the post-November government, was based on two principles: to uphold the Republican régime and at the same time to restore national unity by the incorporation of the "misled elements" (followers of the deposed Imam) to the legitimate fold of the Republican régime.<sup>25</sup>

Al-Iryani made his views on the return of the Royalists known to the Republican Council and Cabinet when they met in joint session on March 27 to consider the progress of the Djedda talks. He told the meeting that the Royalists return and the inclusion of some of them in the government was one element in the proposed reconciliation which he personally would have no difficulty in accepting.<sup>26</sup> When the senior Royalist figures arrived in Sana'a on May 23, al-Iryani delivered a welcoming speech in which he suggested that the differences between Republicans, like himself, and the Royalists, like Ahmad al-Shami, a leading Royalist of moderate leanings, were really only over whether the government should be Republican or Imamic. He said that while in prison for their part in the 1948 revolt, both he and al-Shami had held the same views and

"wished for [the sort of] progress for the Yemeni people as has been achieved today under the Republic.... where the Yemeni people govern themselves, uphold their sovereignty against any foreign intervention, develop their society, live freely... and, beyond and above all, preserve benevolent

religious values... These were ideas shared by both of us (at the time)... We differed on the means of achievement but now we share the same values and hold similar views."<sup>27</sup>

Like al-Iryani, Premier al-Ayni had been an advocate of reconciliation since the idea first took shape in the Khamir Conference resolutions, the resolutions upon which the Nu'man government's policies were based. As a radical nationalist, al-Ayni was inclined not to accept a compromise with the anti-Republican forces. As a pragmatist, however, he saw no other way of settling the war. He was confident the Republic could withstand any Royalist military assaults but he also knew the YAR lacked the capability to achieve an outright victory against the Saudis and their Royalists clients. In his policy statement, which he put before the National Council on 16 April, 1970, he admitted that continuation of the war could achieve no decisive victory and could only bring more misery to the country. He said that acceptance of the Djedda accord was the only way to establish fruitful relations with Saudi Arabia and to enable the Yemenis to forgo their past differences and work together for a more prosperous future. Above all, the agreement aimed at putting an end to the conflict which, in his words had "devastated our country, destroyed our dignity and made us dependent on others, always receiving but giving nothing in return." He added, "I would have deceived you if I said we could accomplish anything while we are confronted with war, anarchy, and destruction."<sup>28</sup> Al-Ayni repeated the same pragmatic views when, upon his return from Djedda, he explained the government's decision to the officer corps. Responding to the astonishment expressed by some of the audience of the government's consent to the return of the Royalists, he made it clear he saw no other way of settling the war,

saying to the resentful officers "had you succeeded in overcoming the Royalists we would not have needed this deal."<sup>29</sup>

### The Decisional Process

The invitation to the Djedda Conference offered the YAR decision-makers an opportunity to further the country's foreign policy objectives of which they were acutely conscious. In no way did the invitation constitute a surprise to the Yemeni leadership. In essence, the decision to accept the invitation was a carefully calculated tactical move which aimed at facilitating a direct dialogue with Saudi Arabia. Although the predecisional activities covered the month of March, 1970, the formal consideration of the issue and the subsequent decision took only two days. However, it took a further month before a decision on the implementation was adopted on 26 April.

### The Pre-Decisional Stage

A joint meeting of the Republican Council and the Cabinet was convened on 16 March to consider the official response. Al-Iryani's contacts with King Faysal were not disclosed but the possibility of holding talks with the Saudis and the Royalists was exhaustively discussed. It was decided that participation would by itself be advantageous to the Republic for it would simultaneously emphasise its commitment to the Islamic cause and enhance the régime's image in the Islamic world. If the looked-for talks did materialise, so much the better.<sup>30</sup> The premier did not participate in the meeting because he was out of the capital, but he was obviously consulted beforehand for he had

announced the Government's intention to take part in the conference on 11 March, five days before the government formally took the decision. On 20 March, the high policy élite, including Shaykh Abdallah ibn-Husayn al-Ahmar, held a meeting to discuss the issue. No information is available as to what was discussed in that meeting but the subsequent talks in Djedda suggest that the meeting was crucial to final agreement on the issue.

The Djedda dialogue was successful because the Saudis had decided to change their Yemeni policy. Until 1969, they had supported the Royalists in their bid to restore the Imamate to Yemen, but when the Royalists failed in this task and regional politics forced a change in the Saudi foreign policy, King Faysal began to consider them a liability.<sup>31</sup> By the time the Djedda Conference took place, the king had already decided to come to terms with the Yemeni Republic and encouraged the Royalists to negotiate with the Republican delegation. Faced with the prospect of being left with no support, the Royalist leaders held a meeting where it was agreed that those who wished to take the Saudi advice could do so and the others could go their own way. On 20 March, when he realised that most of his supporters would take the former option, al-Badr issued a statement urging Yemenis of all persuasions to meet in a national conference in order to decide on their future government.<sup>32</sup> Later, when the agreement between the Republican and Royalist sides had crystallised, al-Badr gave his permission to the Royalists to consider the proposals and arrive at their own decision, undertaking to be bound by the will of the majority of the Yemeni people.<sup>33</sup> Shortly afterwards he left for Britain, implicitly admitting that his campaign for the restoration of the Imamate to Yemen was finally over.



The Saudi desire to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Yemeni Republic was reflected during the Djedda talks in several ways, the most important of which was their acceptance of the Republicans' basic demands. In a series of informal talks between the YAR delegation and Saudi officials, which were facilitated by the good offices of a number of Arab foreign ministers participating in the conference, it became clear the Kingdom was not insisting on its old views. No Saudi objection was raised to either of the fundamental Republican conditions - no compromise on the Republican régime and banishment of the Hamid al-Din family. The only controversial issue was the Saudi suggestion of a national reconciliation conference. King Faysal was anxious not to look as if he had abandoned the Royalists for the Kingdom's own interests and thus he insisted that any Saudi-YAR rapprochement must be preceded by a settlement arrived at by direct negotiation between the Republicans and the Royalists. A national reconciliation conference was proposed as a way to formalise the Royalist return to Yemen within the existing Republican structure.<sup>34</sup> The YAR's Premier rejected this idea on the grounds that it would only give the Royalists a formal status *vis-à-vis* the government.

Al-Ayni suggested that simple ongoing talks were more practical and would yield more positive results.<sup>35</sup> Not wishing to cause disruption of the talks by pressing the issue, it would seem that the Saudis decided to leave the matter to the Republicans. No written agreement was concluded when the talks ended on 28 March, but the accord between the two parties did not refer to the conference issue. The accord covered the following:

- \* a strict ceasefire
- \* discontinuation of hostile propaganda

- \* cessation of Saudi aid to the Royalists
- \* return to Yemen of the Royalists, except the Hamid al-Din family.<sup>36</sup>

### How The Choice Was Made

Despite the fact that reconciliation with the Royalist side had long been an objective for the post-November leadership, there were Yemenis who opposed such a policy; so al-Iryani was keen on secrecy. Details of the ongoing talks in Djedda among the high-policy élite were communicated to the cabinet only at a later stage. On 26 March, while negotiations were proceeding in Djedda, al-Iryani summoned the Republican Council and the Cabinet to keep them abreast of the situation, but only the general outlines of the accord were disclosed.<sup>37</sup>

Full details of the proposed accord were disclosed by al-Ayni upon his return from Djedda on 29 March. The decision evolved during the next two days into face-to-face contact between members of the ultimate decision-making unit. On 30 March, al-Iryani met with all members of the delegation to discuss the outcome of the Premier's mission to Djedda, and on the same day al-Ayni and Shaykh Abdullah al-Ahmar met with General al-Amri for the same purpose. The following day, al-Ayni briefed a joint session of the Republican Council and Cabinet on his delegation's participation in the Djedda Conference, as well as the contacts undertaken with the Saudis, but in response the two councils were only required to approve and legitimise the choice that had already been made by the decision-making élite. In all probability, it was al-Iryani who actually made the decision to accept the Djedda

deal. While Premier al-Ayni was in Djedda conducting the talks, Muhammad Ali Uthman and General al-Amri, the other members of the decision-making élite were out of the capital. Al-Amri had some reservations about the Djedda accord and withdrew to Ta'iz but was eventually reconciled to the extent that he headed the YAR's first official delegation to Saudi Arabia on July 1970.<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Ali Uthman was fully supportive of the accord and his absence was explained by some sources as being due to his strained relations with the prime minister.<sup>39</sup>

These consultations were followed by a joint meeting of the Republican Council and Cabinet on 31 March with a view to consider the Premier's report on his mission to Djedda. Although most of the cabinet members did not know the full details of the proposed deal, no one raised any serious question.<sup>40</sup> This was partly because they already knew the main features of that deal but mainly because they all shared the same view on the basic demands for any peaceful settlement of the war. Ever since the first peace talks in Erkuwit in 1964, the Republicans had insisted on two basic demands as a precondition to any peaceful settlement - maintenance of the Republican régime and exclusion of the Hamid al-Din family. As the proposed deal appeared to have met both these demands, the two councils had promptly decided to accept it. The Information and Yemeni Unity Affairs Minister, Abdallah Humran, announced that the two councils had agreed to the prime minister's report and had thanked al-Ayni and members of the delegation "for the service they rendered to the sons of Yemen so that they could return to their country and take part in its development and also for ending the war and friction which cost the Yemenis so much."<sup>41</sup>

## Implementation

Ten days after the decision was agreed, the first practical step in the implementation of the Djedda accord was taken. In mid-April, there was a ceasefire. Saudi Arabia ordered the Royalist forces to terminate military operations and also asked the Royalist commanders to withdraw from the al-Djawf region.<sup>42</sup>

The stipulation in the Djedda accord that the Royalists should be allowed to return to their homes was unnecessary simply because ever since November 1967 the government in Sana'a had constantly worked for the return of the Royalists (with the exception, of course, of the Hamid al-Din family). Many Royalists had in fact already returned and by the time the Djedda talks started, the rest were divided among themselves as to their best course. Those who enjoyed special status and were politically committed to the Royalist cause, like Hashim ibn Hashim the long serving Information Minister in the Imam's cabinet, held back, trying to obtain as many concessions from the Republicans as possible before accepting Republican rule. Many tribesmen whose stake in the war was purely financial decided there was no point in holding out, especially after it became evident that the Saudis were about to stop payments. Their shaykhs had several meetings in Djedda with Premier al-Ayni who urged them to go back to Yemen while at the same time refusing the Saudi pressure to negotiate with them as equals.<sup>43</sup> Many eventually returned on their own.

Last-minute difficulties against implementation were raised by some ex-Royalists, mainly tribal shaykhs, who insisted on holding a national reconciliation conference, an idea that had already been rejected by the YAR government. There are two explanations for this:

either these shaykhs were not aware of the less than firm commitment of King Faysal to the idea or the Saudi King himself might have been trying to push the idea behind the scenes as far as possible. These shaykhs gathered in Raydah, about 100 miles north of Sana'a over a period of a few days demanding that a conference be held. Initially the government ignored them but eventually al-Ayni agreed to meet with them at al-Rawdah on the outskirts of the capital. Somehow these elements were reconciled and gave their allegiance to the Republic without any preconditions. On 11 May, 1970 the YAR premier announced that most of them had dispersed and some had returned to Sana'a to declare their allegiance to the Republic.<sup>44</sup>

In the case of this decision, implementation was a particularly difficult stage of the decisional process. Not only was there dissension over the proposed reconciliation conference issue, but a difficult problem was posed by the refusal of many Republicans to accept Royalists back into the government; most Republicans believed this would enable the Royalists to undermine the Republic and might distort its revolutionary character. The return in the first half of 1969 of leading Royalists had already provoked strong opposition, mainly from the intellectuals and various political groups, and Kadi al-Iryani had no illusion as to the reaction concerning the government's decision to include leading Royalists in the Republic's institutions. Both he and al-Ayni did their best to prepare the Republicans psychologically for this eventuality. Initially, on 30 March, al-Ayni said that no specific agreement had been arrived at in Djedda with regard to this matter and that he merely urged the Royalists he met to return to their country.<sup>45</sup> However, in the following days, a commitment regarding the Royalists was disclosed in his report to the joint meeting of the Republican Council and Cabinet.

It took one month of intensive campaigning by the YAR leaders to convince opponents to the Djedda accord of the propriety of the government's action. This effort amounted to a rationalisation of the decision after it had already been taken. However, due to the significance of the issue, al-Ayni had undertaken pre-decisional consultations with the various political pressure groups. According to him, before leaving for Djedda he had consulted the Nasirites, the Ba'athists and the communists. All showed an understanding of the imperatives for the potential accord but insisted they could not support it publicly and might even express opposition.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the opposition to the government's position was not effective enough to warrant a change of policy. There had been no opposition from within the two real centres of power - the tribes and the army - and the intellectuals lacked unity and organisation. More importantly, al-Iryani had joined forces with al-Ayni and their combined influence enabled the deal to be progressed. Some suggested that al-Iryani had foreseen opposition to the eventual reconciliation package and persuaded al-Ayni to head the government because of the latter's appeal to the young officers and intellectuals who were most deeply opposed to reconciliation with the other side.<sup>47</sup> Both Republican leaders took it upon themselves to rationalise the decision, and each appealed to a different Republican segment. While al-Iryani was respected by the conservatives, al-Ayni was acceptable to the radicals. But since the conservatives were basically supportive of reconciliation, the real burden fell on al-Ayni.

For obvious reasons, the government was most concerned with the position of the military. In January 1970, possibly due to the beginnings of opposition with the army to a possible accord, the government removed the principal figures in the High Command known to

be radicals and replaced them with loyal officers. Subsequently the new command was gratifyingly receptive to the government's policy. No sooner had al-Ayni returned from Djedda, than Colonel Muhammad al-Iryani (Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and relative of Kadi al-Iryani) and Colonel Husayn al-Maswari (the new Chief of Staff) sent, on April 1, a note congratulating the delegation on their success.<sup>48</sup> A few days later, al-Ayni held a meeting with the senior officers at the High Command headquarters to explain the Djedda accord and the reasons behind the government's acceptance of it. This was followed by a similar meeting with junior officers for the same purpose. Questions were asked during these two meetings, but no objections to the government's decision were raised.<sup>49</sup>

Al-Ayni also held a meeting at the National Council headquarters where he explained the Djedda accord to civil servants from various parts of the country. Overall, he is said to have spoken to 700 officers, military cadets, civil servants and leaders of public opinion.

Although there was a certain amount of internal political pressure, there were no legislative constraints on the government's policy. The National Council's authority over the executive was enhanced by new powers accorded to it by a recent Republican decree, but it did not discuss the matter when this issue was referred to it. The National Council which was dominated by conservative shaykhs, had always supported the government. Most of its shaykhly members had enthusiastically supported the government's policy of reconciliation with the Royalists.<sup>50</sup> The Council had rushed to support the reconciliation deal reached at Djedda even before the government presented its report on the issue. Upon hearing the report on the Djedda talks which Shaykh ibn al-Ahmar presented on 7 April, in which

he had been a participant, the Council announced its approval of all the steps taken. Shaykh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar was an old ally of Kadi al-Iryani and had been associated with the moderate Republicans ever since the first intra-Republican discord surfaced in 1963.<sup>51</sup> For his part, al-Ayni reported to the Council on 14 April; three days later, on 17 April, the chairman of the Council sent a letter to the chairman of the Republican Council in which he conveyed their support for the government and further authorised it and the Republican Council to take whatever steps were necessary to reach a final agreement with Saudi Arabia over settlement of the war.<sup>52</sup>

According to an official Yemeni source, King Faysal stipulated during the Djedda talks that the establishment of relations between the Kingdom and the YAR was contingent upon the successful reconciliation of Republicans and Royalists within a period of three months. If the king had in fact made such a stipulation, Kadi al-Iryani would have had this target date in mind when, at the end of April, he decided to tackle the problem. He called for an emergency joint meeting of the Republican Council and Cabinet. This meeting, which was also attended by Shaykh ibn al-Ahmar, was held on 25 April, 1970. At the conclusion, the Information and Yemeni Unity Affairs Minister made a statement in which he said that:

"the two councils, in their joint session, have considered the steps which should be taken to enhance the bases of peace in the light of the understanding reached during the participation of the Yemeni delegation, headed by the Premier and Foreign Minister Muhsin al-Ayni, in the Islamic Foreign Minister's Conference. The two Councils have approved the



incorporation of some brothers, who would return from Saudi Arabia, in the Government."<sup>53</sup>

The decision did not specify either the number of posts or the nature of the portfolios to be allocated to the Royalists. In mid-May Colonel Yahya al-Mutawakkil, a Republican officer who had family contacts on the Royalist side, was sent to Djedda where he arranged the final details for the Royalist's entry into Government. On 23 May, thirty senior Royalists arrived in Sana'a and on the same day three Republican decrees were issued. The first appointed Ahmad al-Shami to membership of the Republican Council along with Ahmad Muhammad Nu'man who had been living in Beirut ever since his release from Cairo in October 1967. By the second decree, four Royalists were appointed to the Cabinet as ministers for state, public works, justice and Awkaf (Islamic endowments). The third decree provided for the appointment of twelve others to membership of the *al-Madjlis al-Watani* (the parliament), including Shaykh Ali al-Ghadir who was appointed vice-chairman of the Council.<sup>54</sup> Three days later it was announced that all confiscated estates and properties belonging to the Royalists, except those belonging to the Hamid al-Din family, were to be returned to their former owners.<sup>55</sup>

Of equal significance in the same decree was the appointment of three Royalists as governors of Sadah, al-Dawf and al-Mahabshah, all near the Saudi border. Some sources suggest that this was a condition of the Djedda accord. An American authority on Yemen gathered the stipulation was that areas which had been under nominal control of the Royalists were to be administered by Royalist personnel. Indeed, this decentralisation of authority was, according to the same source, at the core of the understanding.<sup>56</sup>

Even after the YAR government had carried out its part of the Djedda accord, Saudi Arabia hesitated for two months before it granted recognition to the Yemeni Republic. Some Republican leaders believed that King Faysal was still sceptical of the Republicans' ability to implement the agreement in the face of internal opposition and preferred not to rush recognition. Others told the writer the Saudis were merely sticking to the three-month deadline stipulated at Djedda.<sup>57</sup> On 21 July, 1970, a large delegation led by General al-Amri began a six-day visit to Saudi Arabia. During the visit, on 23 July, Saudi Arabia formally announced its recognition of the YAR, explaining that recognition was accorded, as the official statement puts it, because the Republican side had followed the steps agreed upon in Djedda, in March 1970.<sup>58</sup> On July 26, at the conclusion of the visit, a joint communiqué was issued which stated that:

"as far as future bilateral relations were concerned the two sides have agreed to exchange diplomatic representation at ambassadorial level. Economic, cultural and commercial relations at various levels will also be exchanged. Bilateral agreements in all these fields will also be concluded. Furthermore, the two sides affirmed their resolve to co-operate in a fruitful and constructive manner aiming at achieving the interests of the two sisterly countries."<sup>59</sup>

However, a period of adjustment lasting nearly one year was to pass before any real co-operation was initiated between Sana'a and Riyadh. Furthermore, it took two years before the Kingdom sent its first resident ambassador to Sana'a, in May 1972.

## Feedback

The fact that reconciliation with Saudi Arabia also ended the Republican-Royalist war meant that most environmental components were affected by the decision. Full examination of these effects would clearly be beyond the scope of this study. The following section will therefore be limited to effects which became apparent during the first year.

The behaviour of Saudi Arabia towards the YAR throughout the war became a vital element in the latter's decisional format. The reconciliation decision added to the significance of that element in several ways. It generally enabled the Kingdom to approach the YAR decision-makers directly and, through some of them, penetrate the decision-making system of the Republic. As early as 1971, Saudi Arabia began paying regular subsidies to the three important forces in the Republic's structure. This constituted annual budget support for central government, payment of the armed forces personnel and direct subsidies to the tribes.<sup>60</sup> The kingdom reportedly exerted immediate and direct pressure on al-Ayni's government to collaborate with Riyadh's persistent endeavours to destabilise the NLF government in Aden.<sup>61</sup> The YAR's own relations with the PRSY were adversely affected by the decision, as the latter perceived a threat to its security in the northern government's reconciliation with Saudi Arabia. Immediately after the decision was announced, the PRSY began to show signs of unease. This prompted al-Iryani in mid-June to send a letter to the PRSY president, in which he drew attention to certain insinuations critical of the reconciliation and reportedly warned against any escalation of such tendencies.<sup>62</sup> Earlier, on 6 May, Premier al-Ayni had sent a letter to his Southern counterpart

explaining the situation and assuring him that no harm should come from the YAR-Saudi reconciliation.<sup>63</sup>

YAR relations with other Arab states were only slightly affected by the decision. The radical Arab régimes in Syria, the UAR, Iraq and Algeria appreciated the reasons behind the YAR action and none objected to it.<sup>64</sup> The Arab conservative régimes welcomed the prospects of Saudi-YAR co-operation and on 15 August Jordan went so far as to reinstate its recognition of the YAR. However, the Arabs in the Gulf perceived a threat from the radical South Yemeni régime and, much as did Saudi Arabia, expected the YAR to take positive action to promote a change in Aden towards a régime of more moderate complexion.<sup>65</sup>

The eventual acceptance of Royalists by the Republican government and the end of more than seven years of fighting were perceived by the YAR leaders as a vindication of their moderate policies, both domestic and foreign. This perception was enhanced by recognition of the YAR by Britain and France within a week of the Saudi recognition; Iran and Turkey added their recognition shortly afterwards.<sup>66</sup> Although no immediate economic aid flowed from the West, the stage was obviously set for future co-operation. Equally gratifying to the Yemeni leaders was the fact that the scope of their country's relations had become broader. They concluded that their non-alignment policy had at last paid off.<sup>67</sup>

With respect to the international environment, the decision generally had a favourable impact. Contrary to Western reports, the USSR had consistently urged a peaceful settlement to the war and showed no reservations towards the national reconciliation. Nevertheless, al-

Ayni took no chances and assured the socialist countries through their Sana'a embassies that the government decision was motivated solely by the need for infusions of aid.<sup>68</sup> Al-Ayni's argument was apparently accepted but YAR-USSR relations, which were already stagnant, remained so for the first few years of the 1970s.<sup>69</sup>

Two major internal environment components were particularly receptive to the feedback effect: the political structure and the economic capability. Incorporation of ex-Royalists into the state's structure had only a mild and short-term effect on the composition of these institutions. At the beginning of 1971 when Ahmad al-Shami was appointed an Ambassador to the United Kingdom, ex-Royalists in the National Council were not elected to the newly established *Madjlis al-Shura* (the Consultative Assembly), while their colleagues in the cabinet at that time were out by 1975.<sup>70</sup> A more important effect of the decision was reflected in consolidation of the post-November leadership's political capability. The national unity brought about by reconciliation improved the credibility of the régime whilst simultaneously enhancing its conservative character. A Western source observed that the Permanent Constitution promulgated in December 1970 embodied the thinking of the older generation of the Free Yemenis who dominated the régime.<sup>71</sup> However, there were still many Republicans who remained suspicious of this reconciliation. This was shown by students protest strikes which took place in several towns. Some radical officers were transferred from posts on suspicion that they might interfere with the arrangements.<sup>72</sup>

Contrary to expectations, the YAR's economic capability was not greatly enhanced as a result of reconciliation, at least not immediately. Several countries provided technical assistance, but

little was offered in a way of direct financial support. The YAR leaders had hoped that the Saudi recognition would be followed closely by economic aid, and in fact economic aid had actually been promised during al-Amri's visit to the Kingdom in July 1970. However, Saudi financial support did not materialise until a year later, in mid-1971. Meanwhile, the financial crisis had partially receded due to a \$6 million loan obtained from a Dutch Bank, guaranteed by the Saudi government. But during the first half of 1971 the situation deteriorated again and there was no knowing when relief would come.<sup>73</sup>

## NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII

1. *The New York Times*, 7 September and 5 October, 1969.
2. See *Al-Hayat*, December 22, 1969.
3. Exchange of aerial raids took place on occasions through that stage of the war (November 1969 - February, 1970).
4. Personal interviews, see also *The Times*, 19 January and 3 April, 1970.
5. *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 February, 1970.
6. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 31 January - 7 February 1970, p.23808.
7. Gregory Gause, *Saudi-Yemeni Relations*, p.196.
8. see Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, *Tatawwur al-Awda*, op. cit., p.103.
9. Personal interviews.
10. Robert Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic: The Politics of Development 1962-1986*, Westview Press, 1987, p.35.
11. Vladin Josarov and Adham Saif al-Mulukuv. *Iktisadiyyat al-Djumphuriyyah al-Arabiyyah al-Yamanyiah*, op. cit., p.109; *The Financial Times*, 2 January, 1970.

12. See Robert Burrowes, *op. cit.*, p.35.
13. See *The Economist*, 11 April, 1970.
14. Syria, Iraq and the PRSY did not take part in the Djedda conference, although the latter had participated in the Rabat Islamic Summit. See *al-Hayat*, 23 March, 1970.
15. *Al-Anwar*, 26 March, 1970.
16. During the Rabat Islamic Summit (September 1969) the YAR delegation had opposed the decision to hold the Islamic Foreign Minister's meeting in Djedda, in view of the then tense relations between Sana'a and Riyadh. See *al-Diplumaci*, No.21, 1 April, 1970.
17. From the writer's interview with Shaykh Abdallah ibn-Husayn al-Ahmar, London, October, 1988.
18. *The Economist*, 11 October, 1969.
19. See *Al-Anwar*, 24 January, 1969.
20. *Al-Anwar*, 16 July, 1969.
21. Al-Iryani's statement in *Watha'ik Ula ...*, *op. cit.*, p.157.
22. *ibid.*
23. From chairman al-Iryani's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated December, 1989.



24. ME/3212/A/1.
25. See the policy statement of the first post-November *Nusus Yamaniyyah*, pp.309-314.
26. Personal interviews.
27. Text of the speech in *al-Diplumaci* (weekly newsletter) published by the Public Relations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No.25, 30 May, 1970.
28. Text of the statement in *Nusus Yamaniyyah*, compiled by Ali al-Ulufi, al-Maktabah al-Wataniyyah, Baghdad, 1978, pp.355-366.
29. From the writer's interview with Muhsin al-Ayni, Washington, January 1991.
30. *ibid.*
31. Muhammad Zabarah, *Tradition versus Modernity*, Praeger, 1982, p.102.
32. Al-Badr repeated this proposal on the eve of the Djedda Islamic Conference. See ME/3336/A/5; *al-Hayat*, 23 March, 1970. Information on the intra-Royalist argument was conveyed to the writer by ex-Royalist leaders.
33. Robert Stookey, *Yemen: The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic*, Westview Press, 1978, pp.254-259.

34. This element in the Djedda proposals was not mentioned in all reports. *The New York Times* mentioned it later on with little details. See *The New York Times*, 8 April, 1970. *Al-Hayat* mentioned it in an article on the Djedda Islamic Conference. See *al-Hayat*, 12 April, 1970.
35. *Al-Anwar*, 27 March, 1979; *al-Nahar*, 28 March, 1970.
36. None of the reports on the negotiations covered all points of the accord. See *The Economist*, 11 April, 1970; *The New York Times*, 15 April, 1970. Complete list of the agreed points was provided by Muhsin al-Ayni in his replies to the writer's inquiries dated February 1990.
37. Personal interviews.
38. Joseph Mallone, "The Yemen Arab Republic's Game of Nations", *The World Today*, Vol. 12, December 1971, pp.544-545.
39. Personal interviews.
40. Personal interviews.
41. *Al-Thawrah*, 31 March and 1 April, 1970.
42. *The Egyptian Gazette*, 14 April, 1970; *The New York Times*, 15 April, 1970.
43. From the writer's interview with Muhsin al-Ayni, Washington, January, 1991; also al-Ayni interview in *Al-Thawrah*, 6 May, 1970.

44. *Al-Anwar*, 12 May, 1970. Supplemented by the writer's interview with Muhsin al-Ayni, dated January 1991, op. cit.
45. *Al-Thawrah*, 31 March, 1970; SWB, ME/3342/A/7-8.
46. From the writer's interview with Muhsin al-Ayni, in Washington, January 1991, op. cit.
47. Personal interview.
48. *Al-Thawrah*, 1 April, 1970.
49. From the replies of Colonel al-Iryani, op. cit.
50. From the writer's interview with Shaykh Abdallah ibn al-Ahmar, October, 1988.
51. In general, the tribes and their shaykhs including ibn al-Ahmar were supportive of the moderate (traditionalist) Republicans who consistently maintained that the tribes were the crucial power in the country and their interests should be accommodated. Shaykh ibn al-Ahmar's trust of Kadi al-Iryani was manifested when, during the turmoil in Sana'a of 3 October, 1967 he told the Arab Tripartite Commission that the tribes authorised al-Iryani to speak on their behalf. See *Akher Sa'ah*, November 8, 1967.
52. *Al-Thawrah*, 22 April, 1970; *al-Hayat*, 8 April, 1970.
53. *Al-Djumhuriyyah*, 26 April, 1970.

54. *Al-Hayat*, 25 May, 1970; SWB, ME/3389/A/13.
55. *Al-Hayat*, 27 May, 1970.
56. Robert Stookey, *The Politics of the YAR*, op. cit., p.225.
57. Personal interviews with prominent figures on both sides - Republican and Royalist.
58. *Al-Thawrah*, 24 July, 1970; SWB/3438/A/1; *Al-Anwar*, 24 July, 1970.
59. Text in *al-Thawrah*, 28 July, 1970.
60. M.S. El-Azhary, "Aspects of North Yemen Relations with Saudi Arabia", in B.R. Pridham (ed.) *Contemporary Yemen*, Croom Helm, 1984, p.198.
61. Joseph Mallone, *The YAR's Game of Nations*, op. cit., p.546.
62. *Al-Hayat*, 19 June, 1970.
63. *Al-Hayat*, 19 June, 1970. Supplemented by an interview with al-Ayni, Washington, January, 1991.
64. Replies of Muhsin al-Ayni to the writer's enquiries dated February 1990. Al-Ayni mentioned that the Algerian President Boumediene had told King Faysal of his support of the reconciliation on Yemen.
65. Robert Stookey, *Yemen: The Politics of the YAR*, op. cit., p.260.

66. Great Britain recognized the YAR on 29 July, France on 24 July, and Iran followed on 9 September, 1970.
67. See al-Iryani's comments on the returns of the reconciliation in *al-Thawrah*, 8 May, 1970.
68. Personal interviews; Joseph Mallone *The YAR's Game of Nations*, op. cit., p.545. Premier al-Ayni had told the writer that the Soviets were wholeheartedly supportive of the reconciliation and, contrary to Western media reports, had always urged an end to the war.
69. Mansur al-Zandani, *Ilakat al-Djumhuriyyah ..*, op. cit., pp.169-170.
70. For composition of the six post-reconciliation cabinets which included ex-Royalists, see *Sidjil Watha'ik*, op. cit., pp.31-45.
71. Personal interviews; Robert Stookey, *The YAR Politics*, op. cit., p.225.
72. *ibid.*
73. Robert Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic: The Politics of Development 1962-1986*, op. cit., pp.36-37.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

## The Findings

This investigation into the four major decisions has identified the procedures followed by the policy-makers in the decision-making process. These procedures have been included in the decisional process of the investigation but are distinguished here to facilitate categorisation. Decisional procedures differ from one case to another, and the procedures considered here are those which were shown to be of most relevance. Although the pattern was not all followed in all the decisions examined here, they could be considered *in toto* as representing the procedures adopted by the YAR decision-makers during the war period. These are: the search for alternatives, consultations, perceptions of policy options, the pattern of choice, and implementation.<sup>1</sup>

## The Search For Alternatives

Despite the fact that the decisional situation properties in the Khartoum (August 1967) and Djedda (1970) Agreements were quite different from each other, the YAR decision-makers responded to them in a similar manner. Neither al-Sallal nor al-Iryani attempted to search for alternative policies to cope with the new situation. Instead, both maintained existing policies. In this context al-Iryani, who had ample time to gather information and consider alternatives to the Djedda proposals, responded to the situation much like al-Sallal who was under real stress during the day the Khartoum Agreement was announced. Both resorted to what might have looked like "defensive avoidance strategy". However, far from being so, the maintenance of existing policies was based on the assumption that the

policy had been carefully developed over time and, in addition, represented a consensus policy. Al-Sallal explained his rejection of the reactivation of the Saudi-Egyptian agreement of August 1965 on Yemen (the Djedda Agreement) by the fact that the accord had already been rejected by both the Government and people of Yemen. On the other hand, acceptance of the Djedda proposals of March 1970 was explained by al-Iryani by the fact that they met long-established Republican terms for political settlement of the war.

These instances point to the possibility that even in situations of stress, decision-makers could, in certain cases, make their choices on a rational basis. Such a conclusion would confirm Verba's assumption that clarity of goals would suppress the irrational idiosyncratic influences on the decision-making. It might also question the validity of the widely held proposition which contends that, because of the primacy of individuals in the decision-making process within third world countries, decisions in these polities usually reflect less rational qualities.

Despite the fact that, in the cases of the PRSY and FRG, al-Iryani and his colleagues in the YAR leadership would have preferred a wide choice, their options were still perceived as limited. The limitations were related not to constraints in the external environment but rather emanated from another fundamental factor, namely the lack of capacity to achieve the desired objectives.



## Consultations

In two of the four cases examined in this study, the YAR leadership perceived the need to also consult other states before taking decisions, to explain the need to them after they were adopted. The YAR leadership was careful to inform other states of the YAR's intention to resume relations with the FRG in 1969, much as did their predecessors who in the summer of 1967 undertook to solicit the views of other states over the Khartoum Agreement. It is significant, however, that while non-Arab states were consulted and/or informed about the YAR policy in only two decisions, pertaining to the Khartoum Agreement and the intention to resume relations with the FRG, Arab states were consulted on virtually all four decisions. While frequent contacts with non-Arab governments stemmed from the need for political support and/or military assistance, the more consistent consultation with Arab governments suggest an awareness of the possible impact of Arab reaction to the YAR domestic politics. In the FRG case, the eagerness of the YAR leadership to consult other Arab states before it took the decision showed how keen it was to avoid possible Arab criticism and consequent public fury.

Consultation with domestic interests became an established procedure and, as we saw from this investigation, fairly wide-ranging consultations were held before each of the four decisions was taken. These consultations, however, aimed mainly at ascertaining the views of the military and the tribal shaykhs, and secure their support. Whilst highlighting the vital nature of the issues involved, these consultations reflected the need by the régime for both internal and external support. At a local level, regular consultations with representatives of the influential groups and the lack of enthusiasm

for mass political organisations brought out the dilemma confronted by many third world states regarding public participation in the formulation of state policies. It was a matter of being torn between the need for public support of the government's decisions and apprehension of too much public involvement in the process.

### Perceptions of Foreign Policy Options

In weighing their policy options, the YAR leaders generally based their calculations on the perceived lack of capabilities to influence the predominantly hostile environment. In the PRSY case, the decision-makers perceived their options to be narrowed by lack of military capabilities sufficient to resist the Royalist forces which began to tighten their siege of the capital by the end of November 1967 whilst simultaneously projecting a forceful position with regard to the anticipated independence of South Yemen. Al-Iryani's citation of the NLF commitment to Yemen's unity as the reason for recognising the PRSY was one way of concealing the régime's inability to pursue active policies on both vital issues at the same time.

The decision concerning resumption of relations with the FRG (1969) revealed a pattern followed by the YAR in exploiting the opportunities latent in their external environment. Lacking the material capacity to influence the West regarding provision of much needed economic aid to the Yemeni Republic, the YAR leaders took advantage of the FRG's need to stem the accelerating rate of recognition of the GDR during 1969 and offered re-establishment of severed relations with Bonn in exchange for economic aid. The FRG Government's eagerness to re-establish relations with the Yemeni Republic was reflected in the

frequent visits during the first months of 1969 to Sana'a by West German non-political missions, which enhanced the YAR leadership's perception of the value of their political leverage *vis-à-vis* the FRG.

This case supports the theory advanced by some students of comparative politics to the effect that even small and resource-poor states like Yemen possess certain capacities to influence the international system to their advantage. A recent study concluded that a small state may influence a larger state if it possesses a desired "resource", be it a valued commodity or strategic location. The small state may threaten to align itself with the other side if satisfaction is not obtained.<sup>2</sup> Given vision and a tendency for taking bold initiatives by their leadership, such states could overcome constraints manifested in their limited material capacity and pursue a more active foreign policy.

At the same time, the Yemeni case highlights the limitations of theories which link the foreign policy actions of small states solely with their material capacity. It should be noted, however, that the prior willingness of the FRG to trade off resumption of relations for economic aid and the communication of this willingness to Sana'a eliminated the need for the YAR leadership to survey the environment for such an opportunity. Inability of the small and poor states to respond to foreign policy problems and opportunities is usually attributed to incomplete information emanating from the lack of sufficient human and material bases for foreign policy negotiation.<sup>3</sup>

### The Choice Pattern

In all the cases examined here, decisions were made by the formal decisional forum, the Cabinet in the Khartoum case and jointly by the Republican Council and the Cabinet in the other three cases. They were arrived at by consensus, although the way consensus was achieved differed between cases. In the decision on reconciliation (1970) and the decision on resumption of relations with the FRG (1969), the shared belief among members of the decisional unit rather than the external threat was the decisive factor in achieving consensus. In both cases, members of the ultimate decisional unit - members of the Republican Council and the prime minister - shared the same basic values defined in terms of reconciliation with the Royalists and openness in foreign policy. These constituted agreed policies which enabled the formal decision-making forum, the Republican Council and the Cabinet, to take prompt and unanimous decisions on each of the above-mentioned issues.

Conversely, there was no consensus within the government in the case of the Khartoum decision. However, there was national consensus in opposition to the Agreement, which led the Cabinet members receptive to the accord to conceal their opposition and concur in the unanimous decision adopted by the Cabinet rejecting the Saudi-Egyptian accord. The consensus within the Government was ensured by al-Sallal when, on 12 October, he formed a new Cabinet comprising only individuals supportive of the government's policy in this respect.

While the war only indirectly affected the way the decisions were adopted, it became the major determinant of the pattern by which the choice was made in the case of the PRSY decision (1967). Views within

both the Republican Council and the Cabinet which were opposed to recognition of the imminent declaration of an independent South Yemeni state were put aside amidst the feeling regarding the need for solidarity against the Royalists, who at that time were tightening their siege of Sana'a.

### Implementation

One of the characteristics of YAR decision-making during the period covered by this study was the salience of external environmental factors to the implementation of decisions. Lack of sufficient military and political capabilities to coerce other actors and lack of material enticements to persuade them to co-operate affected the way decisions were implemented. The difficulties encountered by the YAR decision-makers in achieving a full and speedy implementation to the two decisions on Reconciliation and the Khartoum accord reflected the limitations within the external environment. In the case of the reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, the YAR leadership were frustrated by the delay of King Faysal's recognition of the YAR in implementation of the Djedda deal; it had to resort to persuasion which culminated in the Kingdom's recognition nearly four months after the accord was reached between the two states.

In the case of the Khartoum Agreement (1967), al-Sallal's hesitation to deny entry to Yemen of the Arab Tripartite Commission during the summer of 1967 in implementation of his decision to reject the Saudi-Egyptian accord underlined the YAR's limited capacities to carry out its decisions.

## The Environments

The study has identified the various YAR foreign policy inputs and the interaction among these components within the decision-making system in selected cases during the war period. More specifically, it has pointed to the influences on this polity, the individuals responsible for converting these influences into decisions, and the process followed in the formulation and implementation of these decisions.

## The External Influences

The political and military polarisation which prevailed during the 1960s on both systemic (international) and sub-systemic (regional) levels was the most important of the external influences which impinged on YAR foreign policy-making. During the first five years of the Yemeni revolution, from 1962-1967, the Saudi-Egyptian involvement which came mainly within their politico-ideological rivalry constituted the most important of these external influences. Until June 1967, the Saudi-Egyptian conflict and Egypt's direct intervention in YAR policies influenced both the direction and content of YAR foreign policy. In the last three years of the 1960s the Arab pressures on the Yemeni Republic continued, not only in the form of the Saudis persistent attempts to force a political change in Sana'a but also in the intensification of the Saudi conflict with the PRSY.

With regard to influences from the non-Arab environment, the rivalry between the two superpowers was the most relevant. The strong Soviet support of the Yemeni revolution was in accordance with their strategy of undermining the West's influence in the Arabian Peninsula. This triggered a response from the principal Western countries. In the

pre-1968 period, both Western and Soviet interests in the Yemen conflict was reflected in active, albeit indirect, involvement of both, with the West aiding the Royalists and the Soviets supporting the Republicans. The Egyptian withdrawal from Yemen in the aftermath of the June 1967 war contributed to the decline of American and Soviet interest in Yemeni affairs, thus making the international environment relatively less relevant to YAR foreign policy, although the Soviet role continued to be vital to Sana'a throughout 1968.

### The Internal Influences

Concern for the security of the Republic, which was triggered by the Royalist counter-revolution, became the most relevant factor in determining YAR foreign policy-making during the 1960s. This sense of insecurity was compounded during the active fighting (1962-1968) by the Republicans' continuing perception of their insufficient capacity to ensure the survival of the régime. As a consequence, the pre-1969 foreign policy activities were restricted mainly to relations with countries which provided political and material support, including the UAR and the Soviet Union. Due attention was given to other important values, i.e. economic development and national reconciliation, only when the Royalist threat had subsided in late 1968. When that time came, YAR foreign policy activities were re-orientated towards relations with Saudi Arabia and the principal Western states which were perceived to possess the capabilities to help bring about the desired goals. Another major influence was the orientation of the pre- and post-1967 governing élite. The UAR intervention in Yemen was urged by almost all Republicans (but most strongly by the radicals) including President al-Sallal, who sought to increase the YAR

capabilities of achieving its goals (including security) by aligning the YAR with the UAR and forging closer relations with the Soviet Union and Arab revolutionary governments. Conversely, the moderates who assumed power on 15 November, 1967 undertook to disassociate the YAR from intra-Arab bickering. A policy of reconciliation and openness was pursued during the last three years of the 1960s as a means of insulating the Republic against the negative effects of the Arab and international environment while at the same time benefiting from all possible opportunities for the achievement of the régime's main objectives.

#### The Decision-Makers

While the official forum had changed with the changing constitutional arrangements, both President al-Sallal and Chairman al-Iryani had decisive roles in the formulation of YAR foreign policy. A combination of constitutional and political instability and the need for rapid decisions under the pressures of war conditions strengthened the primacy of the head of state in policy-making. Members of the ultimate decision-making unit, who after November 1967 included members of the Republican Council and the prime ministers, played an important role in the process of state, but al-Iryani continued to have the decisive say. His position within the group was due to the need for his political skill, his revolutionary credentials and his status as a religious judge (Kadi). In this respect, the situation is typical of that described by Sidney Verba in his study of leadership within a small group. He concluded that a person will assume a leading role if he is perceived to be effective in serving the cause and goals of the group and possesses certain characteristics among



which is a respectable social status.<sup>4</sup> Public participation in the formulation of foreign policy was urged by the head of state, who involved representatives of public opinion in the pre-decisional consultations. The military and the tribes had generally insisted on playing a role in the policy-making. But even in cases where these two groups reflected lack of interest, the head of state ensured that he consulted some of their representatives.

### The Pattern Of Policy Making

Observation of YAR decision-making during the war reveals a pattern quite different from the suggestion advanced by J. Robinson and R. Snyder to the effect that interaction among members of a decision-making unit is usually mediated by an elaborate communication network.<sup>5</sup> In considering their political options, the YAR decision-makers depended on face-to-face communication with no bureaucratic elements involved. The sensitive nature of foreign policy issues and the resultant allocation of foreign policy to top government were the main factors which determined the procedures followed in the process. Such influence was discernable in the fact that decisions in the four cases covered in this study were formulated within the ultimate decisional unit (the Republican Council and the Cabinet in the post-1967 era) in a strictly secret manner. Pre-decisional consultation among individuals outside the decision-making unit covered only the broad outlines of possible policy, but the formulation of the specific decision was the function of members of the ultimate decision-making unit (in the post-1967 era) and were reflected in the consensus which characterised the choice-selection process.

From the foregoing conclusions, it has become clear that the war situation was the most important determinant of YAR foreign policy-making during the 1960s. Such a conclusion inevitably raises the question of the relevance of this study. One might specifically ask the following question: If many aspects of the YAR foreign policy-making at that period were linked to the war situation, how relevant is this study to the understanding of the process in general?

In answering this question, attention must be drawn to the fact that although the situational context changed after the end of the war in 1970, most of the other variables persisted and until recently changed very little. The scarcity of national resources and the resultant need for external support continue to form permanent elements in YAR foreign policy-making. In addition, several components of the decision-making system are linked to the degree of socio-political modernisation and are slow to change. A manifestation of this predicament is the snail-like institutional development which resulted in the continuation of the domination of personalities over the decision-making process. Another interrelated phenomenon is the slow pace of social and political mobility which resulted in the continuation of many of the 1960s leadership in power to this date. On the other hand, because of the linkages of intra-Arab politics, the YAR will continue to be attached to the Arab environment where most of the systemic constraints and opportunities originate. A prominent Yemeni politician has even suggested that the Yemeni leaders in the pre and post-revolutionary era followed a consistent pattern in their endeavour to insulate the country against foreign domination by balancing the influence of aspiring powers<sup>6</sup>. These are considerations which constitute an element of continuity in YAR foreign policy-making, regardless of the nature of the situation, and therefore make

this study relevant. In any event, the study could not claim to be either exhaustive or unchallengeable. Its main objective has been to provide some insight into the YAR's foreign policy-making during an extraordinary period of the country's history. It would have achieved a major objective if it could stimulate further inquiries into this unexplored field in the affairs of this little-studied Middle Eastern polity.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX

1. See the application of some of these concepts by Douglas Anglin in his "Zambian Crisis Behaviour", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4, December 1980, pp.581-616.
2. Maria Papadakis and Harvey Starr, "Opportunities, Willingness, and Small States: The Relationship Between Environment and Foreign Policy", in Charles Hermann, Charles Kegley and J. Rosenau (eds.) *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Massachusetts, Allen & Unwin, 1987, pp.426-427.
3. *ibid.*, p.425.
4. Sidney Verba, *Small Groups and Political Behaviour: A Study of Leadership*, Princeton, N.Y., Princeton University Press, 1961, pp.124-128.
5. J. Robinson and R. Snyder, "Decision-Making in International Politics" in Herbert Kelman (ed.) *International Behaviour*, New York, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1965, p.448.
6. Muhammad A. Nu'man, the then Advisor to the Chairman of the Republican Council in an interview with *al-Thawrah*, 23 July, 1970.

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C O R R I G E N D U M

PAGE NO.	LINE NO.	EXISTING FORMULATION	NEW FORMULATION
97	12	A new sentence is to be added after the first sentence.	The new sentence to be added is as follows: ' <b>Saudi</b> Arabia had consistently refused to talk to the Yemeni Republic even after the moderate leadership took over in Sana'a on November, 1967.
116	10	The sentence beginning with the words 'Except for.....' is to be changed.	Replacement is as follows: ' <b>Except</b> for Major-General Abdullah Djuzaylay, Deputy Premier and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and Brigadier Abd al-Latif Daifellah, who enjoyed some loyalties in the army, none of the other cabinet members enjoyed an independent power base.'
150	17	A word to be inserted after the words "During the....."	The new word is ' <b>Cairo</b> '
150	26	The word 'and' to be changed.	The new word is ' <b>for</b> '
180	last line	The words 'any reciprocal recognition by Sana'a' is to be changed.	Replacement is as follows: ' <b>a likely</b> establishment of diplomatic relations between Sana'a and Berlin".
181	21-22	The sentence beginning with the word 'Although.....' is to be changed.	The new sentence is as follows: ' <b>Although</b> denied diplomatic relations with the YAR, the GDR was at first satisfied with non-diplomatic representation in Sana'a."
189	20	The words 'recognition by the YAR' are to be changed.	The new formulation is as follows: ' <b>establishment</b> of relations with the YAR.'
189	21	The word 'recognition' is to be deleted.	
189	29	The words 'for full recognition' is to be replaced.	The new words are ' <b>the issue</b> '.
190	1	The words 'recognition of the GDR' are to be replaced.	Replacement is to read as follows: ' <b>establishment</b> of full diplomatic relations between Sana'a and Berlin.
194	21	The words 'for recognition' are to be deleted.	
194	22	The word 'recognised' is to be replaced.	
197	note No.15	The word 'recognise' is to be replaced.	Replacement is as follows: ' <b>promote</b> its relations with'.
211	last line	The words 'by his colleagues' are to be deleted	

CONTINUED:

PAGE NO.	LINE NO.	EXISTING FORMULATION	NEW FORMULATION
214	4	The word 'two' is to be replaced.	Replacement as follows: 'Saudi monarch and the Yemeni president.'
219	26	The word 'covered' is to be replaced.	Replacement is as follows: 'provided for'
230	8	The word 'Arabs' is to be replaced.	is to read 'regimes'
242	21-22	New words are to be added.	The word 'only' is to follow the word 'not' and 'also' after the wor 'eminated'
246	1	The word 'made' is to be replaced.	Replacement is by the words 'announced only'.
246	3-4	The sentence beginning with the word 'They...' to be changed.	To be replaced by the following. 'They were made by few persons comprising the decision-making unit and were usually arrived at by consensus. The way consensus was achieved differed from a Case to another
250	18	A new word is to be inserted after the word 'state'	The new word to be added is 'decisions'.