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**YAR-US RELATIONS 1962-1990:
A CASE STUDY OF A SUPERPOWER-SMALL STATE RELATIONSHIP**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the nature of the relationship between a superpower and a small state, using as a case study that of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the USA. The period covered is the lifetime of the YAR from 26 September 1962 when the Republic was declared, to 22 May 1990, when the YAR was united with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) to form the Republic of Yemen (ROY).

After a brief examination of pre-revolutionary North Yemen-US contacts, which provide the backdrop to the relationship inherited by the Republic, Chapters 2-5 adopt a chronological approach to the different phases in the YAR-US interaction. The sixth chapter focuses on the economic dimension of the relationship.

Beyond establishing a chronological account, this thesis analyzes several interrelated themes. It explores how the emergence of what was the first Republic in the Arabian Peninsula affected the balance of power in the Middle East and how this, in turn, affected US policy towards the region and towards Sana'a during the Cold War. In particular, it examines to what extent, if at all, the YAR benefitted from the bilateral relationship, and how this fitted in with the YAR government's overall foreign policy. It investigates the extent to which the YAR was subjected to US Middle Eastern and global policies. It further examines how

international strategic rivalries between the superpowers and other interested nations affected the YAR and how Sana'a attempted to exploit and benefit from these rivalries and intersections. Other themes include the role played by the Yemeni people in affecting regional and international relations and the effect of regional religious differences on the YAR-US interaction. This study also studies how the YAR as a small state experienced a degree of freedom of manoeuvre in determining its own foreign policy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Aden News Agency
FBIS	United States Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FLOSY	Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen
FOO	Free Officers Organisation
FYM	Free Yemeni Movement
FYP	Free Yemeni Party
HKJ	Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GPC	General Peoples Congress of the Yemen Arab Republic
ICA	US International Cooperation Administration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JANA	Libyan News Agency
KOY	Kingdom of Yemen (1918-1948)
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
ME	BBC, Summary of Word Broadcasts, Part IV, the Middle East
MKOY	Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen (1948-1962)
NDF	National Democratic Front in the Yemen Arab Republic
NLF	National Liberation Front (of South Yemen)
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PFLO	People's Front for the Liberation of Oman
PFLOAG	People's Front of the Liberation of Oman and the Occupied Arab Gulf (1968-71); People's Front for the Liberation Oman and the Arab Gulf (1971-74) o f
PRSY	People's Republic of South Yemen
RDP	Revolutionary Democratic Party
ROY	Republic of Yemen
SABA'	YAR News Agency
SAF	South Arabia Federation
SAG	South Arabia Government
UAR	United Arab Republic (Egypt 1959-1971)
UPONF	Unified Political Organisation of the National Front
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIS	United States Information Service
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic
YARCPO	YAR Central Planning Organisation
YEPCO	Yemen Exploration and Production Company
YHOC	Yemen Hunt Oil Company
YOMINCO	Yemen Oil and Minerals Corporation
YSP	Yemeni Socialist Party

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Except where names of places or individuals are conventionally rendered into English in other forms, the process of transliteration from Arabic used throughout the thesis is based on that of **THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM**.

INTRODUCTION

This study covers the relationship between the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the USA during the period between the Yemeni revolution on 26 September 1962 and the unification of the two Yemens on 22 May 1990 - when the YAR merged with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) to form the Republic of Yemen (ROY). Despite unification, there is a great measure of continuity between earlier YAR-US relations and ROY-US relations today. While relations between what was South Yemen and the US were limited to the period between 1967 and 1969,¹ Sana'a's more continuous relations with Washington were inherited by the ROY since Sana'a became the capital of the former YAR and is today the capital in both law and reality of the new Yemen.

The Yemen possesses distinguishing if not unique features and characteristics: it is a highly populated country, was long supplied with Soviet arms, has a turbulent modern history, controls the southern mouth of the Red Sea and lies adjacent to sixty percent of the world's oil reserves in what is supposedly an unchallenged sphere of Western influence. Its relations with the US therefore merit thorough and detailed study.

This thesis contributes additional knowledge to several distinct areas of existing research in international relations. Apart from contributing to research on the foreign relations of Third World states and on the contemporary history of the Arabian Peninsula, it also contributes to the literature on North-South relations. Although largely dependent upon US sources

because of their availability, this detailed analysis of YAR-US interaction comes from a Yemeni perspective and is intended to make a significant addition to the available literature, provide a better understanding of this part of the Middle East, and add to existing research on some of the issues involved.

The Sources and Their Limitations

Before the background to the major themes of this thesis are outlined in detail, it is first necessary to state some of the problems that were encountered during the research due to the limitations of the source material.

Research on the Yemen and on the Arabian peninsula that followed the 26 September revolution in the northern part of Yemen and the ensuing Yemen crisis has involved several international scholars and institutions, such as the American Institute for Yemeni Studies in the US (AIYS). These scholars' published and unpublished works², the declassified documents of the US government, the US Freedom of Information Act facilities, and field work undertaken by this author in both the Yemen and the US, have provided the basis of this thesis.

This research encountered a number of difficulties, the main one being that the YAR's relations with the US are, in many respects, not comparable to those with any other Middle Eastern state. Although North Yemen, which was never colonized by a Western power, achieved independence from Turkey in 1918, it was kept largely segregated from the outside

world by its Zeidi rulers whose strict religious ideology sought to keep the country closed to foreigners or outside influence. After 26 September 1962, the YAR tried to develop contact with the modern world, including the US. This was only partly successful. Egyptian intervention and civil war, a close military relationship with the USSR, an alliance with the Arab nationalism movement, a commitment to fight colonialism, imperialism and Zionism, and a dispute with the KSA inherited from the Zeidi Imams affected the YAR's interaction with the USA and with many other key Western countries. The YAR's foreign policy was further affected in the late 1960s and the 1970s, when the pro-Soviet PDRY was established at its southern frontiers and the Republic became largely dependent upon the KSA, involving it in continuous internal struggle between forces loyal to either the KSA or the PDRY, and their respective patrons, the USA and the USSR. In the 1970s the YAR's relations with the US mattered only in the sense that it existed as a buffer between the socialist PDRY, where the Soviet Union gained considerable influence, and the KSA, where huge US interests existed.

Another problem was presented by the fact that the details of YAR-US interactions are in some respects too recent to allow comprehensive research. There is only a limited amount of published material since most YAR-US contacts have always been kept secret. When a senior Yemeni official, for example visits Washington or receives an American envoy, the Yemeni press reports it only in general terms, with words such as: "the two parties have discussed the bilateral relations and means to develop these as well as the issues of mutual interest and concern."

Finally, there is the relative insignificance of the country itself: during most of the period under the study, the YAR was unstable, poor, and had little military power to influence other States or affect the course of international relations. Even in Arab and Peninsula terms the YAR played only a marginal role.

These difficulties were compounded by a paucity of documentation and a lack of access to that which exists. In common with most countries, including the US and Britain, recent YAR diplomatic policy is subject to strict control. This author tried to find documents in Sana'a such as the YAR's Washington Embassy despatches but was denied access. However, from March 1985 and until late 1987, the writer worked as the Director of Information to the YAR Prime Minister, 'Abdul-'Aziz 'Abdul-Ghani, and thus had access to some reports from Yemen embassies. It is not, however, possible to quote from these. In Sana'a, apart from the correspondence between the Foreign Ministry and the embassies, there is no substantial documentation nor any archives concerning the YAR's dealings with the outside world. Moreover, most of the Yemeni officials this writer has interviewed refused to be quoted. In the USA the situation was, at the level of documentation, little better. Despite the Freedom of Information Act, access was denied to most of the documents needed, and most of the White House Central Files pertaining to the YAR were closed for security reasons. The Kennedy administration documents, in the Boston Kennedy Library, were also in closed files in early 1990.

This study was, however, able to make use of documentation from the following sources: the

US Department of State correspondence with US embassies in the YAR, KSA and the UAR for the period 1962-1990, in addition to many US government and UK Foreign Office declassified despatches of the pre-1962 period; recent US congressional hearings; up-to-date USAID presentations to Congress; some White House Central Files; and a number of Congressional and Department of State official publications. Also available were official Yemeni and American statements which are cited in the YAR's official news agency (Saba) bulletins, United States Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) and British Broadcasting Corporation Summary of World Broadcast, Part IV, The Middle East (ME) transcripts, United States Information Service (USIS) daily reports, the American University of Beirut Bulletin, and other similar sources.

Oral interviews in Yemen and the USA were of special benefit to this research, as were interviews which had been conducted by or deposited in the Kennedy, Johnson, Carter and Ford libraries. In addition, the YAR Central Planning Organisation (CPO) and the YAR Central Bank (CB) annual reports, and the reports of various international organisations and banks and funds proved to be an invaluable source. Although they needed to be used with caution, the research further benefited from unofficial publications such as newspapers, journals and books by journalists, academics, political commentators and several politicians and diplomats involved in the actual events. Journals and articles from the Royal Institute of International Relations, London, the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, and the Middle East Institute, Washington, were also of use in charting the course of events.

A third category of sources was this author's own observations from having worked in the media in both Northern and Southern Yemen and Kuwait since October 1966. During this period, especially during the last four years, the author interviewed a large number of influential Yemenis. Additional interviews in the US in early 1990 with numerous officials, ex-diplomats and scholars whose interest was or still is Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, were also valuable. In summation, these varied sources provided the basis for this thesis.

Structure and Themes

Since this study was written under the limitations of information availability and is about a stipulated period, it concentrates on the history of YAR-US bilateral interests. The chapters of this thesis are divided into broad thematic concerns but, within this framework, they therefore follow the most important events of the North Yemen-US interaction in chronological sequence. Chapter one is a survey of North Yemen-US contacts before 26 September 1962 and provides the background to issues at the core of the thesis. The next four chapters cover in detail the different phases of diplomatic relations between the YAR and the US from 1962 to 1990. These relations fall into distinct phases: the initial YAR contacts which led to US recognition of the YAR on 19 December 1962 (Chapter Two); the first phase of relations, until diplomatic ties were broken in 1967 (Chapter Three); the five year period ending in the restoration of relations in 1972 (Chapter Four); the period of US protection which was followed by the discovery of oil in the YAR by a US company in 1984 - this brought about a change in the whole nature of the relationship and marked the beginning of a period of more US interest in the country (Chapter Five). Chapter Six

examines the economic dimensions of YAR-US relations. In the conclusion the relationship is brought up to 22 May 1990, the findings summarised, and the themes outlined earlier in this introduction addressed.

One of the themes examined in this study is that of policy interaction: how Arabian Peninsula problems affected US policy, how Yemeni policies affected the region, and how relationships in that region affected the superpowers. In particular, the study examines how the YAR's relations with the USA fitted into the former's overall policy especially as regards Saudi Arabia and South Yemen; the latter was at first a British protectorate and later controlled by the pro-Soviet National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). Relevant to this is an analysis of the extent to which the YAR benefitted from relations with the US. A major theme is the place of policy towards the YAR in the overall pattern of US policy in the Middle East³, regarding in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the Arab Israeli question and Cold War rivalry with the Soviet bloc, as well as the extent to which the US had any distinctive interest in the YAR between 1962 and 1990. Related to this is an analysis of the reasons for US interest. A fourth theme is how global strategic rivalries and intersections affected the Yemen, and how it tried, in varying ways and at different times, to gain benefit from these rivalries. Other themes include the role played by the Yemeni people in affecting regional and international relations and the effect of regional religious differences on the YAR-US interaction. A key dimension is the superpower-small state relationship in a highly volatile region and how, within this, a small power maintained a degree of freedom of manoeuvre in deciding its foreign policy.

Evolution of Yemeni Foreign Policy

Yemen's policy towards the USA must be seen in the context of its policy towards external powers in general. After World War I Sana'a sought to counterbalance British pressure in Aden by obtaining international recognition for its government and territorial integrity. The Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen (MKOY) formed in 1948 sought the same objectives especially when relations with the UK became strained and the inter-Yemeni opposition posed a threat to the Hamid al-Din ruling family. In the 1950s the ruling Imam sought a US diplomatic presence to counterbalance the Eastern bloc. He was not concerned to obtain US assistance since this would have benefited the Yemeni people rather than himself personally. In the late 1950s the MKOY monarchy appealed to the US to intervene on the border dispute with Aden and to establish a diplomatic legation and a USAID office. The Imam wanted to counterbalance the Soviet and Egyptian presence in the MKOY army, which followed the arrival of some Soviet military equipment. Washington took the situation seriously and in the light of the Eisenhower Doctrine⁴, decided to contain Soviet influence in the Yemen in order to safeguard Western interests and protect Saudi security.

North Yemen's attempts to benefit from superpower rivalries first became evident after its independence in 1918: then Sana'a tried to exploit Italian-UK rivalry by attempting to obtain US support for its aims of liberating the southern areas from the British colonial rule and reuniting 'historical' Yemen. When Washington refused it turned to Italy, a rival of the British in the Red Sea region. In competition with Britain for control of this area, Italy had established a presence on the Asian shores of the Sea following its conclusion of a treaty with

the Amir of 'Asir, al-Idrissi in 1911. In Yemen, Rome opened relations by establishing commercial ties with the Yemeni ports of 'Asir, Tihama and Aden. It then established a commercial centre in Sana'a. After three years of diplomacy, Italy signed a treaty with Imam Yahya of Yemen in 1926, guaranteeing freedom of trade between the two states. This was the first treaty the KOY signed with another state and Italy was the first European nation to recognise Imam Yahya as King of the Yemen. The Imam used the treaty to strengthen his position in the talks with the British delegation headed by Sir Gilbert Clayton held in Sana'a in 1926 which broke down just a few days before the treaty with Rome was signed.⁵ He also used it to put some pressure on Idrissi to surrender to Sana'a. Yahya gambled all his cards on Italy and challenged his rivals to the north and south, the Saudis and the British, before obtaining the necessary armaments and training. This led directly to the annexation of 'Asir by the KSA and to the weakening of the Imam's position in the south.⁶

While Imam Yahya aimed at gaining international recognition of his rule and obtaining arms to strengthen his position against the rebellious leaders of 'Asir and against the British, Italy sought economic markets and a political position that would secure its interest in the Red Sea region and its position in its colonies in East Africa. For this reason the treaty with the Imam was seen to be for Italy "the first important step in the history of its penetration in South West Arabia for which it had waited so long."⁷ As well as a five-year gasoline concession this treaty opened up the Yemen for Italian arms, goods, and doctors, and even allowed Rome to influence the Imam's foreign policy. The contrast between Imam Yahya's policies with the ruler of 'Asir and the British before and after the signing of this treaty indicates that Italian

influence lay behind the unexpected decision of the Imam in 1927 to terminate the activities of the Twitchell American engineering team which was attempting to build a harbour, a communication network and to explore for oil.

The Yemeni-Italian alliance must be assessed within the context of British-Italian competition for the control of the Red Sea. Yemen's alliance with Rome was motivated by the wish to counter the British and to liberate the southern areas from their influence. But the flaw in the Imam's policy was that he used one colonial power to get rid of another. Instead of strengthening his position against the British he only stirred up more vigorous British enmity against his rule, because London treated the Arabian Peninsula in terms of a British equivalent of the Monroe Doctrine.⁸ The region of 'Asir, which the Imam subsequently lost because of his treaty with the Italians, is a case in point. Italy even gained stronger influence in the Yemen following the renewal of the treaty in 1937, especially through the Imam's personal Italian physicians. This continued until 1943 when the Axis bloc lost the war.⁹ In the second half of the 1940s, due in part to growing US interest in the Arabian peninsula, the Imam tried to exploit US-UK competition once again to enhance his rule, and to counterbalance pressure from the British in the south and the Saudis in the north. When this failed in the 1950s, the MKOY sought assistance (mainly military) from the Soviets, who responded positively. This aroused US concern and led to US-UK cooperation in the Yemen resulting in a US offer of development aid. Washington also tried to reconcile the British and the Imam.

US Policy and its Evolution

Yet another theme of this study is that of US foreign policy and its evolution. After the end of World War I, American policy in the Arabian Peninsula was restricted and hard to implement. When the US became more closely involved in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, its interest in Yemen grew.¹⁰ This thesis contains a chapter that examines formal and informal North Yemen-US relations, before September 1962, at both the private and official levels. In addition to its importance as historical background for YAR-US relations, this establishes a basis for comparison between US policies towards monarchical, conservative Yemen and towards the Republic.

After 1945 three aims shaped US foreign policy: to maintain active responsibility for the direction of international affairs; to use all power to combat the spread of the Communist "menace"; and to contain "Soviet expansionism and influence."¹¹ In the Indian Ocean and the Gulf region, this meant the following: a British and a French military presence; US business investment in the region; increased Western demand for oil resources; a Soviet political and military presence; and involvement of the region in Arab-Israeli and Southwest Asian conflicts.

The US emerged from the World War II as a superpower at a time European dominance over its former colonies, protectorates and allies was declining in the region. Thus the US gradually became the most influential and powerful external force in the Middle East generally and in the Arabian Peninsula in particular. The combination of military and

economic strength gave the US the capability to project its presence and influence to countries, many of which it had no previous relations. After World War II, finding there was no objection from London, the US responded to the Imam's demands by a decision not to leave Yemen for other powers to penetrate. Washington also sought stability in the Arabian Peninsula to safeguard US business interests and the world oil reserves. This objective was to be achieved by protecting its KSA ally against any threat that might emerge from MKOY alliances and by reconciling the Imam with the UK. During this period Britain tried but failed to play a direct role in determining internal Yemeni politics. It finally came to rely heavily upon its influence over US officials in order to exert indirect leverage in determining the course of events in Southwest Arabia. This situation made it appropriate for formal relations between the US and the KOY to be established.

Arab Nationalism and Superpower Cold War Rivalries

1947 witnessed the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, a new principle in America's foreign policy, which aimed to support those "who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."¹² In this year President Truman announced that his country would assist all countries that opposed Soviet ideology and policies.¹³ This led to the creation of economic and military aid packages, mutual defence treaties, regional pacts and alliances and, although the Doctrine was initially concluded with Greece and Turkey, to increasing US interest in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. As a result the US came to take its relationship with Yemen more seriously. Overall, this doctrine led to a policy of resisting and dislodging the USSR. Secretary of State John Dulles visited the area in 1953,

one year after the Egyptian revolution, but achieved very little. On his return to Washington, Dulles confirmed that "many of the Arab League countries were preoccupied with their disputes with Israel, Great Britain and France, a matter which lessened their fear of Communism."¹⁴ The US Secretary's statement indicated clearly that the Arabs were struggling to obtain their independence from the European colonialists and were feeling a concrete threat from Israel rather than from Communism. This meant a cool response to the plans of the US, which was already damned in the eyes of many Arabs for being the supporter of Israel.

In 1956 the crisis between Western colonial powers and Arab nationalism reached its climax. The US suspected that this movement might welcome the Soviet Union into a sphere of influence that the US had inherited from its European predecessors. The Eisenhower administration responded to this situation by pledging the US to exercise a more assertive policy in the Middle East, and to do so partly through bilateral relations with local governments which included most of those in the Arabian Peninsula. The USSR reacted by increasing its support to revolutionary and national liberation elements in the Arab world and by acquiring a foothold in the Middle East to confront "colonialism and imperialism." Their first chance came when President Jamal 'Abdul-Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal in 1956. The USSR promptly pledged political and military assistance to Egypt. Under the nationalist movement of the 1950s, Arab countries became hopeful of using Soviet support to free themselves from the vestiges of Western colonialism with Soviet support. This, of course, displeased American and West European policy makers. The Arab nationalist

movement faced many difficulties in achieving independence from direct or indirect Western influence, partly because of Middle East dependency upon European economies, and also because of the lingering effects of decades of colonialism. This explains why, by the end of the 1950s, most Arab countries were either traditional or revolutionary regimes; the former placed their fate in the hands of the Western powers, while the latter found their interests lay in allying with the Eastern anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist bloc. Thus one of the side-effects of the Cold War was the Arab world's dependence on either the US or the USSR.

In this period, the US continued to maintain military installations in Saudi Arabia intended to provide not only for the defence of the Middle East as a whole but also of the important oil reserves in the whole Gulf region which had become essential to the energy supply of the West. Behind this economic and military presence in the area was US concern at Soviet influence in the Yemen. It was also concerned about the Yemen's continuing dispute with neighbouring KSA. Robert Stookey, the last US Charge d'Affaires in monarchical Yemen, pointed out that the ongoing British-Yemen dispute also worried the US more at the outbreak of the Cold War than any other time, since the British military base in Aden was used to underpin the Anglo-American position in the Gulf and the Peninsula.¹⁵

Conclusion

The above-mentioned themes reoccur throughout the text of this study and are summarised in the concluding chapter. Between 1918 and 1962 North Yemen's relationship with the US was limited. It was affected negatively by the following factors: US lack of economic interest

in the country; the US stance on the Palestinian issue and its role in creating Israel; Zeidi ideology and the Imams' fears of exposing their subjects to the modern world; Yemen's dispute with the UK over the southern areas of the Yemen (ie. Aden and the Protectorates) and its territorial dispute with the KSA; and the strong KSA-US relationship. Most of these factors were initially the source of only marginal aggravation to the US, but they became exacerbated after the formation of the YAR in 1962.

Four major issues dominated YAR-US relations in the following years: the Cold War; the relationship of both countries with the KSA; US policy in the Middle East; the nature of the bilateral interaction itself. This raises questions about the nature of US interest in the Republic between 1962 and 1990; about whether the YAR's relationship with the US helped or retarded Yemeni economic, political and social progress; about whether a small state like the YAR was able to experience a freedom of manoeuvre in determining its own foreign policy.

Notes

1. For a recent account on PDRY-US relations see Fred Halliday, **Revolution and Foreign Policy: The Case of South Yemen 1967-1987**, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 79-98.
2. See for example works on Yemen by Fred Halliday, Seyyid Mustafa Salem, Robert Burrowes, Manfred Wenner, Robert Stookey, Mark Katz, John Peterson, Richard Sanger, 'Abdul-Rahman al-Baidani, 'Abd-Allah Djuzeilan, Robin Bidwell, 'Abdul-Rahim 'Abd-Allah, 'Abd-Allah Barakat, and Gregory Gause III listed in the bibliography of this thesis. This research benefitted from the bibliographies of S. Mondesir, Sultan Nadji, AIYS, Wenner, Halliday, and Stookey.
3. Works on US Foreign policy consulted include Arthur S. Link and William B. Catton, **American Epoch**, New York, 1974; M. McCormick, **American Foreign Policy and American Values**. Itasca IL, 1985; Ronald W. Barlett, **American Foreign Policy in Perspective**, 1978; Charles W. Kegley and W.H. Eugner, **American Foreign Policy Pattern and Process**, London, 1987; John Spanier, **American Foreign Policy Since World War II**, New York, 1980; Raymond L. Garthoff, **Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan**, Washington DC, 1985; Stanley Hoffmann, **Dead Ends: American Foreign Policy in the New Cold War**, Cambridge MA, 1983; Raymond Avon, **the Imperial Republic, the United States and the World 1945-1973**, New Jersey, 1974; Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, **The Limits of Power, the World and United States Foreign Policy 1945-1954**, New York, 1972; James Joseph S. Nye, Jr., **The Making of America's Soviet Policy**, New Haven, 1984; Alexander L. George, ed, **Managing U.S.-Soviet Rivalry: Problems of Crisis Prevention**, Boulder, 1983; Stephen Ambrose, **Rise to Globalism, American Foreign Policy 1938-1980**, London, 1980; Stanley Hoffman, **Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War**, New York, 1978; Christopher Jonesson, **Superpower: Comparing American and Soviet Foreign Policy**, London, 1984; John Lewis Gaddis, **Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy**, New York, 1982.
4. The doctrine aimed at providing assistance to countries which need such assistance in order to keep them neutral if not pro-US countries.
5. **The Times**, London, 7 September 1963.
6. As a direct result of the Italian-KOY alliance, the ruler of 'Asir, who had sought self determination for his province within the Yemeni kingdom, switched allegiance towards King 'Abdul-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia and signed a treaty with him for protection which the latter had refused to sign a few months earlier. The King justified his alliance with the Amir of 'Asir out of fear of Yemen's public alliance with Italy. (Factionalism of the Imam in dealing with his Sunni subjects and imprisoning the sons of the Sheikhs as a guarantee for their loyalty, the

hostage system, were also responsible for the segregation of other southern parts of the country.) In October 1926 King 'Abdul-'Aziz declared to a passing journalist that "I have no particular quarrel with the Imam, and I am at peace with him. On the other hand, I have nothing specially in common with him, and it seems to me that 'Asir is a useful buffer between us. But that is not the only reason for my wish to see 'Asir continue to exist. Idrissi is my son and has taken shelter under the shadow of my branches. I cannot for that reason sit still and see Sabia and Djizan swallowed by the Imam. I shall be forced to take action if the Imam attempts to take those two places. I am strong, and I have troops." See Djidda British Agency report to the Aden Acting Political Resident, Major B.R. Reilly, 30 October 1926 in **FO 371-11445**.

7. Sayyid M. Salem, **Takwin al-Yaman al-Hadith**, Cairo, 1984, pp. 304-309.

8. A reference to the dual principle of American foreign policy enunciated in President Monroe's message to US Congress on 2 December 1823. The doctrine stated that the American continents, especially Latin America which revolted against Spain and was recognised by the US, were not to be considered any longer as a field for colonisation by European powers. President Monroe announced that Washington would not interfere in European affairs but would view with displeasure an attempt by the European powers to subject the nations of the New World to their political systems, **The Columbia Encyclopedia**, New York, 1944, p. 1195.

9. For more account about the Italian role in the Yemen 1926-1943 see **Takwin al-Yaman al-Hadith**; 'Abd-Allah 'Abdul-Karim al-Djurafi, **al-Muktataf min Tarikh al-Yaman**, Cairo, 1951, pp. 250-252; Amin Muhammad Sa'id, **al-Yaman Hadiruha wa Madiha**, Cairo, 1959, 84; Clare Hollingworth, **The Arabs and the West**, London, 1952, p. 116

10. Yemen's alliance with Italy during World War II, the long-standing rivalry between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and the tensions of the Cold War in the post World War 2 years, all further increased American interest in the Yemen Kingdom.

11. **American Foreign Policy Pattern and Process**, p. 37.

12. **American Epoch**, P. 705.

13. Ibid.

14. **US Department of State Bulletin**, Vol. 28, No. 729, 15 June 1953, p. 831.

15. **America and the Arab States: An Uneasy Encounter**, New York, 1975, p. 180.

CHAPTER ONE:
NORTH YEMEN-US CONTACTS BEFORE 1962

In the period leading to the 1962 revolution Yemen was not able to benefit from private and official American contacts, nor, due to its geo-political location between the KSA and the Western interests in the British colony of Aden and the surrounding protectorates, to develop cooperative relations with the US government. YAR-US relations were constrained by 1) Yemen's rivalry with the UK over the southern areas and with the KSA; 2) Washington's major interests in the KSA, its Arab and Middle Eastern policy and its fear of Communism; 3) internal Yemeni resistance to relations with Washington, which came from Zeidi isolationism and the belief of the Free Yemeni Party (FYP) that the US would provide a life-line to the country's ruling family.

Private, Informal, and Formal Ties

The early history of Yemeni-US relations is intermittent and often based on unofficial contacts. American vessels first called at the Yemeni port of Mocha in the late 18th century. Trade intensified with Yemen in the early 19th century as trade in coffee, gum and hide expanded.¹ By the end of the century American missionaries, Dr Samuel Zwemmer and Charles F. Camp and their wives had settled in Yemen. The murder of Camp by the Turks, who were then occupying Yemen, brought the American Consul in Aden, Charles K. Moser to Sana'a in 1910, to investigate the incident.²

In 1918 North Yemen gained independence and the monarch, Imam Yahya, requested US recognition. This resulted in a goodwill visit to the Imam from the American Consul in Aden in 1919. His aim was to lay the ground for some American business expeditions the following year.³ In 1920 the Standard Oil Company made a geological investigation for oil in the Kingdom.⁴ Amin al-Raihani, an American of Syrian origin, visited the Imam from 1921-1922, and returned with a letter which raised the recognition issue once again, from the Imam to the American Consul in Aden.⁵ In 1926 the American Vice-Consul in Aden introduced the first American businessman to the Imam, Niton Houlberg, representative of the Houlberg-Kidde Corporation of Aden and New York.⁶

Another American contact was made in 1926, when the American Consulate in Aden introduced the diplomat and entrepreneur Charles Crane to the Imam. Crane visited Sana'a several times in 1926 and 1927.⁷ When he left Sana'a in 1927 he carried with him an Arabic draft of a proposed treaty with the United States. No treaty was concluded but the US Government approved Crane's activities and instructed its Consul in Aden to make an informal trip to the Yemen. Crane introduced to the Imam an American engineer, Karl Twitchell, who between 1927 and 1932 studied the geology and infrastructural needs of Yemen. He also provided technical assistance for the construction of roads and bridges and distributed farm and industrial machinery as gifts. Twitchell was responsible for connecting Sana'a with the port of Hudaidah by constructing bridges along approximately 350 kilometres of difficult mountainous country.⁸ Surprisingly, the Crane-Yahya relationship came to an

end⁹, and in 1932 both Crane and Twitchell switched their interest to the KSA.¹⁰

In 1933 Carleton S. Coon, his wife, and Ralph Forbes made a short anthropological expedition into the country and in 1937 two American oil geologists landed at Hudaidah harbour, but "they found no oil."¹¹ Ford Company representatives arrived in Sana'a in the 1930s to offering to construct modern roads all over the country on condition that Yemen committed itself to buy only Ford cars for 20 years. Imam Yahya rejected the offer.¹²

During May 1944, Washington responded to the Imam's request to intercede in Yemen's border dispute with the UK and despatched its newly appointed Consul in Aden, Harlan B. Clark, to meet Imam Yahya in March 1945. Meetings between the two resulted in American recognition of Yemen as an independent state on 4 March 1946. A treaty of friendship and commerce was concluded on 4 May 1946, but diplomatic representation with the US was delayed.

After the failure of the 1948 revolution against the Yemeni ruling family and the success of Imam Ahmad in restoring the throne of his assassinated father, the US reconfirmed its recognition of the Yemeni government and a Yemeni Consulate was opened in Washington.¹³ Yemen, however, denied permission for the Americans to do the same in Sana'a, offsetting this refusal by permitting a number of American scientific missions and expeditions to enter the country. A US Navy medical mission was allowed to survey health conditions and undertake zoological studies, and a major expedition of the American

Foundation for the Study of Man led by Wendell Philips, visited the Marib area and undertook archaeological and palaeographic investigations of the remains of the pre-Islamic Kingdoms as well as oil explorations.¹⁴ Because of a misunderstanding between Philips and the Yemeni authorities the expedition was asked to leave the country suddenly in 1952.¹⁵ US diplomats were stationed in Yemen in 1959 and US AID operations started in 1961.¹⁶ Against the background of this brief chronological survey, it is now possible to look in more detail at some of the underlying themes in Yemeni-US relations.

North Yemen Rivalry with the UK

After its independence from the Ottomans in 1918 Yemen sought to establish its authority throughout what it saw as 'historic' Yemen, including the southern areas occupied by the British since 1839. London therefore objected to and resisted all economic and political cooperation between Sana'a and Washington. As an influential power in the region the UK was largely able to contain Yemen-US relations throughout the period 1918-1962.

In 1918, when Imam Yahya requested American recognition, President Wilson took no action¹⁷ because the "U.S. Department of State followed Great Britain's advice on matters related to the Peninsula."¹⁸ Despite signing treaties with many countries throughout the thirties, Imam Yahya continuously sought American alliance in order to use it against the UK. He understood that his task was difficult because he had been "a potential enemy of Great Britain, with which country the U.S. is friendly."¹⁹

The Imam considered the private and informal contacts (i.e. Niton Houlberg, Charles Crane and Karl Twitchell) to be a personal success but none of them achieved what he really wanted, namely US recognition. The Imam encouraged American trade in order to obtain American arms and "the negotiation of a treaty," which were effectively blocked by the British and by Anglo-American friendship.²⁰ American businessmen and diplomats insisted that the Imam should give up all claims on the British protectorates. This the Imam refused to do.²¹

The years following 1944 witnessed the rise of US influence and interest in the Arabian Peninsula. Washington realised that by neglecting Yemen, US long term interests in Saudi Arabia might be threatened. This led to the establishment of formal relations without British objection, because the latter wanted to stabilize the balance of power in the Arabian Peninsula.²² Imam Yahya, although desirous of obtaining aid and official recognition for his country and for his own position, did not facilitate the exchange of diplomatic representation with countries with which he signed treaties.²³ This was due in part to British obstruction, who worked through influential officials inside and outside the palace.²⁴

In 1947 Saif al-Islam 'Abd Allah, Imam Yahya's son, returned to Sana'a from Washington bringing with him a draft of a supplementary agreement with the US, which proposed the Imam establish some infrastructural projects for roads and water. The British, as the Middle East Office of Great Britain in Cairo indicated²⁵, protested since they considered the to be contrary to the spirit of the February 1934 Anglo-Yemen treaty whereby Yemen gave

preference to the UK in all international dealings. Leading members of the Free Yemen Movement (FYM) in Sana'a discussed the situation and decided to launch a coup d'état with Iraqi support, which might persuade the UK to support the change²⁶ Influenced by Djamal Djamil, the Iraqi military advisor, the FYM believed Iraq could mediate with Britain to put Anglo-Yemeni relations on a friendly footing, if it agreed to give preference to the UK in international affairs.²⁷ Yemeni officers, also influenced by Djamil considered the supplementary agreement to be "a Jewish plot directed against the Arabs."²⁸ Thus relations between Sana'a and Washington once again failed to progress mainly due to British influence in the Yemen itself. Opposition forces in Yemen began to collaborate with some seeing the need to depose the Imam before an American life-line enabled him to destroy them.

When Ahmad became the new Imam after the aborted revolution in 1948, he sought to maintain an even-handed policy towards the Communist countries and the US in order to secure armaments and to counterbalance the continuous pressure from the British. His initiative was welcomed by Washington which extended its recognition to his government. In early 1952, efforts were renewed between the Yemen and American governments to establish closer relations, but were resisted yet again by the British opposition. Between 1953 and 1954 there were several American efforts to establish a permanent mission in Ta'iz; but the US Department of State thought there was little prospect of achieving this for several reasons, not the least being the Imam's refusal to allow foreign Legations fly their countries' flags over their buildings in Yemen. Congress would not follow the British example in allowing such a "derogation of sovereignty."²⁹

In 1955 there were signs of improved prospects for Yemen-US economic cooperation, but this was still strongly resisted by Britain which suggested "Britain and America should agree on spheres of influence in the Middle East."³⁰ In 1957, the US decided to provide aid to Yemen despite the attitude of King Ibn Sa'ud of the KSA and the British. The Colonial Office in London wrote to its Legation in Taiz expressing the wish for the US to understand their difficulties with Yemen and therefore refuse to help a hostile regime. But it recognised that as "Yemen was considered a target for Soviet penetration, it had therefore been placed on the list of potential recipients of US economic aid."³¹ Washington assured London that "Yemen would not receive military aid, and would not be required to cooperate with the US in the military defence sphere."³² On this basis the British response was that they neither could nor should "attempt to influence the US against continuing their project of economic aid."³³

American diplomatic representation in Ta'iz started on 16 March 1959. It was followed by economic assistance, not military or political as the Imam proposed. Yemen's permission for the stationing of permanent American representation came out of weakness, resulting from the failure of negotiations with the British that took place in Ethiopia in July 1958 and which were followed by the proclamation of the new Federation of South Arabia in February 1959. After these negotiations had failed, Imam Ahmad found it necessary to turn to the US to intervene in his dispute with Britain. Washington did not aid him politically but used this opportunity to establish an International Cooperation Administration mission in Yemen (ICA). It also provided 15 thousand tons of American foodstuff, sent as relief after a serious fire in the city of Hudaidah.³⁴

Yemen Rivalry with the KSA and Washington's Arab Policy

From the early 1920s Imam Yahya competed with King 'Abdul-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud for influence in Arabian Peninsula affairs. The dispute between the Zeidi Hamid al-Din royal family in Yemen and the Saudi royal family had a religious basis: the Saudis are Sunni and the Zeidi imams are Shi'ites who believe they are descended from the Prophet Muhammad. Saudi Arabia saw the Imams who ruled the most populous country in the area as rivals who might destroy KSA security. Their rivalry was heightened in the 1930s when 'Abdul-'Aziz annexed the disputed border areas claimed by Imam Yahya.

In early 1934 the British defeated the Imam in a war on the southern borders; British air power created havoc in the Imamate army and alarmed the Imam. Weakened and defeated by the British, he engaged in another war with the Saudis which he also lost. Neither the Imam nor the Yemeni people were satisfied with the 1934 peace treaty of Taif, which was concluded at the end of the war to regulate Yemeni-Saudi relations and temporarily define the northern Yemen frontier, because it was negotiated and signed under duress.

Because of this Yemeni-Saudi rivalry and because of an open foreign policy towards the outside world, King 'Abdul-'Aziz welcomed the Crane-Twitchell overtures in the 1930s. He granted the Standard Oil of California the first concession to explore and develop his country's oil resources "in exchange for relatively low payment even in his own terms while his dispute with Imam Yahya reached its climax in the 1934 war between the two

neighbours."³⁵ Various Yemeni sources suggested to this writer that King Ibn Sa'ud established stronger relations with the al-Wazir family, rivals to the ruling Hamid al-Din family, and encouraged the al-Wazirs to oppose the policies of Imam Yahya. During the 1934 war, anxious to protect the huge interests of American companies in the KSA, Washington wanted stability and pushed for a peaceful solution. In July of that year Karl Twitchell stated that Charles Crane "had advised the peaceful settlement between the Imam and Ibn Sa'ud."³⁶

Ibn Sa'ud was able to use the leverage of oil, military bases and even the Soviet danger, to ward off the Americans from his rival. In May 1949, for example, when Imam Ahmad initiated contacts with the Eastern bloc countries to obtain arms, Ibn Sa'ud warned the American representative in Djiddah, in an audience from which even interpreters were excluded, of the danger of Communism, "stating that he did not fear it at home but was concerned about its taking hold in some neighbouring Arab countries."³⁷ He also demanded that the US restrain the Hashimites in Jordan and Yemen and stated that Yemen was flirting with Trans-jordan and Iraq and that Saudi Arabia might find itself encircled by enemies.³⁸ Since the major US concerns in the Arab world were the security of Israel, the containment of Communism, and the securing of oil resources for the industrial world, and since there was no American interest in the Yemen, the KSA was able to block any possible American assistance to the Yemen.

Inter-Yemeni Resistance to Relations with US

Cultural isolation and a foreign policy maintained by rulers who had no experience of the

outside world, were responsible for Yemeni backwardness and ultimately for the collapse of the Imamate itself. Behind the failure of the external policies of Imam Yahya was the Zeidi or Shi'ite, doctrine. For religious reasons the Imams and the Zeidi "'Ulama" (scholars), whose contemporary parallel were the Ayatollahs of Iran during the lifetime of Imam al-Khomeini, had never been interested in maintaining any sort of relations with foreigners, unless forced to simply in order to break a stranglehold by another foreign power. The Yemeni Imams largely succeeded in using one superpower against another, but they completely failed to benefit from this policy or to make real friends and allies either inside or outside the country; this failure led to their demise.

When Imam Yahya established formal relations with the US in 1946, his eldest son, Crown Prince Ahmad, played an effective role in delaying diplomatic representation with Washington for his own purposes. He was suspicious that any further contact with the Americans during the life of his father might deprive him of the throne, since his younger half-brother 'Abd Allah had better contacts with both the US and the UK.³⁹ The numerous opponents of the ruling Hamid al-Din family, displeased by the establishment of formal Yemen-US and by the American medical care of the Imam whose death they had long awaited, also played a role in delaying a diplomatic relationship with the US. The Sayyids and Kadis, the two top tiers of the ruling Zeidi elite, who feared America would manipulate the ruling Hamid al-Din family by military force, played their part in preventing close Yemen-US relations. In 1946 after welcoming the American recognition mission headed by Ambassador William Eddy, Kadi 'Abdul-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Sayyaghi, then Governor of Hudaidah, "gave the

impression that he thought Yemen was doing all right the way it was and that any changes brought about by Westerners would be for the worse."⁴⁰ Another example of internal obstruction tactics was the implacable opposition from the Minister of Defence, Prince Ali, and other leading officials, including the Foreign Minister, Kadi Muhammad Raghib Bey to the supplementary agreement brought to Sana'a by Prince Abd- Alla in 1947.⁴¹

The official American approach to Yemen exacerbated hostility of both the internal and external enemies of the ruling family. The establishment of formal relations between Yemen and the United States, I think, was a factor behind the 1948 revolution and the assassination of Imam Yahya on 17 February 1948 since it played on this conflict. An influential Sayyid and the Special Secretary of Crown Prince Ahmad, al-Shami, has revealed to this author the following:

Sayyids, Kadis and Sheikhs plotted against the tradesmen and the peasants; Sayyids and Kadis plotted against the Sheikhs who lost part of their authority; and Sayyids then plotted with the Hamid al-Din family against the Kadis, who lost their high posts in the governing structure of the country. Because of this background we were sure that Yahya sooner or later would push us out of his way. We were very sure that Imam Yahya, who was the first Imam to violate Zeidism, was going to get rid of all other Sayyids because he wanted to secure the rule of the country for his own sons. That is why we participated in the 1948 revolution and struggled for a constitution that might unite the opposition against the ruling family.⁴²

"Although [it] never existed as [a] coherent and organized entity but rather manifested itself through a number of organisations"⁴³, the Free Yemeni Movement (FYM), was an effective instrument in limiting if not preventing co-operation between the Imamate regime and the US. The organisations of the FYM which were established between 1935 and 1960 opposed by all means available the ruling Hamid al-Din family. They believed the Imam had sought

American assistance to strengthen his position against his subjects. That object was achieved by warning the Imam of the disadvantages of relations with the Americans or by playing his fear of foreigners. The FYM considered the Yemen-US connection a threat to its existence and its plans for future revolution. It condemned the establishment of formal relations, and accused the Imam of selling the country and its people to the most powerful country in the world, the USA.⁴⁴ For example Nu'man and Zubairi, the FYM twin leaders wrote to President Truman, asking him not to support the Imam against his own people:

The Yemen population refuses all pacts made by the present Yemen Government which does not represent the nation's will. We request you to remember your statements that you will not make any pacts with governments which do not represent their nations.⁴⁵

The FYM was the prime mover of the 17 February 1948 revolution during which Imam Yahya was assassinated and Imam 'Abd Allah al-Wazir was installed as the new Imam to lead reform in the country. When the revolution failed the leaders of the Movement were either sentenced to death or jailed. Though secret and suspected members of the FYM were using all their powers to undermine the rule of the Hamid al-Din family they opposed a later military attempt to replace Imam Ahmad by, whom they believed was, his pro-US brother, 'Abd Allah, because their objective was to rid the country of the whole family. On 24 March 1955 a coup d'état headed by Prince 'Abd Allah took place against Imam Ahmad in Ta'iz.⁴⁶ Although it failed, it provided the FYP with an opportunity to denounce the new Imam publicly: "The Free Yemenis denounced the coup d'état and announced that the new Imam was one of the agents of American imperialism and that he would put Yemen in the US sphere of influence"⁴⁷.

In conclusion, despite the private, informal and formal contacts which occurred before 26 September 1962, North Yemen was unable to develop or benefit greatly from its relations with the USA.

Notes

1. An account of early Yemen-American contact is presented in Eric Macro's work, **Yemen and the Western World Since 1571**, London, 1968, pp. 21-71.
2. Richard Sanger, **The Arabian Peninsula**, New York, 1954, p. 237.
3. Robin Bidwell, **The Two Yemens**, Boulder Colorado, 1973, p. 112.
4. Aden Consul's despatch to the Department of State, 15 September 1920, **US Documents on the History of South West Arabia: Tribal Warfare and Foreign Policy of Yemen, Aden and Adjacent Tribal Kingdoms 1920 1927**, Salisbury NC, 1976, pp. 390-3.
5. Ibid., pp. 75-105.
6. Ibid., p.263.
7. **The Arabian Peninsula**, p. 235; **Modern Yemen 1918-1966**, p. 168.
8. Karl Twitchell, **Saudi Arabia**, Princeton, 1958.
9. Ta'iz British Legation Despatch, 10 February 1928, **FO 371-12999**.
10. Ibid.
11. **The Arabian Peninsula**, p. 240.
12. Author's interview with Ahmad al-Shami a former Foreign Minister of the Yemeni Royalists and a former member of the Presidential Council of the Republic, Sana'a, 1984.
13. Ibrahim al-Rashid, **Yemen Under the Rule of Imam Ahmad**, Chapel Hill NC, 1985, p. 15.
14. Harry Hoogstal and Robert E. Kunz, "Yemen Opens the Door to Progress", **National Geographic Magazine**, Vol. 101, February 1952, pp. 213-244.
15. Yemen Legation's statement, **Washington Middle East Institute's Yemen Files**.
16. Author's interview with al-Shami, and **Modern Yemen 1918-1966**, p. 187.
17. **Saudi Arabia**, p. 38.
18. **US Documents on the History of South West Arabia**, p i.
19. Ibid., p. 234.

20. Despatch of US Vice Consul in Aden to the State Department, dated 23 March 1927, *ibid.*, pp. 269-283.
21. Despatch of American Vice Consul, Aden, 20 October 1927, *ibid.*, pp. 297-314.
22. Ibrahim al-Rashid, **Yemen Enters the Modern World**, Chapel Hill NC, 1985, pp. 19-20.
23. **Takwin al-Yaman al-Hadith**, p. 334.
24. John Peterson, **Yemen, the Search for Modern State**, Baltimore, 1982, p. 61.
25. See report by Captain Djamal Djamil, an Iraqi advisor of the Yemeni government, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad, 12 October 1947 as translated and reported by the Middle East Office of Great Britain in Cairo on 27 December 1947, **FO371-68322**.
26. *Ibid.*
27. It seemed that Great Britain, through Iraq, encouraged the Yemeni army officers to undertake the coup d'état of 1948. The competition between Britain and the US over Yemen reached its climax at that period as Djamil had illustrated, **FO371-68322**.
28. *Ibid.*
29. In a letter to the British Foreign Office from R. W. Baily of the British Embassy in Washington dated 18 January 1954, **F0371-109983**.
30. United Kingdom's Legation in Ta'iz despatch dated 28 November 1955, in **FO-371-114800**.
31. **FO371-127056**.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. **Modern Yemen 1918-1966**, p.187.
35. Nadav Safran, **Saudi Arabia: the Ceaseless Quest for Security**, Harvard, 1985, pp. 61-65.
36. "The Operations in the Yemen," **Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society**, Vol. 21, July 1934, p. 28.
37. **Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security**, pp. 61-65.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Author's interview with Ahmad al-Shami, Sana'a, 1984.

40. **The Arabian Peninsula**, p. 249.
41. In a report by Captain Djamal Djamil, *ibid.*, **FO371-68322**.
42. Author's interview with al-Shami, Sana'a, 1984.
43. The most important organisations of the movement were: **Hayat al-Nidal** (1935-36), **Fatat al-Fulayhi** (c.1935), **Nadi al-Islah** in al-Hudjariyah (1935), **al-Katiba al-Ula** (1938-40), **Shabab al-Amr bil Ma'ruf wal-Nahyi 'an al-Munkar** (1941), **Hizb al-Ahrar al-Yamaniyyin** (1944-45), **Djam'iyyat al-Islah** (1944), **al-Barid al-Adabi** (1945), **al-Djam'iyyah al-Yamaniyah al-Kubra** (1946-48), and **al-Ittihad al-Yamani** (1952-62). J. Leigh Douglas, **The Free Yemeni Movement 1935-1962**, Beirut, 1987, p. 239.
44. "A letter from 'Abd-Alla 'Ali al-Hakimi to the Secretary General of the Arab League", 19 October 1946, in **al-Hikmah**, Volume 17, No. 2, Aden, February 1988, pp. 83-86.
45. Dated 27 February 1946, **Yemen Enters the Modern World**, p. 22.
46. It failed on 28 march. See 'Abd Allah al-Thawr, **Thawrat al-Yemen 1948-1968**, Cairo, 1974, pp.106-116.
47. Ribhi Taher Sahwil, "al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah wa Atharuha ala Harakat 26 September", Centre of Yemeni Research and Studies, **Thawrat 26 September: Dirasat wa Shahadat lil-Tarikh**, Volume I, Sana'a, 1986, p.44.

CHAPTER TWO:

INITIAL YAR-US CONTACTS

On the eve of the Yemeni revolution Sana'a-Washington relations were no better than those between Sana'a and Moscow; Yemeni-American relations were minimal: American representation in the country simply reflected the desire of Imam Ahmad to achieve a balance between the two superpowers to prevent them from interfering in his Kingdom's affairs. Despite the fact that since the Second World War the US has preferred to protect its interests by forming alliance with conservative and monarchical regimes in the area, there were six main factors that had prevented any real relationship for developing between the two countries: 1) US lack of an economic interest in the country; 2) the opposition of the Yemeni elites to the US policy towards the ruling family; 3) the alliance which existed between Washington and London which prevented the US from supporting Yemeni demands in the southern areas; 4) Washington's support of Imam 'Abd Allah ibn Yahya Muhammad Hamid al-Din during the 1955 attempted coup d'état; 5) the growing entente between the US and the KSA which the latter successfully used against its rivals, the ruling Zeidi Imams of Yemen; 6) the reactionary religious attitude of the Zeidi Imams towards the outside world.

A Republic in the Monarchical Peninsula:

"Policy Problem" in Washington

On 26 September 1962 North Yemen witnessed a revolution, one which the CIA "did not

forecast."¹ The revolutionaries in Sana'a declared the first Republic in the Arabian peninsula. The birth of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) was an outcome of "the long struggle of the revolutionary element in the country that had been led by the Free Yemenis Party [FYP] as far back as the 1940s [which had] come to a successful ending"². The various forms of persecution from which the people of Yemen had suffered under the ruling Hamid al-Din family since Yemen independence in 1918, led to the outbreak of the revolution³ which opposed "a corrupt and despotic rule...against the sloth and indolence of life in Yemen, a sloth that has been responsible for Yemen's failure to emerge from the dark ages. It was to leap forward in the life of the nation, after a long period of stagnation, from the dark ages to the progressive life of the twentieth century."⁴ In his study of the evolution of political awareness in North Yemen, John Peterson, an American specialist on the area, stressed that the roots of the revolution were contained in the pressures for change generated during Imam Yahya's reign, and that its continuing progress "was marked by the unfinished search for a legitimate replacement for the old Imamate."⁵

Imam Ahmad died on 19 September 1962 from wounds received from the bullets of three members of the Free Officers Organization (FOO) who had attempted to assassinate him the previous year in the city of Hudaidah⁶. Muhammad al-Badr, the Crown Prince, became the new Imam of the country. In a speech at the Grand Mosque of Sana'a, al-Badr promised to follow in the footsteps of his father and his grandfather in ruling the Yemen. This statement contributed to his overthrow. The revolutionaries realised they had to depose the new King before he got control of the army and before he executed those whom he suspected were

plotting against his monarchy; they decided "to eat him at lunch before he eats them at dinner" in the words of an Arabic proverb.

Although they opposed Washington's support of the Hamid al-Din family and disliked US policies that favoured both the monarchical and reactionary regimes in the area and Israel, the leaders of the revolution were not hostile to the US and had no intention of running counter to US policy. The Republicans' main concern was to change the political and social structure of their country and to improve the life of Yemeni people. They announced that the YAR revolution "believes in Arab reunification and Arab nationalism"⁷, but their aim had never been to interfere in external affairs or to threaten the interests of the US in the area.

The idea of a Yemen Republic was first discussed during the 1940s when four Zeidi Sayyids were consulted about replacing Imam Yahya if an attempted revolution in 1948 succeeded in overthrowing the Hamid al-Din family. 'Ali al-Wazir, one of the four candidates for successor, failed to fulfil all the fourteen Zeidi conditions⁸ for the Imamate because he was a one-eyed Sayyid. He therefore suggested to "make it a republic."⁹ But the idea of a republican Yemen only became serious after the failure of another attempted coup d'état in 1955 and as a result of the developing Arab nationalist movement led by the former United Arab Republic (UAR) President, Djamal 'Abdul-Nasser. Sheikh 'Abd Allah bin Hussein al-Ahmar, the dominant Sheikh of the Hashid tribes and the first President of the Republican Consultative Council, stated: "the idea of the republic sprang up after the failure of the 1955 coup d'état, when serious thinking in this matter started. It was the 1952 July revolution in

Egypt that guided the Freemen Movement towards a better substitute, which is the Republic"¹⁰.

The Yemeni National Charter pointed out that the 1962 Yemen revolution, although it was encouraged by Egypt, arose from domestic motives and objectives. This Charter stressed that "the revolution was determined to change conditions in Yemen for people of all walks of life. Its aims were set out in the following six objectives: (1) Liberation from despotism and colonial rule and their consequences; the establishment of a just republican government; and the reduction of class distinctions and privileges; (2) The building of a strong national army to protect the country and to safeguard the revolution and its achievements; (3) The elevation of the economic, social, political and cultural standards of the people; (4) The creation of a democratic, co-operative and just society which shall base its laws on the true spirit of Islam; (5) To strive towards the fulfilment of national unity within the framework of an overall Arab unity; (6) To respect the United Nations Charter and to abide by the laws and regulations of International Organizations; to adhere to the principle of neutrality and non-alignment; to strive towards the establishment of world peace and to consolidate the principle of peaceful co-existence among the nations of the world."

Counter-revolution with Saudi Support

The new Imam's uncle, Prince Hassan bin Yahya Muhammad Hamid al-Din, who was Yemen's ambassador to the US and the UN, left New York on the 27th September. Assuming Imam al-Badr dead he declared himself the successor to the throne and sought British and

Saudi support to regain the monarchy. Al-Hassan first contacted Faisal, the Saudi Crown Prince, who was in Washington when the YAR revolution broke out, and then stopped in London on his way to Saudi Arabia where he convinced King Saud to help reinstate the royalists because a Republic in Yemen "would be a real threat to Saudi Arabia."¹¹ At the same time he initiated diplomatic efforts to win the support of the US government or at least to delay its recognition of the Republic until the counter-revolution became able to bolster its position inside the Yemeni arena. This effort which was supervised and encouraged by Saudi Arabia and Jordan can be detected in some telegrams by the self-proclaimed "Imam al-Watheq Billah al-Hassan bin Ameer al-Mumineen" to President Kennedy via the Yemeni legations in Amman, Djidda and Washington. These telegrams protested in the name of the Yemeni tribes against the Egyptian bombardments of their towns and villages and appealed to President Kennedy to help restore al-Hassan to the Yemeni throne. Al-Hassan's telegrams also appealed to the US to discover "the truth about the present conditions in Yemen" and requested US support for the Yemeni people "in their resentment to any foreign intervention in order to allow them the opportunity to express their free will without any outside pressure which will guarantee their independence and integrity."¹²

It was subsequently confirmed that Imam al-Badr had not been killed but had reached Saudi Arabia: there he obtained political and military support for his counter-revolution from King Saud and the Crown Prince Faisal, who gave their support to the Hamid al-Din family's claims to the Imamate. Yemeni royalist supporters, with their loyalty paid for in Saudi gold pounds, continued attacks on several pro-Republican towns. The first diplomatic activity of

Imam al-Badr was to contact the President of the United States. On 20 October 1962 "Ameer al-Mumineen al-Mansoor billah Mohammad King of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen", wrote to President Kennedy via the Yemeni Legation in Amman giving the story of his survival, his own willingness to crush the rebels and informing him that his forces had started their operations against Republican targets:

Our triumphant army has started moving victoriously. While we are informing you of this we are sorry to state that some states have started moving and supplying the rebels with weapons, ammunitions, experts, and planes to fight our peaceful citizens who did not commit any [crime] but are defending their honour and freedom. These acts are a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of an independent state thus violating the United Nations charter which prevents any country from interfering into internal affairs of another state. We appeal to you that standing by the side of the truth you will support our delegates whom we have instructed to protest strongly and present our just cause before the General Assembly of the United Nations...¹³

British Support to the Royalists

The British decided to give support to the Royalists because they saw that a YAR allied with the UAR would provide a base for political and military activities aimed at undermining the Saudi regime and challenging the British presence in Aden. For London, the YAR revolution took place at the worst possible time, that is, immediately prior to Aden's accession to the Federation of South Arabia, a project which Britain was promoting to protect its own interests. Nasser's involvement in Yemen was too deep for Britain to ignore: "Her Majesty's government would not be happy to see the Aden colony absorbed into a Yemen [which was] Cairo dominated."¹⁴

London decided to oppose Yemeni nationalism and counter the increasing Nasserite and anti-

colonialist pressures, which were backed by nationalist and Communist movements elsewhere.¹⁵ On 31 October 1962 British Foreign Minister Edward Heath stated that no action had been taken on the issue of recognition of the Republic because of "the doubts we have about the situation in different parts of the Yemen, and about the control of the government over the whole country."¹⁶

This argument reflected London's familiarity with internal Yemeni affairs. It thought the Zeidi¹⁷ warriors, if supported by money and arms, would produce "disastrous" results for Egypt. The British understanding of the situation was that "Yemen differs from all the Middle Eastern countries in the degree of preponderance of religion, conservative xenophobic and warlike Zeidi tribesmen...The Republic and Egyptians will never defeat the Zeidi tribesmen in their mountains. On the other hand, the Zeidi tribesmen might defeat the Republicans and the Egyptians in their towns and strongpoints. They surely can drag the war out at least as long as an Algeria-type war. And if the Egyptians withdraw, the royalist tribesmen will surely win"¹⁸. This British view was reinforced when Jordan and Saudi Arabia assured the UK they would support Imam al-Badr with arms, ammunition and money for as long and as best as they could. Thus both the British¹⁹ and the Saudis, who held talks on the issue in London on Prince Faisal's way home from Washington in October 1962, made the survival of a Republican Yemen dependent upon UAR support.

UAR Protection for the YAR

To ensure the survival of the YAR, the revolutionary leaders were forced to turn to Nasserite

Egypt for military and political aid. Yemeni revolutionary leaders, "who feared intervention from Saudi Arabia and the British, informed Egypt of their plans to gain assurances of its support to ensure the success of their attempt"²⁰. Nasser and the UAR responded to YAR appeals for help "under the defence treaty of 1956."²¹ On 1 October the YAR Deputy Prime Minister, 'Abdul-Rahman al-Baidani, warned the Saudis against making any attempt to cross into Yemeni territories in support of the deposed rulers, and stated that any such Saudi hostile action might force the YAR to extend the war into the KSA.²² Egyptian armed forces immediately started to arrive in Yemen. The first Egyptian ship, *Sudan*, reached the Yemeni port of Hudaidah on 5 October 1962 carrying arms as well as 100 officers and soldiers²³. By the end of the third week of October the number of the UAR forces exceeded one thousand. Although this initial military action was limited, it reflected a high degree of UAR political support to act as a deterrent against Saudi aggression.²⁴ When the counter-revolution started its attacks from outside Yemen's borders, Egypt announced its readiness to defend the YAR from any external offensive acts of aggression and more Egyptian armed forces were despatched to Yemen. By mid-October "Nasser was replacing UAR advisors with Soviet-equipped combat troops,"²⁵ which exceeded twenty thousand. Nasser defended this intervention on the grounds that the Republican government was being threatened with subversion from outside - specifically Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the British. Egypt, which at that time was "embattled by world imperialism and threatened by Saudi Arabia"²⁶ considered the revolution in Sana'a to be "a blow at these forces,"²⁷ and, therefore, lost no time in taking advantage of the opportunity offered. During the following month hundreds of well-armed Egyptian forces, less well-trained and equipped Yemeni fighters, and the tribes of

Sheikh al-Ahmar²⁸ become engaged in a battle against the Royalist tribes in some northern and western areas of the country; "this was the start of a bitter Royalist-Republican civil war which ebbed and flowed across the northern and eastern parts of the country."²⁹

UAR-KSA Encounter by Proxy

The arrival of Egyptian forces in Yemen made Egyptian-Saudi rivalry, which had begun after the 1952 revolution in Egypt, reach a climax. Parker T. Hart, the US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Minister to the Yemen at the time of the birth of the YAR said that the Saudi government was very alarmed and saw the arrival of UAR forces in the Yemen as a threat to its integrity, "because for the first time in a hundred and thirty years or more Egyptian forces were deployed in the peninsula. They have a feeling about the peninsula, similar to our Monroe Doctrine feeling about Latin America, that outside forces don't belong there...a foreign force coming in (and particularly under these circumstances) to support a republican revolution, with loud propaganda over every medium, Cairo and Sana'a calling for the overthrow of the ^{Saudi clan} and the overthrow of the monarchy in Saudi Arabia, it couldn't be regarded as other than a hostile act toward Saudi Arabia."³⁰

What the US Minister did not mention was that the Saudi monarchy was afraid that the Yemenis, if they gained the necessary strength and opportunity, would want to liberate their three northern provinces, which King 'Abdul-'Aziz had annexed by force following the Yemeni-Saudi war in 1934. More important was the fact that a revolutionary and Republican Yemen at Riyadh's doors was a serious threat to the rule of the Saudi royal family and the

Sheikhdoms of the area. The YAR revolution and the advent of UAR forces on KSA territory shook the political foundations of the Saudi regime. Edgar O'Ballance observed that at the time the Saudi military appeared to be more loyal to Nasser than to the Saudi family, and that from 2-8 October 1962, "four Saudi aircraft crews defected to Egypt with planeloads of arms intended for the royalists."³¹ Some days later many high-ranking Saudi officials signed a memorandum urging the King to recognize the YAR.³² A few days after that, it was reported in Cairo that four Saudi Princes, Talal, Badr, Fawaz 'Abdul-'Aziz, and Sa'd bin Fahd, had arrived in the UAR capital and formed the Committee of Free Princes calling for reform and change in their country. To save the Saudi monarchy from collapse, the Saudi family quickly appointed Crown Prince Faisal as the Prime Minister; he agreed to form his government without any interference from the King.³³

As the Yemeni revolution brought Cairo's presence closer to the KSA and other Sheikhdoms of the Peninsula, US anxiety was aroused concerning its interests and strategic position in the area. Washington was particularly fearful lest the Saudi-Egyptian encounter expand outside the Yemeni stage,³⁴ perceiving the situation in the context of "this business of the so-called progressive Arabs versus the reactionaries with a strong socialist overture."³⁵ In an attempt to interdict the flow of money and military surplus to the royalists in the British colony of Aden and in Saudi Arabia, President Nasser ordered air strikes against towns which were serving as Saudi points of supply for the royalists as from 3 November.

US Response

The US response to the YAR revolution was cautious. Initially there were contradictory statements made by senior US officials and Ambassadors within the Kennedy administration. Chester L. Cooper, a Liaison Officer to the National Security Staff with the CIA from 1961-1962, claimed that there was a tendency on the part of some in the White House to come out very strongly and very quickly in support of recognising the revolutionary Yemen regime. Others, however, felt that "either it wasn't necessary to do it quite that fast, or maybe we didn't need to do it at all."³⁶ Parker T. Hart maintained that the question of recognition of the new YAR government "did not arise immediately" in Washington, because "the biggest concern was, what has happened to our own people³⁷ and what are the status of those people?" He added: "Our earliest report made it quite clear that there should be no recognition until they treated us like a legation, gave us our security of communication, pouch, telegraph, protection to our personnel, diplomatic privilege. They were not giving them at first. They were trying to pressure us in to recognize as the price of giving us these. We said, 'Nothing doing. You will give us those privileges, and then we'll think about it.' and we held firm on that."³⁸

On the same point Robert Stookey, the US Charge d'Affaires in Ta'iz³⁹ in 1962, has stated that since there were about a hundred American engineers and technicians building the road from Mocha to Ta'iz and Sana'a, his concern was the security of this American community for which he was responsible. He also revealed the real source of his worry over the American community:

Since we were foreigners allied with the British, we were not on good terms with the new revolutionary government. There were no violent incidents but sort of incidents where Americans felt under threat from some force of some sort. So that was a preoccupation of mind throughout this uncertain period before our government decided to set up normal relations.⁴⁰

Stookey went on to say:

There was one period, quite early after the revolution, when I was not sure of the new government's ability and willingness to ensure the safety of our American community and I spent hours making out evacuation orders for the Americans all over the country, signing these orders if I decided that the time had come to order these people to leave. Then, I arranged for an American destroyer, a warship, to be just beyond the horizon of Mocha, and the general plan was that we would all pile into jeeps and rush to Hudaidah for evacuation hoping that no organized force would stop us. Of course I didn't reveal the details of the plan to the leaders in Sana'a, but made it clear that I was concerned about the safety of Americans who would leave if they proved to be in danger.⁴¹

It was evident at the time that although American interests were not directly threatened by the civil war in Yemen, Washington was concerned about the possibility of a more overt confrontation between the UAR and Saudi Arabia. The US "had a clear interest in the maintenance of a pro-American regime in Saudi Arabia."⁴² Confirming this, the US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Parker T. Hart formerly Minister to the Yemen in 1962, stated:

When the Egyptians came in with these troops and began supporting a Republic that was stridently anti-Saudi, frequently anti-American in its pronouncements, anti-British, calling for the expulsion of them from Aden, really beating the war drum, it began to be a changed picture.⁴³

US concern was related to the presence of UAR troops in this strategically important part of the world. A study based largely on the official record and the personal papers of Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and supported by interviews with Ambassador Parker T. Hart, John S. Badeau, Ambassador to the UAR and the YAR after the Yemeni revolution, and

Ambassador Talcott W. Seelye, then in charge of the Arabian peninsula affairs in the State Department and who later assisted Bunker during the mediation mission of 1963, states:

While it was recognized that the presence of the UAR troops in the strategic southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula was not a direct extension of Soviet power to that area, it was felt, nevertheless, that given the close relationship between the U.A.R. and the USSR, it offered dangerous opportunities to the Soviets.⁴⁴

Ignoring the obvious need of the Yemeni people to overthrow the repressive Imamate, Washington judged the revolution only by its effect on its own economic, political and strategic interests in the area and the YAR's connections with the UAR and the USSR.

Ambassador Hart stated that the

Hamid al-Din family had thoroughly discredited itself in the Yemen. And God knows, they had. That was a regime which belonged to the Middle Ages, and there was no basis for supporting the return of that regime. Of course the Saudis claimed al-Badr would have been different. Well, maybe he would, but he had done very little before as Crown Prince to recommend him.⁴⁵

The US was not specifically interested in the YAR as it made little difference to their position whether Yemen was ruled by a monarchical government or a republican one. Robert Stookey noted that "the revolution of 1962 and the ensuing civil war greatly stimulated interest in Yemen's politics,"⁴⁶ especially since the political outlook of the government and people of Yemen "has important implications for the security and prosperity of the region."⁴⁷ He concluded that "the anxiety to promote stability in the region, rather than any direct stake in the country itself, has shaped US policies toward Yemen."⁴⁸

The encounter between Saudi-Arabia and the UAR was, in effect, one between US and Soviet interests. It happened when Washington was involved in the Cuban missile crisis, and in the

Vietnam war, and when the Cold War was continuing at a peak. The US considered the revolution in Sana'a an integral part of the Cold War and it became "important that South Arabia...should be neither occupied nor dominated by unfriendly countries"⁴⁹. This assessment of the YAR revolution by the US is revealed in a then secret memorandum to President Kennedy from his advisor for national security, R. W. Komer, dated October 4, 1962:

...the Yemen revolt has brought to a boil all Saudi fears of Nasserism (the house of Saud well knows it might be next). Faisal wants US backing for the UK/Saudi counter-effort in Yemen... Our current Yemen policy is one of non-involvement. We can't do much anyway, and the Imam's regime was one of the most backward. However, Nasser clearly backed the revolt and his radio has been telling Saud he'll be next. So the Saudis are compelled to react... Here the important thing is to reassure Faisal as to our firm backing of the House of Saud...our policy toward Nasser is designed (a) to turn him inward; (b) to increase US leverage on him so that we can encourage policies less-antagonistic to our interests and those of our friends. We do not think US aid (mostly food) is keeping Nasser in power. If we didn't help, he'd turn more to the Soviets, which would be emphatically against [the] US... We think the Saudis themselves must press forward with modernization and development. Deliberate, controlled internal reform is the best antidote to Nasserism...⁵⁰

As this memorandum reveals, the issue of the revolution in Yemen was complex for the American administration: "the first thing to realise about the Yemen war, is that, like so many crises in the Middle East, it came with practically no warning."⁵¹ This is why it took the policy-makers in Washington as long as eighty four days, which was "a quite long time"⁵², to study the novel situation of the first Republic in the Arabian Peninsula and to decide what official stance to take.⁵³

As the Yemeni revolution generated new tension between important Arab states, especially the UAR and the KSA, Washington was in a dilemma over whether to withhold recognition

of the new government, as the British had been arguing, or to recognize the Republic as a means of curtailing the growth of Egyptian and Soviet influence over it. Of importance to note is that at that time US diplomatic policy was to moderate President Nasser's anti-American feelings. The dilemma was heightened because the Kennedy administration had been trying to improve relations with Nasser in order to draw the UAR out of the Soviet embrace. To this end, Kennedy appointed a Middle Eastern expert and director of the American University in Alexandria, John S. Badeau, as the American Ambassador to Cairo.⁵⁴ Badeau revealed that in respect to President Kennedy's wish to mend fences with the Egyptian President, who was seen as a "progressive, non-Communist local counterweight to Soviet expansion,"⁵⁵ he personally prepared the ground for Nasser's visit to the USA. The Yemeni revolution and subsequent UAR involvement meant that US efforts to win Nasser's understanding of the West were spoiled.⁵⁶

The Kennedy administration was interested in a stable situation in the Gulf-Arabian Peninsula region and in forestalling any future revolutionary wave which might supplant the ruling families in the region and protect continued access to cheap oil.⁵⁷ American concern was to prevent the war in Yemen from spreading to Saudi Arabia, counter a stronger Communist presence in the area, maintain stability in Jordan against the spread of a pro-Nasser element, and to protect Israel. Thus, the US saw that the new "situation in Yemen threatened the uneasy equilibrium between radical and monarchical forces in the area", and that if this collapsed, "it could have led to either a move for union, or domination by the UAR", which would create a serious threat to Israel and Western oil interests in the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁸

As a result, the US decided to "stoop to conquer" by trying to remain on speaking terms with all parties involved in the dispute. However, the revolution and counter-revolution and the KSA-UAR-UK-USSR involvement created a "policy problem" in Washington: the Kennedy administration had to determine how to get the Egyptians to agree "to pull their troops out in return for the Saudis stopping aid to the royalists" as well as to get President al-Sallal "to quiet down his imprecations and his threats against the Saudis in return for recognition by us of the regime."⁵⁹

Initial YAR-US Contacts

When the Yemen Arab Republic was proclaimed on 26 September 1962, the leader of the revolution, 'Abd Allah al-Sallal, sent President Kennedy a telegram that informed Washington of what had happened in Sana'a. Due to the poor communications system in the Yemeni capital it was not cabled from Sana'a until the 30th of the month. The Sallal message, which was in Arabic but badly transcribed into a Roman script read as follows:

BAAEWNAH TAEI KED NAFZNA RAGHAMT ALSHAB FI TAGHIR
ALAWDAEA ALBALIAH FI ALIMEN WKMNA BTATER NDAM ALHKM
ALBAEID ALI NDM JAMHWRI DAIMW KRATI AESSRAY IHAFAD ALI
KRAMATH ALANSAN WHKAWKAH WALI ALAEDLAH WALAJTMAEIAH
WALMSAWAH BIN ABNA ALSHAIB WAEI NA KIAM ALJAMHWRAIH
ALAERABIAH ALIMNIAH ABTDAN MN IWMNA 27 RBAIAA ALTANI SAH 82
ALMWFAK 26 SEPTEMBER SANAH 62 WKDFAWDNA ALMAMTHLOUN
ALHKIWIN LLSHAB BAN TSAR ALAMWR WNSATLM ZMAM ALHKAM
RITHMA ITM WDAA ALJAZAT ALJDID MWADAA ALTANAFIZ NRJWA SIAD
TKOUN TAKHZWA ALMAN BHDA BANNA SNHFAD ALI JAMIAASSLAT
ALSADAKAH WALTAAEAWN ALKAEIMAH BIN SHABNA WDWALTNA MAA
ALRAGABAH FI ZIADAT TWATHAIK ALSSLAE ALWDAHAAH WTKBLWA
AKHLASS TAMNIATNA WAWAMR ALHTRAM.⁶⁰

Ungarbled, Sallal's cable stated that the revolutionaries in Sana'a had ousted the Imamate in response to the wishes of the Yemeni people and proclaimed a Republic on the same day, and that al-Sallal had been chosen to head the revolutionary cabinet until matters become settled; it was hoped that the US President would be helpful to the Yemenis.

The first mission of the YAR Foreign Minister, Muhsin al-'Aini, who was appointed to this post while in Baghdad, was to meet President Jamal 'Abdul-Nasser of the UAR and to contact the UK, Italian and US Ambassadors in Cairo. He met the US Ambassador on 1 October 1962. According to Ambassador Badeau, al-'Aini stated that past attempts by tribal sheikhs and military leaders to depose the Imamate had failed because they were based on factional support. The revolution, therefore, had been delayed until widespread supra-factional support was assured. He informed Badeau that the new Republic was expecting "some trouble" from the border "tribes with Saudi connections", but expressed his belief that the YAR was strong enough to handle the problem. The YAR Foreign Minister also stated that the objective of the new government was to bring about progress in Yemen; it did not intend to "dabble" in foreign affairs, but hoped to maintain and continue friendly relations with Western countries.⁶¹ Al-'Aini specifically requested that the interview be reported to Washington.⁶² Twenty seven years later, al'Aini told this author:

I explained to him [Badeau] the story of the revolution, its motives, its objectives and our hopes in Yemen that the superpowers would welcome the change and hence recognise the republican regime. Ambassador John Badeau's reply was "we are looking into the matter and we will inform our government of your wish." ⁶³

The American Ambassador's response was that Washington's position would be one of mediation, but he stressed US concern for stability in the Gulf region and to provide

continued support for the British presence in Aden.⁶⁴ This early contact with the US administration by the al-Sallal telegram and the YAR foreign Minister's meeting with US Ambassador Badeau, preceded meetings between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the US Charge d'Affaires in Sana'a. They all indicated the naive hope that the republican United States would be of assistance to the republican Yemen in achieving its objectives for the welfare of the Yemeni people and for the mutual wellbeing of the two nations. But while waiting for a positive reply from the Kennedy administration to the Sallal appeal, the Yemeni leaders were disappointed to learn that it was an American citizen who first revealed that Imam al-Badr was still alive. Some of the revolutionary leaders considered this a bad sign despite the fact that this American who went by the name of 'Abdul-Rahman Conde⁶⁵ was no more than an American adventurer and a friend of the Yemeni Royal family, especially Imam al-Badr.

According to the Vice-President of the Revolutionary Commanding Council, Dr al-Baidani, the Yemeni leadership was aware that the Cuban crisis affected the superpowers response to the Yemeni revolution and that the US might not favour a new involvement on another front against the Soviets for the sake of al-Badr, as long as the YAR demonstrated good intentions towards American interests in the area, and an awareness that Moscow was "interested in seizing a great opportunity to counter imperialism in a very sensitive arena such as the oil-rich Arabian peninsula."⁶⁶ To avoid an East-West crisis or encounter in the Yemen, the Yemeni leadership decided to make contact with the US. Thus, in the first few days of the YAR revolution, the new government rejected Egyptian advice to close the US and UK

diplomatic legations. The Yemeni Vice-President stated:

I received advice from Jamal Abdul-Nasser to close the American and British missions because their governments did not recognise the Yemeni Republican regime, but I apologised, arguing that their existence in our country during war time is more important than in peace and that through these missions we can convey to Washington and London our intentions directly... President Nasser asked me if I had ever heard of a similar event in the history of international relations, but I replied: why can't this policy, if it succeeds, be a contribution to international law by the Yemeni revolutionists?⁶⁷

In Sana'a, the Yemeni government conveyed the same message to the US administration in Washington through the US Charge d'Affaires, Robert Stookey. Recalling the content of these contacts, Stookey told this author that the YAR leaders were urging his government to recognise the YAR:

This took a long time, many trips by myself from Ta'iz where the legation was to Sana'a where the government headquarters was, before some formula was worked out that was formally satisfactory to us so that we could go ahead and recognise. Our government was concerned about the attitude of the government of North Yemen towards Saudi Arabia, what course had to be taken because the Egyptians were really in substantial control of the Yemeni government, because the Egyptians were not at all friendly with Saudi Arabia.⁶⁸

Stookey recalled these contacts took place very soon after the declaration of the Republic: "immediately after they took control of Sana'a, very early, within the first week," but that "it took a quite long time for formal relations to be established between the US and the new government", because "the principal preoccupations in Washington were the positions and status of the British in the Arabian peninsula at least generally, as well as the security of Saudi Arabia. And one principle issue was the claim of North Yemen to sovereignty over all South Yemen."⁶⁹

According to Stookey direct contacts between the YAR government and Washington were

difficult at the time:

This...involved my travelling between Ta'iz and Sana'a every time to exchange telegrams between me and Washington on the subject of recognition. It was not a very comfortable situation for me because I had no faith in the ancient Yemeni planes that flew between Ta'iz and Sana'a, so I travelled back and forth by jeep every time and I was always received by the new leaders very cordially and the negotiations were very pleasant on both sides but it was an impediment to full cooperation on both sides.⁷⁰

Stookey also mentioned that telegrams were the only way to contact Washington:

There was no aeroplane service into Yemen at that time. The department was worried, of course, about the safety of my legation and the American community and they kept urging me to report every day by telegram. But at that time, telegrams sent from Yemen were the most expensive in the world. A Two or three page telegram cost \$1500 for just one message, and of course I was not paying by a cheque or paper money. Only the Maria Theresa dollars. A bag of one thousand weighed 65 lbs. A three or four page telegram cost two thousand of these dollars.⁷¹

He also mentioned that his important meetings were normally with President al-Sallal himself

but there was a huge lack of privacy:

I usually saw al-Sallal and my conversations with him took place either in his headquarters which was swarming with Egyptian advisors or at the hotel at night where we could talk with very few other people around. And it was very apparent at me, how resentful al-Sallal was at the close control the Egyptians were attempting to maintain over him. At the end of one of our conversations in Sana'a, he accompanied me from his office to the front door, and one of the Egyptians was designated to interpret... Of course I was talking with him in Arabic and during our walk down to the door the Egyptian soldier attempted to interpret some remarks, so al-Sallal said to him "yetkallam 'Arabi ahsan minnak" (He speaks Arabic better than you do).

Although Stookey reported that apart from some border areas, the YAR was in full control of the country, he urged for recognition.⁷² Some officials of the US Department of State, in Washington, however questioned his advice pointing out that all communication was through the Yemeni-controlled cable system and therefore could not be trusted and that the British government was insisting on the strength of tribal support of the Imam's opposition

to the Republic.⁷³ Despite this situation the Yemeni government pursued its contacts with the Kennedy administration. In October 1962 the YAR government sent two letters to President Kennedy to attempt to persuade him to recognise the new Republic. Several meetings⁷⁴ between the Yemeni Vice President and Foreign Minister Dr al-Baidani, and Robert Stookey were held in Sana'a to promote the Republican argument for recognition.

While diplomatic efforts seemed likely to succeed, Washington used economic aid to induce apparently hostile regimes to create situations more favourable to US interests. To this end, on 18 October Stookey informed the YAR Foreign Ministry of Kennedy's decision to present Sana'a with 20 thousand tons of wheat.⁷⁵ Stookey told an interesting story about US present of wheat to the YAR:

The food supply was in a very crucial state at this particular time. Our bags [of wheat] arrived one month earlier than the Chinese food supply which arrived in one of their bulk ships. Yemeni officials in the port of Hudaidah filled our bags all stamped with the US AID emblem with the Chinese flour, so a lot of the Yemeni people thought it was still American wheat. The Chinese were a little put out by this. This was symbolic. It was ironical rather than amusing for me.⁷⁶

There was another indication of the improvement in the relations between Washington and Sana'a. During a meeting held on 18 November 1962, Stookey delivered to the Yemeni Foreign Minister a list of 17 Yemeni Communists who were holding key posts in the Republican government, and requested their removal. Stookey stated the list was delivered because "we see Communists behind every bush and so forth."⁷⁷ The Yemeni Minister assured the American diplomat that there were more than 43 Communists in different positions in the government, but that the government was not under their influence.⁷⁸

Muhsin al-'Aini⁷⁹, by now the YAR Ambassador to the United Nations, was in New York to urge friendly nations to recognize both his government and the Republican delegation in the UN and found the official US attitude less forthcoming. He travelled to Washington to try to arrange talks with Talcott Seelye, the director of the Arabian Peninsula affairs in the US department. Al-'Aini told this author that it had not been easy to contact the Department of State, and that when he finally succeeded in meeting Seelye he was only granted informal talks (in a restaurant which stood where the Watergate complex now stands) "because they wouldn't meet officially before recognition." He added:

I used the opportunity of being in the UN to take this initiative. At this unofficial meeting, I tried to convince him, arguing "If the US wants stability in the Arabian Peninsula, it would be achieved by recognising the Yemen Arab Republic and that Saudi Arabia and Great Britain should do the same thing. That's the only way avoid the escalation of struggle, dispute and the Egyptian presence." I also told Seelye "If the objection is to the Egyptian troops in the Yemen, which is surrounded by enemies from south and north, it is only natural to expect the YAR to do anything to protect itself and seek help from any source". That's why the Americans found that by withholding recognition Sana'a was forced to seek the help of another power.⁸⁰

As understanding of the Yemeni people's cause slowly developed in Washington, the talks between al-'Aini and Seelye concentrated on the conditions of US recognition for the YAR.

Seelye told this author:

I had informal talks with al-Aini about the conditions for recognition in November which were later outlined in the statement, and again in December when Ahmad Zabarah, the head of Yemen Legation in Washington, refused to give up the legation offices. We tried to disengage but the Saudis were not happy because they thought we were helping Nasser.⁸¹

In addition to the effective diplomatic efforts in Sana'a, Washington and Cairo, the Yemeni official statements were studied carefully by American policy makers, particularly the threat

by President 'Abd Allah Al-Sallal in November that "our massed forces have orders from the Yemeni Supreme Command Council to march into Djizan and Nadjran to regain Yemen's stolen territory"⁸² and his declaration a week later concerning the foundation of an Arabian Peninsula Republic.⁸³

The UAR aerial bombardment which began on 3 November, in retaliation for the arms and money that the Saudis gave to a number of northern tribes which had entered the conflict when al-Badr returned to Yemen, had caused acute intensification of the tension between Cairo and Riyadh.⁸⁴ By 6 November, when Faisal broke diplomatic relations with Cairo, the situation had reached the brink of open war. This immediately caused concern in Washington. In reaction to these developments the US administration decided to bolster Saudi Arabia which was threatened by internal and external forces stemming from the Yemen conflict. On 14 November Washington ordered some of its jet fighters to make a display of air power over the Saudi cities of Jiddah and Riyadh.⁸⁵ The military implications were clear to both the UAR and the YAR. At the same time, while the US declared its commitment to protect the Saudi Kingdom by all means, it tried to solve the problem by contacting the other parties of the conflict, in order to try to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis. It also continued to implement its diplomatic policy.

On 17 November, President Kennedy wrote to President Nasser proposing a peace plan and sent identical letters to King Hussein, Prince Faisal and President 'Abd Allah Al-Sallal. Robert Stookey, the US Charge d'Affaires in Ta'iz, delivered Kennedy's proposal on 18

November to the YAR Foreign Minister. The main points of the proposal were as follows:

1. Saudi and Jordanian troops concentrated on the Yemeni border would "gradually but promptly" withdraw;
2. The UAR troops would "gradually but promptly" withdraw from Yemen;
3. Some neutral body or third party would be brought in to guarantee that these measures were carried out - the United Nations might play a role;
4. The YAR would recognize its international obligations and would negotiate with other elements in Yemen to stabilize the situation in the country; and
5. The United States would recognize the YAR government and extend aid to it.⁸⁶

Kennedy also proposed direct contact between all the parties concerned, and a possible observation or supervision of the disengagement process by the United Nations.⁸⁷

The Yemeni Royalists whom President Kennedy had neglected protested against this US proposal. Al-Badr wrote to Kennedy "I am surprised to learn that you have sent letters concerning my country to the governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and also to the rebel Colonel Sallal, without consulting or even informing me or my government which is the legitimate government of the Kingdom of Yemen as recognized by the United States and eighty other nations. I must protest with utmost vigour against this unprecedented treatment of a friendly sovereign state, and can only suppose that you have been misinformed about the true situation in my country... I ask you as a matter of urgency to send a mission of enquiry to the Yemen to ascertain for yourself the true facts as outlined above, before any irrevocable decision is taken by your government which might prejudice the future of my country."⁸⁸ In London **The Guardian** quoted US sources as saying that as President Kennedy had not written to the Imam, "presumably he would have to accept exile, or battle on in the mountains without the support of foreign money or arms."⁸⁹

In Washington there was fear that President Nasser might "have plunged into an all-out war against Saudi Arabia and presented the White House with a painful dilemma, whether to turn against Nasser or to betray the United States commitments to Riyadh."⁹⁰ The essential American concerns in Yemen were outlined by the US Secretary of State, Philip Talbot, in a letter to Senator Hickenlooper:

- 1) To keep the Yemeni conflict and its repercussions from spreading and endangering vital US and Western interests in the Middle East, outside of Yemen, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.
- 2) To prevent the development by the Soviet bloc of a predominant position in Yemen.
- 3) To encourage the prospects for a relatively stable and independent Yemen.⁹¹

"Only by recognizing the regime could we play a useful role in preventing an escalation of the Yemen conflict, causing even more foreign interference", Talbot stated.⁹²

The YAR government, which insisted upon a complete halt to every form of hostile activity on the part of Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and the withdrawal of Egyptian troops in stages⁹³, stated that it welcomed the US Administration's offer of mediation, especially if Washington was prepared to use its influence to prevent aggression on the Yemeni northern borders. To encourage a friendly US stance, al-Sallal, emphasised "Yemen has no aggressive intentions against the Arab people in Hidjaz."⁹⁴ It is noteworthy, however, that al-Sallal used the term 'Hidjaz' rather than the official title of the country, Saudi Arabia.

Because of the UAR bombardments the diplomatic efforts in Cairo, Sana'a and Washington did not succeed in achieving US recognition for the Republic. On 14 December, the YAR

warned that it would close the embassies and diplomatic missions of all countries which had not as yet officially recognised the Republic.⁹⁵ The result was that the US administration decided to act without delay. The American Ambassador in Cairo, John Badeau, met President Nasser to seek his assurances that Yemen would not be used to export revolution to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, nor to harass British positions in South Yemen. On December 16 the American Charge d'Affaires in Sana'a met the Yemeni Foreign Minister to assure him that Washington was going to recognise the Republic.

Nasser accepted the plan but said that clashes were inevitable unless Saudi Arabia abandoned its attempt to invade the Yemen. Nasser also said that King Saud "imagined the revolution in Yemen to be a battle between the monarchical and republican regimes," and "with that erroneous impression, he launched himself with all his power and resources into an attempt to invade Yemen." This was when the UAR had placed "some of our forces" at the YAR's disposal, "to help it face the fierce assaults."⁹⁶

The Saudis accepted the US peace plan only because they did not wish to appear to be swimming against the tide. This became quickly evident, because only two days before American recognition, reports reached Nasser of KSA preparations for further attacks on the YAR. In a letter dated 17 December to Field Marshall 'Abdul-Hakim 'Amer, the Commander of UAR Forces, who was then visiting Sana'a, Nasser stated that a plane loaded with arms and ammunitions had arrived in Nadjran on 16 December from Belgium, that a second would arrive on 28 December while the a third and fourth would arrive on the 30th⁹⁷. On 18

December, one day before the US recognition Nasser wrote:

'Ali Sabri met the American Ambassador at noon and it was agreed that we announce our statement at 11 pm tonight and that the American communique should be issued tomorrow... 'Ali Sabri had informed the American Ambassador of the developments in the Saudi territories near the Yemeni borders, especially in Nadjran, which showed that Saudi Arabia would not commit itself to the Kennedy disengagement plan, because they were still storing arms and ammunitions and pushing in infiltrators and paying money to the royalists. The American answer was that they would use their pressure to ease Saudi support to the Hamid al-Din family. However, after the American recognition.... In my opinion, we ought to re-try to stop the Saudi activity politically.⁹⁸

President Nasser's letter implied that the Saudis never intended to stop their support of the Royalists and that their official acceptance of the plan was "for political expediency only."⁹⁹

The US Minister to Yemen then residing in the KSA stated:

This was cooked up as formula between Washington and Cairo and agreed to, and then I was told to sell it to King Faisal. Well, he was absolutely furious; I've never seen the man so angry in my life. Here we'd been a close friend of Saudi Arabia, and he was handed a fait accompli. He said, "You know what the Egyptians are going to do? They're just not going to withdraw. They'll take advantage of the stopping of aid to the royalists and liquidate the royalists." He said, "I won't agree to it." And he refused to.¹⁰⁰

It was evident that US recognition was part of a deal with Egypt, which agreed to withdraw its forces from Yemen if the Saudis and the Jordanians ceased their aid to the royalists, US recognition was a means to contain both the UAR and the YAR from within. A statement by the US Ambassador in Saudi Arabia concerning the British diplomacy at that time, revealed the true US intentions:

We're not so worried about the East Aden protectorate or heaven knows with the West Aden protectorate. And they would be supporting forces of radical change that they thought would affect adversely their interests in South Arabia. So they never could bring themselves to go along with our formula for disengagement. We tried

very hard to get them aboard....I question their judgement of the problem itself, whether it would have made any difference if they'd recognized the republic or not.¹⁰¹

US Recognition and Implications

As demanded by Washington the Republic declared it would honour Yemen's international obligations, including all treaties concluded by previous governments. The communique which was issued in Sana'a on 18 December 1962 stated:

Since the first day of the Yemeni revolution, we have announced our sincere willingness to concentrate our efforts on improving the life of the Yemeni people and developing friendly relations with all countries. Yet, during the last few weeks we found ourselves obliged to defend our Republic against foreign invasion and against those persons who continued their contact with this foreign invasion and are obtaining its assistance and encouragement. These tragic events might have been due to the fact that some powers did not realise the factual principles of the Yemeni people and their objectives. Again, we announce that the YAR is still committed to this policy, which includes its respect of its international obligations including all the treaties signed by the late government. We are hoping to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours as far as they cherish this hope with us. Also, we call upon all our Yemeni brothers in the neighbouring areas to preserve law and order.¹⁰²

Cairo responded by issuing a communique on the same day that stated:

The UAR confirms and supports the full contents of the communique released by the government of the Yemen Arab Republic. The UAR is proud of having extended full support to the Yemen revolution since the early hours of its outbreak, a support in consonance with existing agreements. Now that the Yemen Arab Republic has firmly established itself as the government of Yemen and inasmuch as we deplore the continuation of the bloodshed, the UAR hereby signifies its willingness to undertake a reciprocal expeditious disengagement and phased removal of its troops from Yemen, as soon as the Saudi and Jordanian forces's support of the Yemen royalists is terminated, whenever the government of the YAR should make such a request. To this we pledge ourselves provided the foregoing conditions are met."¹⁰³

The following day, the US formally recognised the YAR not because of any American

intentions to cooperate with or to aid the new regime, but "as a part of its political and strategic policies toward the events of the Yemeni arena"¹⁰⁴ Chester L. Cooper subsequently revealed there had been mixed feelings in Washington:

On the very day that recognition was to be announced, I had gotten some intelligence to the effect that the fighting was not going along as well for the revolutionaries as we had thus far been led to believe. And I made a fairly strong pitch to at least postpone the announcement of our recognition of the revolutionary regime at least for a couple of weeks until we could assess the significance of some of the stuff that was coming in that indicated that for one reason or another-- either because we didn't really have a good feel for the situation up to then or because there had been significant changes in the capabilities of the loyalists-- the royalists-- that might indicate that it wasn't a cut and dried affair that would be over in a month or so. Unfortunately we had gone pretty for down the line by them. It was one of these unfinished problems. I got this stuff in time for the 9 o'clock staff meeting, and the recognition was to be announced at noon. And I just wasn't able to turn this thing off, or turn it around. And I am sorry I wasn't. As it turned out, two or three years later the thing was still going on unresolved.¹⁰⁵

However, Washington recognised the YAR on condition that the latter honour its international obligations including the treaties with the US, the UK and the KSA and that Egypt withdraw its forces as soon as external support to the royalists ceased. The US Department of State issued the following statement:

In view of confusing and contradictory statements which have cast doubt upon the intentions of the new regime in Yemen, the United States government welcomes the reaffirmation by the Yemen Arab Republic government of its intention to honour its international obligations, of its desire for normalization and establishment of friendly relations with its neighbours, and its intention to concentrate on internal affairs to raise the living standards of the Yemeni people. The United States is also gratified by the statesmanlike appeal of the Yemen Arab Republic to the Yemenis in adjacent areas to be law-abiding citizens and notes its undertaking to honour all treaties concluded by previous governments. This, of course, includes the Treaty of Sana'a concluded with the British government in 1934, which provides reciprocal guarantees that neither party should intervene in the affairs of the other across the existing international frontier dividing the Yemen from territory under British protection.

Further, the United States government welcomes the declaration of the United Arab Republic, signifying its willingness to undertake a reciprocal disengagement and expeditious phased removal of troops from Yemen as external forces engaged in support of the Yemen Republicans are removed from the frontier, and as external support of the Royalists is stopped. In believing that these declarations provide a basis for terminating the conflict over Yemen and in expressing the hope that all parties involved in the conflict will cooperate to the end that the Yemeni people themselves be permitted to decide their own future, the United States has today decided to recognize the government of the Yemen Arab Republic, and to extend to that government its best wishes for success and prosperity. The United States has instructed its Charge d'Affaires in Yemen to confirm this decision in writing to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Yemen Arab Republic¹⁰⁶.

Washington observed that most of the Arab and Communist countries, including China, recognised the Republic very quickly and that the Soviet Union had gained a considerable foothold in the area through the Yemeni revolution. The US could not neglect its allies in the area who were supporting the counter-revolution but the Kennedy administration was anxious to change world opinion about its associations with reactionary regimes for the sake of its interests.¹⁰⁷ By recognising the YAR the US adopted a policy that would enable it to participate in shaping the future of the new Republic.

Dana Adams Schmidt, the author of **Yemen: The Unknown War** argues that the 26 September revolution took place at "a time when the 'new frontiersmen' were anxious to escape from the stigma of American association with reactionary, feudalistic and sometimes anachronistic regimes in various parts of the world" and that recognition of the new Republic was probably "an easy way to help restore mobility of American policy in the Middle East and identify the US with progressive and popular forces" since "if the US did not recognise the regime, there would be no major Western presence to offset the activities of the

Communist bloc."¹⁰⁸

Patrick Seale a British reporter in the Middle East stated at the time that the Kennedy administration was trying to associate itself with President Nasser, hoping to win his friendship because of his popularity and progressive reputation in both Asia and Africa. Recognising the YAR therefore was meant to satisfy Nasser and form a kind of association with the nationalist and anti-Communist element in the Arab world. He wrote:

President Nasser has been assigned a prominent role, partly because he has been tough with his local Communists and because he is thought to represent progressive, reformist trends which in the long run are the best defense against Communism, but more particularly because he is considered too important a figure in the Afro-Asian world..."¹⁰⁹

James N. Cortada, the first US Charge d'Affaires in the YAR after US recognition, presented a detailed account on the rationale behind US recognition:

The Soviets, who in the last year of the Imam Ahmad's reign had been lurking in the wings, waiting for an opportunity to develop an effective position of influence, apparently felt that the revolution offered this chance. Accordingly they lent full support to the new Republic--arms, training, and economic assistance. They also swung the satellites under Soviet influence quickly in line in behalf of the republic. Communist Chinese and other Communist regimes in the Far East likewise recognised the republic quickly, and lent at least moral support, and later Communist China contributed food and other commodities. With the exception of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which were monarchies, and which continued to recognize the fallen Imamate as the legitimate government of Yemen, the other Arab states recognized the republic, soon after the coup...since West Germany, Italy had also recognized the republic, the US found other non-Communist powers also represented in Yemen and aware of the danger of the security of the peninsula which the crisis suggested. ¹¹⁰

Thus US policy after the Yemeni revolution was to prevent the Yemeni conflict from

spreading outside the country and endangering vital US and Western bloc interests in the Peninsula, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and to prevent the Soviet Union from taking a strong position in the region.¹¹¹

Stookey, emphasising that the Saudi Monarchy was "under no threat, no matter how shaky some people imagine it to be," commented that Washington chose to mediate because of "the Communist element, the British factor and the general impulse to be helpful to less fortunate peoples." He elaborated "we didn't want to see the British kicked out of South Yemen at that time, even though the British were having second thoughts about their position in east of Suez generally, we still wanted to encourage them to stay on to defend Western interests in that part of the world."¹¹² He added:

By recognizing the new regime and conducting normal relations with it we had a better chance of furthering our own interests... as well as the British position. We could influence the new YAR government to maintain decent relations with the British across the border in South Yemen. Normal relations would make it possible for any official to plead their case in Yemen. Without recognition we would have no influence at all. The British...refused to follow our example and therefore the YAR forced them to close their diplomatic office.¹¹³

In London **The Guardian** expressed its belief that what made the US recognise the YAR at that particular time were the reports from Yemen that "in the last few weeks Russia has been sending by air equipment to Yemen that can be used in guerrilla warfare, and the amount which has already arrived is three times greater than the supplies sent by Egypt."¹¹⁴

Cortada also reasoned that "In view of the United States government objective of peace in

the Middle East, and policies designed to deny the area to Soviet control, it became apparent that if American influence was to be exerted on behalf of peace, it was important for the United States to remain on talking terms with all parties to the dispute."¹¹⁵ He concluded:

An alternative to the recognition policy would have been continued support for the Royalist regime, the United States thus becoming a direct partisan in the conflict, with unforeseeable consequences in view of the danger of an armed conflict between the Saudis and the Egyptians. The United States could also have backed away from the situation entirely and allowed events to develop without an American attempt to influence their course. The latter decision would, in effect, have been a signal to the Soviets that no obstacle was to be placed before them. Since a basic American consideration in the Middle East is to help keep the area free of Soviet domination, it would have been unrealistic, in the light of this objective, to remain aloof from trying to help solve the conflict..When the United States recognized the Republic, it had become quite evident that the United Arab Republic had the capability of maintaining itself indefinitely in Yemen.¹¹⁶

Another reason for recognition, according to Cortada, was that "tensions were developing in Saudi Arabia, in whose welfare the United States had considerable interest." He pointed out that any KSA involvement in the conflict in support of the royalists, coupled with the general effects in Saudi Arabia of the Yemen revolution, was straining the fabric of stability in the kingdom. He stated:

In fact, there was evidence that even before the United Arab Republic bombed Saudi depots in November 1962, there was considerable opposition within Saudi Arabia to any kind of Saudi military venture. Saudi nationalists opposed the return of the Imamate, and many economy-minded Saudis saw financing of the Imam's counterrevolution as a serious strain on the country's financial resources at a time when economic and social development plans were about to be strongly supported by the government. Furthermore, Saudi army officers, aware of the country's military limitations, were concerned over the possible military confrontation with a relatively powerful United Arab Republic army. It seemed to many Saudis that since Saudi Arabia could not hope to cope militarily with the United Arab Republic, and since royalist forces were quite small and numbers and poorly trained, it was only a question of time before Egyptian aerial attacks would increase and Egyptian subversive attempts to destroy the Saudi Arabia regime would be intensified.¹¹⁷

Thus according to the first US Charge d’Affaires in Sana’a after US recognition, Washington’s policy was a means of countering the UAR and Communist influence from within the YAR itself rather than from outside it.

According to Cortada there were four specific reasons for US recognition: 1) The YAR’s control over most of Yemen; 2) The YAR’s undertaking to adhere to previous international agreements, among which was the Treaty of Sana’a of 1934 between the British and the Imam; 3) The US AID mission which afforded a means for the US to exert its influence in Yemen and which would have had to be withdrawn if recognition had not been forthcoming; 4) The acquisition of a position of influence inside Yemen with a government which had evidenced a desire to work with the Western world, thus enabling the US to work more effectively for a negotiated agreement designed to reduce the tensions flowing from the conflict.¹¹⁸

There were also four narrower US objectives: 1) Development of a situation which would lead to the safeguarding of American private and national interests in the Arabian peninsula; 2) Prevention of the conflict’s escalation; 3) Termination of outside intervention in Yemen; 4) Avoidance of further enhancement of Soviet influence in Yemen.¹¹⁹

International Recognition of the YAR

Many other countries followed the American example and the next day, the 1202nd Plenary Meeting of the Seventeenth Session of the General Assembly discussed the draft resolution

of the Credentials Committee of the UN. The meeting witnessed an acrimonious encounter between the representatives of the UAR and the KSA. The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mahmoud Riyadh, pointed out that the General Assembly had before it the report of the Credentials Committee which unanimously recommended the YAR to be accepted as the only valid Yemeni credentials in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. He expressed his confidence that the General Assembly would uphold the recommendation of the Credentials Committee and that the Secretariat would be instructed to see that the delegation of the YAR occupied its rightful seat in the General Assembly. He asked the members of the General Assembly to support the lawful representation of the YAR in the UN. He went to say that "since the emergence of the new progressive revolution of the people of Yemen against the reactionary feudal regime, the Yemeni people have been subjected to a brutal combination of the reactionary forces in the Arab world," and stated that "all means of slander and terror have been mobilized against the peaceful people of Yemen and its new progressive revolution." To explain the UAR role in the Yemeni arena he stated that the UAR was duty bound to come to the assistance of the Republic to defend its sovereignty and its territorial integrity, and that his government "could not conceivably be indifferent to the reactionary aggressive conspiracies designed to reimpose the monarchy which isolated the Yemeni people from the world and from civilization for generations." Riyadh ended his speech saying:

In the Arab world, as in other parts of the world, there exists a decisive battle between the forces of reaction and the forces of progress, between the will of the people and the reactionary regimes. It is the determined desire of the people to liberate themselves from poverty, injustice and exploitation. The victory of the forces of progress will be an accomplished fact in the foreseeable future. No effort to stifle the people and challenge the power of these new forces will be successful. This is what happened in Yemen, and any honest and objective observer could not but welcome the great achievements of the people of Yemen.¹²⁰

The Saudi representative (in fact, a Palestinian), Djamil Baroudy, opposed the YAR delegation occupying the Yemen seat in the General Assembly. Quoting part of a memorandum which the Saudi delegation had received from its government and which he considered presented the facts as they actually obtained in Yemen, Baroudy argued that "ever since the rebellion of a small group of Yemeni citizens occurred on 27 September 1962 against their lawful government by resorting to armed force for the attainment of their objectives, the Saudi Arabian government has been watching closely and with deep concern the development of events in Yemen- and naturally so, because Yemen is on our frontiers." He stated that "the main interest of the government of Saudi Arabia has been motivated by its genuine desire to safeguard a neighbouring sister state from becoming the victim of evil strife and civil war." He also said that "the interventionist government seems to have forgotten or tried to ignore the fact that no sooner had His Majesty Mohammed al-Badr ascended the throne after the death of his father, the late Imam Ahmad, then he declared a new policy introducing various reforms." The Saudi report denied any Saudi intervention in the Yemen affairs and declared that "there is not a single Saudi soldier on Yemeni territory, nor has the government of Saudi Arabia at any time interfered by the dispatch of troops in the internal affairs of Yemen."¹²¹

The Saudi representative also said that "the persistent foreign interference in the internal affairs of Yemen is likely to worsen the situation and cause the present conflict to spread into other countries" and warned: "Recognition or no recognition, the fight will go on in Yemen because the Yemeni people are fighting in their homeland ..."¹²²

The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution of the Credentials Committee by 73 votes to 4, with 23 abstentions. It was clear from the debate that the US position led to the welcoming of the first YAR delegation to the United Nations. After the vote was taken, Muhsin Ahmad al-'Aini, who headed the Yemeni delegation, mounted the rostrum and expressed "the gratitude of the people of Yemen and their progressive government to all the countries which have recognised us and supported our people's aspirations" and proclaimed that "those countries have thus demonstrated their friendship and their desire to promote the well-being, development and progress of our people and our country"¹²³. Al-'Aini also reaffirmed the YAR's adherence and dedication to the United Nations...¹²⁴

On 26 December 1962 the YAR representative to the UN presented his credentials to the Secretary General of the International Organization, U/Thant. On that important day in the history of the YAR the old flag was replaced by the flag of the Republic in the United Nations.¹²⁵ Al-'Aini, the first YAR Ambassador to the UN and Ambassador to the US considered US recognition and support in the UN to be a very symbolic moment in the history of YAR-US relations:

As you know the annual meeting of the UN starts in the second week of September and the royalist delegation was occupying Yemen's seat as of the 17th of the month. It was necessary, therefore to move quickly to represent the people's Republic. I arrived there to face this problem especially since the Committee of Credentials discusses the papers on the last few days of the session to deliver its report recommendations to the General Assembly in the last session. That's why everything continued to be the same until the end of the session. So we used the time to present our cause outside the hall where we succeeded in getting recognition from many countries. President Ahmad bin Billah of Algeria helped us. And at the end of the session the US who recognised us on the 19th of December helped us to regain the seat of Yemen. There were many Latin American countries who were not for or against recognition, but when the US recognised the Republic they followed its path.

During the last session we took over the Yemen seats. Despite its strong connection with Saudi Arabia, the US stand —
was unforgettable in comparison to France or Britain who recognised us only in 1970.¹²⁶

In conclusion, the chief American concern was the protection of its basic interests by diplomacy and by political and military support to its allies. According to an American source, in reply to the inquiry from Senator Bourke Hickenlooper in a letter of 16 July 1963 as to whether in view of "the growing discredit of the republican government" American recognition should be withdrawn, US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Talbot revealed that Washington had never insisted upon the withdrawal of Egyptian troops once Saudi Arabia had begun to observe the terms of the disengagement agreement, but merely expected the Egyptians to "withdraw in a phased and expeditious fashion." He said that American recognition of the Republican government was based on "its control of the apparatus of government and most of the country, apparent popular support and ability to honour international obligations."¹²⁷ However, such a statement was clearly not a full account of US general thinking, because the US denied recognition to the People's Republic of China for many years while the latter was in total control of its territory.¹²⁸

Notes

1. As confirmed by the then US Ambassador to the UAR, John Badeau in **The Middle East Remembered**, Washington DC, 1983, p. 199.
2. 'Abdul-Wahid al-Zindani, **Arab Politics in the United Nations**, New Delhi, 1977, p.187.
3. The members of the first command council were Colonel Abd-Allah Al-Sallal (President), Colonel Hamud al-Djaifi, Captain 'Abdul-Latif Dei-Allah, Captain Muhammad Kaid Seif, Captain Muhammad al-Makhidhi, Lieutenant Muhammad Mufarrih, Lieutenant 'Ali 'Abdul-Mughni, Major 'Abdullah Djuzaylan (members). **Sana'a Radio**, Thursday, September 27, 1962. All the "Free Officers" agree that their choice as the leader of the revolution was Colonel Hamud al-Djaifi. Due to his hesitation he was replaced by Colonel Al-Sallal who played an essential role in the success of the revolution. According to al-Baidani in his work to be mentioned at the end of this note (p.304), al-Djaifi's stance was a result of a consolation letter on the occasion of the death of Imam Ahmad, which was sent to him from an American Commander of an American warship in the Red Sea, and which he interpreted as a threat against any attempt of revolution. On Sunday 30 September, the following names were added to the Revolutionary Commanding Council: Dr 'Abdul-Rahman al-Baidani (Vice President), Kadi 'Abdul-Rahman al-Iryani, 'Abdul-Ghani Mutahhar, Sheikh 'Abdul-Kawi Hamim, Lieutenant Sa'd al-Ashwal, Kadi 'Abdul-Salam Sabrah, Lieutenant Colonel Hassan al-'Amri, Muhammad Mahyoub Thabit, 'Ali Muhammad Sa'id and Pilot 'Abdul-Rahim 'Abdallah. See 'Abdul-Rahman Al-Baidani, **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah wa Thawrat al-Yaman**, Cairo, 1984, pp. 318 and 321. Fred Halliday is one of those who have refused to consider the events of 26 September 1962 in Sana'a a coup d'etat. He argued "September 1962 can be called a revolution. It was the YAR that introduced capitalism into North Yemen- opening it to the world market and unleashing the domestic bourgeoisie - and it destroyed the political rulers who had governed North Yemen up to that time". See **Arabia Without Sultans: A Survey of Political Instability in the Arab World**, New York, 1975, p. 115.
4. An extract from the YAR's **National Charter**, translated by Suheil Badi Bushrui, Sana'a, 1984.
5. **Yemen, the Search for Modern State**, p. 68.
6. The three officers' attempt took place on Sunday March 26, 1961. One of them was suffering from a serious disease. When the Imam refused to send him abroad for treatment, Muhammad 'Abd-Allah al-'Ulufi decided to put an end to the life of the Imam to prove to the Yemeni tribesmen and peasants that the King was a human being not a representative of God on earth as many used to believe. In the early hours of the attempt date the three officers met in the house of a member of the Free Yemeni Party, agricultural engineer Ali Muhammad Abdoh, Centre of Yemeni Research and Studies, **Thawrat 26 September: Dirasat wa-Shihadat li al-Tarikh**,

Volume 1, Sana'a, 1986, pp. 54-55.

7. Sana'a Radio, **Thawrat al-Yaman 1948-1968**, p. 132.

8. According to Zeidism in Islam the candidates for the Imamship should fulfil 14 conditions or requirements: they are to be male, freeborn, taxpayers, vigorous in mind, sound in all senses, perfect in their limbs, just, pious, generous, endowed with administrative ability, 'Alawi (that is descended from Ahl-al-Bayt or the Prophet Muhammad), Fatimi (designed to eliminate members of Ismaili sects from candidacy), brave (able to restore his rule by his sword if necessary), Learned (able to interpret the Koran and create new laws if necessary). Although the best candidate for the post, 'Ali Al-Wazir, being blind in one eye, failed the Zeidi conditions. See Muhammad An'am Ghalib, **Nidham al-Hukm wa al-Takhalluf al-Iktisadi fi al-Yaman**, Cairo, 1962, p. 75; **Takwin al-Yaman al-Hadith**, pp.25-28; Amin al-Rayhani, **Muluk al-'Arab**, Beirut, 1951, p. 141; **Modern Yemen 1918-1966**, p.31.

9. Centre of Yemeni Research and Studies, **Thawrat 26 September: Dirasat wa Shihadat li al-Tarikh**, Volume 2, 1987, pp. 139-142.

10. Ibid.

11. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Parker Hart by Dennis O'Brien for the John F. Kennedy Library, Arlington and Virginia, 15 April 1969, 27 May 1969 and 10 June 1970, p. 13.

12. Telegrams from King of Yemen to President Kennedy dated 8 and 9 October 1962, **John F. Kennedy Library White House Central File, Box No 6, CO 320 Yemen**.

13. Ibid.

14. **House of Commons: Parliamentary Debates**, Volume 666, 31 October 1962, cols. 327-328.

15. In the British House of Commons as in Harold Ingrams, **The Yemen, Imams, Rulers & Revolution**, London, 1963, pp. 140-145

16. Ibid.

17. Western orientalists place much stress on the Shafi'i - Zeidi division, but Katz was able to understand the Yemenis better. He stated: "although relations between the Zeidis and Shafi'is are not hostile, the division is an important one because political authority was held by the Zeidis throughout the Imamate years, until the revolution of 1962. The leaders of the YAR have also been predominantly Zeidi, and this has sometimes been a source of discontent among the Shafi'is", Mark Katz, "North Yemen between East and West, **American Arab Affairs**, No. 8, Spring 1984, pp. 99-116.

18. Dana Adams Schmidt, **Yemen: The Unknown War**, New York, 1968, p. 189.

19. On 17 February the British legation at the city of Ta'iz was closed following a week's notice given by President al-Sallal.
20. See American Legation in Taiz airgram no. 66, dated January 26 1963, as quoted by Robert Stookey in **Yemen: The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic**, Boulder, 1978. p.306.
21. **Arab Politics in the United Nations**, p. 189.
22. **Al-Ahram**, Cairo, 25 April 1983; **The Two Yemens**, p. 198.
23. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiyyah**, p. 389.
24. Ahmad Yusuf Ahmad, **Al-Dawr al-Misri fil Yaman**, Cairo, 1981, p. 118.
25. Christopher McMullen, **Resolution of the Yemen Crisis, 1963: A Case Study in Mediation**, Washington DC, 1981, p. 1.
26. **Arabia Without Sultans**, p. 119.
27. Ibid.
28. Sheikh al-Ahmar's father Hussein al-Ahmar, and his brother Sheikh Hamid al-Ahmar, who called for a republic in Yemen, were killed by the Imam in the prison of Hadjah in 1959.
29. Peter Mansfield, **The Arabs**, London, 1985, p. 364.
30. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 13.
31. Edgar O'Ballance, **The War in Yemen**, New York, 1975, p. 88.
32. Khadidjah al-Haysami, **al-'Alakat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah**, Cairo, 1983, p. 129.
33. **Al-Djumhuriyyah**, Taiz, 15-23 October 1962.
34. Muhammad Zabarah, **Yemen, Tradition^{alism} Versus Modernity**, New York, 1982, p. 95.
35. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 19.
36. Oral History Interview With Chester L. Cooper Conducted by the Kennedy Library, 6 May 1966, p. 59.
37. According to Ambassador Hart, the total American community in Taiz at the time of the revolution was between 100 and 130, and included not less than 20 children.
38. Ibid., p. 15.

39. Ta'iz was the base of foreign diplomatic missions as well as Imam Ahmad 1948-1962. This situation continued for few years after the revolution due to the YAR's civil war.
40. Author's interview with Dr Robert Stookey, Austin, 30 January 1990.
41. Ibid.
42. James Cortada, **The Yemeni Crisis**, Los Angeles, 1965, p. 2.
43. Ibid., p. 16.
44. Ibid., p.1.
45. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 16.
46. **Yemen: The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic**, p. XV.
47. Author's interview with Dr Stookey.
48. Ibid.
49. **Yemen: The Unknown War**, p.204.
50. Document number 41 in Muhammad Hasanein Heikel, **Sanawat al-Ghalayan**, Cairo, 1988, pp. 920-922.
51. John Badeau, **The Middle East Remembered**, Washington DC, 1983, p. 199. The YAR's first Vice President mentioned that the Director of the Egyptian Intelligence, Salah Nasr, confirmed him few days before the revolution that the CIA was aware of a plan by the revolutionists, and ,therefore, they should abandon their plans. This information seems to contradict Badeau's testimony, **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah**, pp. 276-277.
52. In the words of the then US Charge d'Affairs, Robert Stookey, author's interview.
53. Ahmad Yousuf Ahmad, "Al-S .yyasah al-Amrikiyyah wa Muhawalat Ihtiwa' Al-thawrah fi al-Yaman Al-shimaliyyah 1962-1967" in Khayyriah Kasimiyyah, **al-Siyasah al-Amrikiyah wal 'Arab**, Beirut, 1982, p. 161; Misbah Tanirah, "Al-Tatawur al-Istratigi Li al-Siyasah al-Amrikiyah fi al-Watan al-'Arabi, ibid., p. 105; **America and the Arab States: an Uneasy Encounter**, p. 183; John Peterson, **Conflict in the Yemens and Superpower Involvement**, Washington DC, 1981, p. 4; and Philip Horton , "Our Yemen Policy: Pursuit of Mirage, **The Reporter**, London, October 28, 1963, p. 29.
54. **Resolution of the Yemeni crisis, 1963: A Case Study of Mediation**, p. 2.
55. Gregory Gause, **Saudi-Yemeni Relations**, New York, 1990, p. 60.

56. See Oral History Interview with John Badeau, conducted as part of the Kennedy Library's Robert F. Kennedy Oral History Project, 1969, pp. 27.
57. John Badeau, "A Role in Search of a Hero," pp. 132-136, as in 'Ali 'Abdel Rahman Rehmy, **The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World, Intervention in Yemen 1962-1967: Case Study**, Washington DC, 1983, pp. 114-115.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. **White House Central File Box No 6.**
61. US Ambassador in Cairo John Badeau's telegram to the Secretary of State, 1 October 1962.
62. Ibid.
63. Author's interview with Ambassador Muhsin al-'Aini, Washington DC, 7 February 1990.
64. Ambassador Badeau's report to the Department, *ibid.*
65. Bruce Conde (his American name) said that al-Badr was to start a counter-revolution, and told journalists in Aden airport that he was going to join al-Badr in the northern borders of the country to assist him in regaining his throne. Conde was a former American army officer who became an intelligence major in the 82nd Airborne Division in North Africa. His first contact was with the Crown Prince of Yemen Muhammad al-Badr during the early fifties when he sent al-Badr a letter asking for some stamps. When he received a reply from al-Badr, he asked to visit Yemen. Imam Ahmad sent him an invitation to visit the country in 1953 and, after abandoning his American passport, he was given a Yemeni one by the Consulate in Cairo. After settling in Sana'a, Conde became preoccupied with the stamp business. When the 1955 attempted coup d'état took place Conde was the first foreigner to congratulate Seif al-Islam Abd-Alla on being the new Imam. In 1958 Conde converted to Islam and changed his personal name to Abdul-Rahman. During his stay in Sana'a he managed to visit Djidda and Beirut several times and maintained friendly contacts with members of the American as well as the British embassies. Imam Ahmad expelled him from the country in 1959 and there is no explanation of how he returned to Yemen before the revolution. In 1962 he joined the Royalist forces and became Bourbon Conde. On 28 September 1962 Conde and British pilots who were operating the small Yemen Airline managed to escape with a plane to Aden, where he made the statement mentioned above. Among the passengers were two members of the Revolutionary Command Council, Muhammad Kaid Seif and Ali Muhammad Sa'id. Members of the ex-Free Yemeni Movement considered him to be an American spy, while others like Ahmad al-Shami, a former royalist Foreign Minister, believe he was and still is a sincere friend of the Yemeni Royal family. According to a British report by the Taiz delegation, dated 4 October 1957 (FO371-127066) Bruce Conde was a free-lance writer of corny travelogue articles, reporting for **Lands East** at that period. The report added that Conde first came to Yemen in 1953 and returned to Beirut,

where he wrote for the **Daily Star**, in October 1956. The report also mentioned that Conde's "image of himself was as an American Lawrence" and complained that he "worked as bear-leader for the Western journalists who were invited to Yemen to see the British aggression". In 1990 Conde was living in Morocco.

66. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah**, p. 379.

67. Ibid.

68. Author's interview with Dr Stookey.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. **Yemen: The Unknown War**, p. 185.

74. More than 12 meetings were held between the two parties during October-December 1962, **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah**, pp. 402-490.

75. Ibid., pp. 486-487.

76. Author's interview with Dr Stookey.

77. Ibid.

78. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabia**, pp. 486-487.

79. 'Abdul-Rahman al-Baidani replaced al-'Aini as a Foreign Minister in this month.

80. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.

81. Author's interview with Ambassador Talkott Seelye, Washington DC, 19 February 1990.

82. **The New York Times**, 11 October and 5 November 1962.

83. **The Times**, London, 27 November 1962.

84. **The Yemen Crisis**, P. 8.

85. **The Times**, London, 27 November 1962. According to Schmidt on the first occasion, six F-100 jets staged stunt-flying demonstrations over Riyadh and Jiddah, and on the second, two jet bombers and a giant jet transport, while returning to their base near Paris after a visit to Karachi, in Pakistan, put on a demonstration over Riyadh. The demonstrations, in conjunction with the President's assurance to protect the Saudi integrity, suggested that the US might use force to prevent Nasser from expanding beyond the Yemen, **Yemen: The Unknown War**, p. 186.
86. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah**, p. 505. **Foreign Reports Bulletin**, 5 December 1962, p. 1; Muhammad Sa'id Badeeb, **The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict Over North Yemen 1962-1970**, Washington DC, 1986, pp. 61-67.
87. Muhammad Hassanein Heikal, **Nasser: The Cairo Documents**, London, 1971, p. 196.
88. **John F. Kennedy Library, White House Central File, Box No. 6.**
89. London, 29 November 1962.
90. **US Department of State Bulletin**, Volume 63, PP. 44-45.
91. Letter from US Assistant Secretary of State, Philip Talbot, to Senator Hickenlooper, 30 July 1963, **U.S. Congressional Record, Senate**, Volume 109, Part 10, pp. 13669-9.
92. Ibid.
93. **The Daily Telegraph**, London, 11 December 1962.
94. "Yemen", **Deadline Data**, 9 December 1962 and **The Times**, London, 27 November 1962 as in **Modern Yemen 1918-1966**, p.201.
95. **The Daily Telegraph**, London, 15 December 1962.
96. **Al-Ahram**, 28 November 1962.
97. **Sanawat al-Ghalayan**, pp. 923-4.
98. Ibid., p. 925-6.
99. Adeed Dawisha, "Intervention in the Yemen: An Analysis of Egyptian Perception and Policy", **Middle East Journal**, Volume 29, Winter 1970, p. 50. There is a different story by the YAR's first Vice President concerning the Saudi reaction towards the American proposal. Dr al-Baidani mentioned that Saudi Arabia respected its acceptance of the proposal, and he added the pro-Soviet Egyptian influentials, such as 'Ali Sabri, reported false information to President Nasser in order to involve him in Yemen and achieve the Soviet plans in the area. Al-Baidani confirmed that he himself flew over the borders where he saw no offensive gatherings on the Saudi side and concluded that the planes which bombed Nadjran following the American recognition flew directly from Cairo at the request of 'Ali Sabri, **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah wa-Thawrat al-**

Yaman, p. 547.

100. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 16.

101. Ibid.

102. **Thawrat al-Yaman 1948-1968**, p. 137; **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah**, p. 538.

103. See *ibid.*, p. 539. A translation of the Egyptian communique is in **Yemen: The Unknown War**, p. 187.

104. 'Abd-Allah al-Baradduni, **al-Yaman al-Djumhuri**, Damascus, 1983, p. 435.

105. Oral history interview with Chester L. Cooper conducted by the Kennedy Library, 6 May 1966.

106. **Department of State Bulletin**, Volume 68, 7 January 1963, pp. 11-12.

107. Theodore Sorensen, **Kennedy**, New York, 1965, p. 534.

108. **Yemen: The Unknown War**, p. 185.

109. Patrick Seale, "The War in Yemen: Did Nasser Lure the US Out on a Limb?", **New Republic**, 26 January 1963, p. 10.

110. **The Yemen Crisis**, pp. 6-9.

111. A letter from US Assistant Secretary of State, Philip Talbot to Senator Hickenlooper, 30 July 1963, **US Congressional Record, Senate Records**, Volume 109, Part 10, pp. 1366-9.

112. Author's interview with Dr Stookey.

113. Ibid.

114. **The Guardian**, London, 20 December 1962.

115. **The Yemen Crisis**, p. 9.

116. Ibid., p. 8.

117. Ibid., p. 9.

118. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

119. Ibid., p. 10.

20. **UN General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Official Records, Volume 3, New York, 1962, pp. 1225-1241.**
21. **Ibid., pp. 1230-1231.**
22. **Ibid.**
23. **Ibid., pp. 1233-1234.**
24. **Ibid.**
25. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah, p. 550.**
26. **Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.**
27. **Yemen: The Unknown War, p. 199.**
28. **See UN General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Official Records, Volume 3, 1962, pp. 225-1241.**

CHAPTER THREE:

THE FIRST PHASE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

The US position towards the YAR, the KSA, and the UAR, immediately after the revolution is evidence that Washington was mainly concerned to protect Western interests in the KSA and Aden. The US realised that the KSA's best interests would be served by leaving Yemen for the Yemenis, by convincing the UAR to withdraw its troops from the Yemen, and by convincing the Saudis to end their support for the counter-revolution. This was overtly expressed in a telegram from the US Embassy in Ta'iz to the State Department on 14 September 1964: "US is willing to guarantee support of SAG territorial integrity if SAG cooperates in the proposed positive program. Conversely, if SAG chooses to intervene directly in Yemen, the YAR and its ally, the UAR, would be justified in retaliating and the USG could not make a commitment to defend SAG in these circumstances." In another telegram to Washington, the US Embassy in the YAR revealed the American position on the southern areas of Yemen:

Considerable importance we attach to base dependent on wise UK handling of complex situation in Aden's hinterland, which UK sees as buffer zone for Aden and base. Conceivably ill considered UK measures toward SAF on Yemen could make continued USG support for UK position so impracticable as to lead USG reconsider importance of base itself. Above all we must not allow Aden develop into another Cyprus or Algeria.¹

Once American and international recognition had been achieved Sana'a was hopeful that this diplomatic victory would mean that both the UK and the KSA would withdraw their

opposition to the Republic.

But US recognition of the YAR angered Washington's allies in the area. The Royalists, supported by Saudi Arabia and Jordan, launched offensive attacks on many northern areas. This led to the UAR aerial bombardment of many Saudi targets, including Djizan and Nadjran. On 1 January 1963 the KSA reported the resumption of UAR air attacks on "its territory"; two days later the KSA ordered a general mobilization. Washington "was concerned lest a situation develop in which the Saudis might ask [them] to come to their aid militarily."² On 3 January the US Department of State publicly deplored the UAR air attacks and emphasised American interest in the preservation of Saudi Arabian integrity. On 7 January President Al-Sallal summoned the American Charge d'Affaires and warned him that Yemen would not hesitate to defend its territories.³ In a reaction to the American and Saudi stances Al-Sallal announced a general mobilisation on 11 January "to launch a last effective attack against the reactionary regimes in the area" which he called "the dregs of the Saud, Faisal, and Hussein Houses."⁴ On 17 January the YAR President announced he was going to seek the support of Arab volunteers and claimed "the Arab people and our friends the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc are all backing the Yemeni people."⁵

These developments coincided with greater pressure from the US allies in the area who called for a US policy review towards the UAR and the YAR. In an effort to influence the US, the Prime Minister of the KSA restored diplomatic relations with Britain, which supported the

Royalists with arms and military advisors.⁶ Even the Royalists tried to influence decision-making in the White House. On 20 January 1963, Prince 'Abd Allah bin al-Hussein, Commander of what he called the "First Royalist Army based in al-Djawf" and "American University of Beirut Senior Student on Academic Leave" sent a seven-page hand-written letter to the US President in which he appealed for a US fact-finding mission to enter the country via the Harib-Beihan⁷ eastern borders of the Yemen:

We believe that if competent American observers will come to render a confidential report to the White House on the true situation in Yemen and will compare conditions here in the free Yemen with those in the Egyptian occupied part, that the following facts will be established, and may possibly lead to a re-appraisal of the Yemen situation vis a vis American and Free world interests in the Arabian peninsula, the withdrawal of recognition of the Sallal puppet regime, and at least to a "wait and see" policy vis a vis eventual recognition of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen when our people have recovered the presently Egyptian-occupied parts of this Kingdom.

The Prince promised President Kennedy that "the very names Egyptian, 'Abdul-Nasser and Soviet Union would be hated in Yemen for generations" and pointed out that "massive American aid to Egypt has freed Nasser's hands and funds to pursue his merciless war of aggression against the Yemeni people, just as it frees other funds for his expensive 'Voice of the Arabs' [radio station]... and ceaseless attacks against imperialism."⁸

In fact, what resulted was the exact opposite of what the Prince warned: the UN, in the person of the Secretary for Political Affairs, Dr Ralph Bunche, arrived in the eastern area after the Prince and his forces had been defeated, and the words "Nasser," "Nasserite Egypt" and the "Soviet Union" remained venerated by many Yemeni.

'Abd Allah's letter and other Royalist appeals did not change US policy towards Yemen because the US was aware when it recognised the YAR that "the royalists had scored considerable successes but did not seem to have the weapons or the organization for a really decisive push."⁹ Royalist attempts to put pressure on Washington may, however, have

influenced the US decision to encourage the UN to send a fact-finding mission to the YAR.

The Kennedy Administration not only supported the Saudi government's commitment to the preservation of the KSA's integrity, but also despatched a number of jet fighters, a destroyer, and American paratroopers to express US determination to defend Saudi Arabia.¹⁰ In early February 1990 the YAR Ambassador in Washington said that Kennedy had supplied the KSA with arms only after the bombing raids of the Egyptian air force on Saudi depots and when Riyadh was "under real threat."¹¹ US anger was also expressed through a show of force - an aerial demonstration over Djiddah in mid-January. In an interview on 25 February 1967, Ambassador John Badeau revealed that R. W. Komer, US Advisor for National Security, had urged "much stronger tactics: possibly, letting American planes patrol the border and shooting any Egyptian plane that got out of line. By this time Yemen was called 'Komer's war.' I set myself very strongly in opposition to that course of policy."¹² At the time the State Department declared:

The United States, as an impartial friend of all governments involved, remains convinced that the best interests of the Yemeni people will be served by the disengagement of foreign military forces and termination of external intervention.¹³

In a memorandum to Kennedy, Komer justified US military action:

There [are indications] that Nasser is going to invade Saudi Arabia and that the Pentagon is raring to use the Sixth Fleet but the soft heads in the State Department are opposed. We've already done a lot to deter the UAR from escalating. We've had destroyers visit Saudi port, bombers flying in, now a Special Force team is there. We've warned Nasser again not to step on our toes... True, Nasser may still try greater pressure on Saudis... We've consistently estimated (dead right so far) that Nasser would escalate rather than quit in Yemen. He's already resumed bombings, and we discovered UAR parachute drop of supplies to... partisans in Hi[d]jaz. Some...think UAR may try to promote a revolution in the Hi[d]jaz or a raid on Saudi supply dump. We're warning Nasser again...Painful and uncertain as it is, I see no alternative to our present effort...¹⁴

Vice-President and Foreign Minister 'Abdul-Rahman al-Baidani threatened, "if the despatch

of the American naval forces endangers the Yemeni revolution there is another military force which is no less mighty that will come to help us."¹⁵ Following this statement, which illustrates the deterioration in bilateral relations, the US tried to assure the Yemen government that it was doing its best to stop Saudi aid to the Royalists. American diplomatic efforts succeeded in calming Yemeni anger during the following week. On 28 January 1963 it was announced that Sana'a and Washington had signed a new agreement concerning the construction of the Ta'iz-Sana'a road and the Ta'iz water project in addition to the study of other projects that might be implemented with US assistance.¹⁶ On 2 February, the Yemeni Foreign Ministry welcomed the upgrading of the US legation to the level of embassy.¹⁷ Five days later, William Polk, a personal envoy of President Kennedy, arrived in Sana'a, where he stated that his mission was not political but merely "a regional tour of reconnaissance."¹⁸ Within the same year the US Department of State assigned to Sana'a a First Secretary, a Third Secretary, an Administrative officer, a Public Affairs Officer, and an Army Attache with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.¹⁹ A suitable building for the first American Embassy in Sana'a was found in the spring of that year.²⁰

Following the upgrading of its diplomatic representation, the US government tried to create a close relationship with the Yemeni government through the following means: 1) Providing the YAR with a modest assistance program which included training in Yemen, Beirut, and in the US, of Yemeni personnel selected for eventual managerial and technical responsibilities connected with the water project at Ta'iz and the road to Sana'a; 2) Grants to send to the US a small number of Yemeni government officials on ninety-day visits; 3) The presence of a

US destroyer in the port of Hudaidah; 4) A tour of the US by two senior Yemeni army officers; 5) Assistance to small villages in the Ta'iz area in the form of technical assistance and hand tools for self-help projects such as well drilling, improving mountain tracks, clearing the Mocha harbour of debris, etc.; 6) Encouragement of local merchants and officials in Ta'iz to develop plans to take advantage of the momentum created by the American AID projects; 7) Teaching of English to Yemenis under the supervision of the Public Affairs officer in Ta'iz; 8) Distribution on a grant basis of US surplus wheat and; 9) Maintaining close contact between American diplomats and AID officials with Yemeni government personnel and businessmen.²¹

Despite this improvement in YAR-US contacts during the end of January and early February 1963, the bilateral talks did not achieve a great deal. The upgrading of American representation in the Yemen, was not in itself enough to cement YAR-USA relations completely.

As a result of this situation, which provided US diplomacy in the Middle East with "its greatest challenge since Suez,"²² the US continued to play what was seen as "an ambiguous role."²³ The US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Minister to Yemen, Parker Hart, who indicated that Washington expected Egyptian withdrawal from Sana'a in return for recognition, later explained his government's stance:

Nasser didn't repay our recognition of the YAR very well. He took it [to be] a hunting license to go after Saudi Arabia... He hit a border area near [D]jizan and he followed it up with strikes against Na[d]jran, and in February of '63, in the middle of the night - believing, with false intelligence, that there was a big resistance group on his side that could be helped - he dropped by parachute force a hundred and eight bundles of ready-to-go weapons and ammunition on the Saudi coast north of [D]jidda where they were spotted in the early hours of the morning by an American special forces mission flying with Saudis on a training flight...this deepened, of course, the feeling of distrust in Washington of Nasser's intentions.²⁴

According to the US Charge d'Affaires, Robert Stookey, another factor that contributed to

the uneasy YAR-US relations "was that when the British were expelled we were in charge of their interests and there were incursions from the territory of Sherif Beihan across the border into the Yemen and things of that sort."²⁵

The YAR Ambassador in Washington during early 1990, Muhsin Al-'Aini, believed that Sana'a did not benefit from US recognition because of the very high tension in the area during that period: "there was a war between the royalists, the KSA and the US on one side, and Sana'a, Egypt and the Soviet Union on the other... The Egyptian forces' operations in the country were at their maximum, and hence Cairo was the real ruler. Our government did not want to lose the support of Egypt naturally while the relations between Cairo and Washington were strained. There was a severe attack by President Nasser: yeshrabu mayyat al-bahr (Let them drink water of the sea)."²⁶

Asked whether Cairo worked hard in the beginning to secure American recognition for the new born Yemeni Republic al-'Aini replied: "Recognition was one thing and Egypt-US relations were something else, despite the fact that Kennedy was trying to improve these relations."²⁷

American concern over the effects of the Yemen conflict on the KSA increased further when a military coup on 8 February deposed the Kassim regime in Iraq. The leader of the coup, 'Abdul-Salam 'Arif, announced his support for Nasserism. This seriously threatened the existence of the Sheikdoms and the Saudi and Jordanian monarchical governments. Thirty

days later another pro-UAR coup occurred in Syria. Although the Syrian revolution did not directly threaten the KSA, it was clear that pro-Nasser governments in countries close to Israel and the Gulf Sheikdoms at a time when Nasser was trying to provoke revolution in Riyadh, did not fit in with US foreign policy in the region, as a US study of the Yemeni crisis stated:

Nasser was a popular, charismatic figure whose doctrine of Arab unity had great appeal to many Arabs who looked upon the Egyptian leader as a twentieth-century Muhammad or Saladin... In view of these perceived threats from the outside, the US urged Faisal not only to disengage from Yemen but to concentrate on internal reforms which would bolster his own political position within Saudi Arabia.²⁸

On 8 February 1963 Washington again stressed the importance it attached to Saudi Arabia by releasing a letter that President Kennedy had sent on 25 October 1962 to the Saudi Crown Prince, Faisal, who as Viceroy was the de facto ruler of the monarchy while King Saud was in Europe. This letter pledged full American support for the maintenance of Saudi territorial integrity. Kennedy expressed his awareness "that in order to accomplish your goals you must have the requisite tranquillity - an atmosphere devoid of recriminations and instigations from within or without. I share your concern at the tensions which prevail in the area and which hamper your design to strengthen the fabric of government and society in Saudi Arabia. As I indicated to you in Washington, the United States desires to be helpful in finding a means of reducing these tensions."²⁹ This was followed by repeated private assurances that the US was making the greatest efforts to get Nasser to end his air attacks on Saudi territory. Although it had to be recognised that "not only the UAR but also Saudi Arabia was intervening in Yemen."³⁰

On 9 February it was announced in Sana'a that USSR representation was upgraded to the level of Embassy.³¹ On 22 February President Al-Sallal warned that he would support any popular revolution in the Arabian Peninsula against Saud and his brother Faisal³².

On 27 February in a reaction to developments in Yemen, Iraq, and Syria, Kennedy approved the sending of a special emissary to King Faisal to reassure him of US interest in Saudi Arabia and to convince him of the importance of disengaging from Yemen. The memorandum authorized the emissary to inform the King that the US would consider stationing a temporary air defense squadron in Saudi Arabia to deter UAR air operations.³³

Meanwhile, correspondence between Kennedy and Nasser continued. This indicated that Saudi Arabia did not accept the American disengagement plan and that the US could not force it to. The American President urged Nasser to withdraw his forces from Yemen. Nasser refused on the grounds that the KSA was continuing to give aid to the Royalists. He stressed that the basic aim behind the despatch of Egyptian forces to Yemen was to stop any invasion of the YAR. Defending his policy toward Yemen, Nasser wrote a letter to Kennedy on 3 March 1963 in which he said he trusted the sincere efforts of the US President regarding the conflict between the KSA and the YAR, but he could not tie his hands and just watch Saud invade Yemen or the fierce assaults of the British on the Yemeni people:

...Hence, the imperative response to the request of the government of the Arab Republic of Yemen to place some of our troops at its disposal to participate in the defence against the violent attacks which took [Nadjran] for a base and to which the Yemeni Northern frontiers were exposed at the time in the [Sa'dah] Region....³⁴

But he declared his interest in achieving peace and avoiding an armed clash with the KSA through American mediation:

...The UAR certainly seeks no war with Saudi Arabia along the Yemeni borders. The historic difference between [the KSA and the UAR] is not the kind to be settled by armed clash. The difference is much deeper: its roots are well imbedded in the depths of the social conditions prevailing in the Arab world, with hopes in the future striving to break away from the remnants and residue of the past to forge an honourable future for the Arab human being, owner and master of his land....³⁵

The Kennedy Administration believed it possible to persuade the governments of the UAR and the KSA to disengage from the Yemeni conflict because it was very much in their interests to do so. The only problem was "how to find a formula which would prove face-saving for both parties?"³⁶ Washington felt that the best approach was "to persuade the UN to become concerned with the Yemen question as a threat to peace, and to use its influence in helping to calm down the situation".³⁷ The US succeeded in getting the UN to send Dr Ralph Bunche, the United Nations Under Secretary for Special Political Affairs, to the area in early March on a fact-finding mission on behalf of the UN Secretary General. George McGhee, former US Under Secretary for Political Affairs, explained Washington's reasons: "The Department and the President had become concerned about the Yemeni affair largely because of the introduction of large number of UAR troops. We feared that if this build-up continued there might ultimately be war between the UAR troops in the Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, who was supplying the Royalist forces."³⁸

Washington was convinced that the Royalists could not win and that the UAR could not be driven out of the YAR except by direct full-scale military intervention by the UK or other

Western powers. In addition, the US Administration was unable to assess either the reactions to the Yemen Republic in other parts of the Arab world, and was particularly ignorant of internal political developments in UAR. Washington believed that further instability and bloodshed in Yemen which was not in the interest of the KSA or UK might well spread across borders. The longer the massive UAR military presence was required because of the security threat to the YAR, "the more firmly entrenched Nasser becomes and the less authoritative become the voices of the Yemeni moderates, such as al-Iryani, Zubairi, Nu'man and 'Uthman."³⁹ Nasser could not be bled to death but had to be allowed to withdraw with honour; if war was prolonged it was al-Badr and his supporters who were more likely to bleed to death. It was realised that there was a little chance of a compromise Yemeni government that would include the Hamid al-Din family and that the moderate YAR leaders, who were more Yemeni than Arab nationalist, had no designs on Saudi territory nor any basic antipathy toward the Saudi monarchy, but wanted cordial relations with the SAF government and friendly relations as well as help from the UK. Washington felt the moderate Yemeni leaders would agree to establish a "Dawlat al-Yaman" (State of Yemen) instead of the YAR that would exclude both Al-Sallal and al-Badr. It was also expected that if the "Yemenis were left alone a strong Zeidi leader might sooner or later restore [a] reconstituted monarchy or at least [a] spiritual Imamate, applicable to tribal society."⁴⁰

To prepare the way for a US mediation mission to be led by the diplomat Ellsworth Bunker, the US Ambassador in Cairo, John Badeau, wrote to Nasser on 4 March requesting that the UAR suspend its air attacks on Saudi Arabia during the Bunker-Bunche efforts. Badeau told

the UAR President that President Kennedy considered the Yemen dilemma a test case for Cairo-Washington cooperation in the Middle East and that Washington did not object to Nasser's commitment to protect the YAR revolution as long as the affair was contained within Yemen.⁴¹ Nasser replied that Cairo's involvement was "more costly than had been envisioned and that he was anxious to remove his troops from the YAR" provided the US persuaded the KSA to accept the disengagement plan. He agreed to suspend air attacks on Saudi supplies to the Royalists during "the course of the American-sponsored mediation exercise."⁴²

The UN mission under Ralph Bunche, known as "an American-instigated mediation effort by the UN"⁴³ began to alleviate the crisis. It was clear that US recognition had paved the way for the UN to take a role in resolving the conflict and for reducing the chances of the struggle endangering world peace. Bunche arrived in Ta'iz on 1 March. He visited many parts of the country and was both moved and disheartened by the conditions of the Yemeni people. In Sana'a he met President Al-Sallal and 'Abdul-Hakim 'Amir, the deputy Supreme Commander of the UAR armed forces.

Al-'Aini later gave his recollections of the Bunche mission:

I flew back home to arrange for Dr Bunche's visit. On the way I stopped in Beirut. There, I heard that the Saudi Crown Prince Faisal had said that the UN envoy wouldn't be able to visit anywhere other than Sana'a. I called my deputy to the UN and told him to inform the UN envoy that I was going to receive him in Ta'iz. There he was received by the Yemeni people in an unprecedented way. The same thing happened upon his arrival in Sana'a. Then we moved to the place where the Foreign Ministry stands today. Moved by the situation, Dr Bunche delivered a speech to the crowd, and I was the translator. On that day, Al-Sadat and Marshal 'Amir were in the

capital after liberating Marib. I asked Dr Bunche "where do you want to go now?". When I received no reply I suggested he visit Marib, the ancient capital of the Queen of Sheba. Before making this suggestion, of course, I had been informed that our forces had already arrived in Marib. A helicopter carried us to the Queen of Sheba's capital. Following our arrival numerous royalist tribesmen arrived in the ancient city. They were protesting against Egyptian interference in the Yemeni affairs, but I translated something else to him. I told him they were protesting against Saudi Arabia and asking "Who gave the Saudis the right to interfere in Yemen?" I also told him they were threatening to take revenge. Then I suggested he travel to the colony of Aden. We announced in the very early morning of that day that Dr Bunche would travel to Aden accompanied by our Ambassador to the UN. When the Yemeni people in Aden heard the news they gathered from every direction and he was given another mass welcome.⁴⁴

After this visit Bunche announced the Republic was in effective control of the country and persuaded the UN Fact-Finding Mission of this. He even asserted that the YAR had a right to call in Egyptian troops to help deal with the Saudi-backed Royalists, and that the Egyptians had not tried to interfere in Yemeni affairs.⁴⁵ Bunche's findings were not accepted by the Royalists or the Saudis and the latter refused to accept that either the US or the UN could play a role of neutral mediator.

Bunker Mission

With the approval of the US President, the US Department of State decided to play a more direct role. First, it despatched Terry Duce, an ex-Vice President of the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO), "who was highly respected by the Saudis," to talk with Prince Faisal and "to see what he could do to try to find a bridge with Faisal and with the Saudis that could be useful in bringing about a disengagement on the Saudi side if there were a disengagement on the Egyptian side."⁴⁶ But his efforts failed.

American efforts continued when Ellsworth Bunker⁴⁷, a former American Ambassador, was sent to the area in March 1963 to reduce the pace of hostilities and to prepare the way for a UN peace-observing mission. US planes and warships were sent to bolster the Saudi position in an operation called "Hard Surface", while Bunker flew to Riyadh to reassure the Saudi government of US support. This threatened to turn Yemen into a stage for a full-scale civil war with Republicans supported by Egypt and the Soviet Union, and the Royalists supported by the KSA, Britain, Jordan, Morocco and the US. On 6 March 1963, Bunker initiated talks with Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia to persuade him to support the UN mediation effort. Bunker returned to the region three weeks later to negotiate with Faisal the cessation of Saudi assistance to the Yemeni Royalists while at the same time seeking from Nasser a phased withdrawal of UAR troops. Bunker's presence was part of Kennedy's general policy of using high-ranking Americans to inject US influence and prestige.⁴⁸ On 1 April Bunker initiated talks with President Nasser. On 5 April he returned to Riyadh, and four days later he returned to Cairo where he successfully obtained a disengagement agreement which he delivered to the UN Secretary General on 13 April.⁴⁹ Bunker obtained the agreement of all parties concerned on a withdrawal of most UAR troops and a cessation of Saudi assistance to the Royalists. Both sides also agreed on the stationing of neutral troops on the Saudi side of the border, at Yemeni airports and at the port of Hudaidah.⁵⁰ Though successful on reaching an agreement, the former US Ambassador did not use straight-forward mediation methods in either Djiddah or Cairo. From examining the personal papers of the US emissary Christopher McMullen observed an extraordinary feature of Bunker's *modus operandi* regarding "his use of papers detailing the points to be agreed, which in each case

left out - to be covered in oral pleadings - a point that was most sensitive to his interlocutors: In the case of Nasser, the proposal that he handed him did not include the element of simultaneity (which was resolved eventually by Nasser's agreement to an initial token withdrawal), and in the case of Faisal the proposal handed to him on 5 April did not include the element of restrictions on the activities of the Yemeni royal family (which was resolved by a carefully worded clause in the agreement)."⁵¹

The terms of the agreement announced by the UN Secretary General in his report to the Security Council dated 29 April 1963, were as follows:

- 1) A demilitarized zone was to be established and extended twenty kilometres on either side of the demarcated Saudi Arabian-Yemeni border from which all military and para military forces and military equipment were to be excluded.
- 2) An agreement was to take place over the stationing of United Nations observers within this zone on both sides of the border to observe, report on and prevent any continued attempt by the Saudi Arabians to supply Royalist forces with arms and supplies.
- 3) Simultaneously, the United Arab Republic would begin a phased withdrawal of all its troops from Yemen to take place as soon as possible. The United Arab Republic would also abstain from taking punitive action against the royalists for any assistance prior to the disengagement and would likewise put an end to any actions on Saudi Arabian territory.⁵²

Washington's assessment of the YAR's military strength without UAR backing was accurate. In their interventionist policy, they emphasised that the Yemenis should be isolated, because they knew that this would enable the Saudis, Great Britain and Jordan to defeat the Nasserite element in Yemen. The US Embassy in Cairo stated some time later in 1964 that though the Bunker agreement did not succeed "in bringing about withdrawal of the UAR troops," it had "given Faisal breathing room to strengthen his internal position and had averted a KSA-UAR

confrontation."⁵³

These US and UN mediation efforts resulted in the UN-Yemen Observation Mission whose task was to supervise the disengagement plan which had been proposed originally by the Kennedy Administration.

UN Observation Mission

On 30 April 1963 the UN appointed Major General Von Horn, Chief of Staff of the UN Truce Supervision Organization, to consult with the relevant governments on the details of setting up a UN Observation Mission.⁵⁴ He arrived in the area in late May to observe whether the disengagement agreement was being complied with.⁵⁵ An observation group of about 200 personnel was initially agreed upon; this was later reduced for security reasons. The units were furnished mainly by Canada, Sweden, and Yugoslavia. The UAR and the KSA agreed to finance the mission.

In reaction to the US and UN efforts to bring about peace in the peninsula, the Royalists, backed by the Saudis, tried to gain control of some northern areas of Yemen to demonstrate their existence and to demand that they should be part of the solution. Sana'a confirmed that the UAR and YAR air forces had bombed Saudi targets, where the rebels were gathering to cross the border.⁵⁶ As a result American military units engaged in joint manoeuvres with Saudi military personnel in May 1963: however, in the words of one authority, "no decisive American reaction occurred, in part due to Saudi refusal to permit the stationing of Jewish

personnel among the American military forces there due to its open opposition to Israel, and partially because the UAR operations did not threaten the survival of the Saudi monarchy."⁵⁷

In June 1963 the UN observation units arrived, and on 4 July the Mission was officially established and commenced operations. On 15 July 1963 the US sent an air defence squadron of eight F-100's to the KSA, where it remained until 1 January 1964: "its orders were to conduct a training exercise with the Saudi air force as part of our overall effort to improve Saudi defense forces and as evidence of continuing US interest in the security of the country. The squadron was also to provide a limited air defense capability."⁵⁸ The most important role to be played by the UN group was to prevent any direct clash between the UAR and the KSA forces. At the same time the US government urged the two countries to cooperate with the UN efforts. The UN Mission continued its work until 4 September 1964, but due to difficulties, such as when Saudi Arabia halted paying instalments of the mission expenses, it ultimately failed.

To implement the Bunker agreement Washington instructed its embassies in Djiddah, Cairo, Ta'iz and London, to persuade the UK to maintain the "moratorium on assistance to Yemeni royalists" and to "dissuade" the KSA "from any action to renew aid which it might be tempted to take in view [of] reports [on] royalists suffering serious military reverses" while in pressing on the UAR the need to withdraw its forces from Yemen.⁵⁹

On 22 November President John F. Kennedy was assassinated; under Lyndon Johnson,

Washington's policy towards President Nasser, and towards the Arab world in general, changed. The Johnson administration gave the Israelis and the Saudis a free hand in the area as well as stronger American commitment to protect their security. Faisal adopted a tough strategy towards both the YAR and the UAR and received all the necessary political, economic and military support from Washington:

Faisal was favored by a rapid increase in revenues during the first two years of his reign, which rose at about double the 11 percent annual rate of the previous two years. It was clear that the increase, which [was] derived mainly from greater oil production, was the result of a deliberate move by ARAMCO and its parent companies to help Faisal. It was clear then that the American government [had] adopted a more cooperative attitude toward Faisal's strategy. Disappointed by Kennedy's attempt to woo Nasser, the United States under President Johnson was more willing to support Faisal's plan to build up the Saudi armed forces.⁶⁰

To counter Nasser's Arab Nationalist Movement, Faisal backed by Iran and Jordan, called for and sponsored what became known as "the Islamic Conference Organisation" in an attempt "to widen the scope of regional politics to include non-Arab Muslim states like Iran and Pakistan, and thus to dilute Egypt's dominance of Arab politics." In the case of the neighbouring Republic, Faisal encouraged some traditional Yemeni tribes to counter the YAR and the UAR from within.⁶¹

The outbreak of guerrilla warfare against the British in the southern areas of Yemen on 14 October 1963 encouraged Cairo to extend the presence of its forces in the YAR, and the subsequent YAR and UAR support to the guerrillas caused concern in Washington. On 28 May 1964, Washington instructed its Charge d'Affaires in Ta'iz "to reiterate that the US was motivated by the desire that Yemen be fully independent and able to control its own destiny. The Charge was to urge the Yemenis to meet with British representatives under United

Nations auspices for the purpose of considering [the] creation of a demilitarized zone. He was also instructed to urge the Yemeni government to make known directly to the Saudis its desires for peaceful relations."⁶² The American Embassy in Cairo revealed that Washington instructed the UN representative in Yemen, assisted by the US and probably others, to prepare for talks with the KSA, the UAR, the UK and the YAR concerning the normalisation of relations between the Republic and the UK.⁶³

In January 1964 an Arab summit meeting was held in Cairo where President Nasser and King Saud met and discussed a reconciliation. This resulted in the resumption of diplomatic relations between Cairo and Riyadh on 3 March 1964. The YAR President met with King Saud, at the same summit but nothing concrete in Riyadh-Sana'a relations resulted. The restoration of diplomatic relations between Cairo and Riyadh was not welcomed by the Crown Prince and resulted in an inter-Saudi conflict between King Saud and Prince Faisal which showed Faisal's greater influence. This undermined the UAR-KSA reconciliation and thus fighting in Yemen continued.

On 14 April 1964, President Al-Sallal returned from his tour to the Eastern bloc where he had sought military assistance.⁶⁴ His tour had not been approved by Cairo and this led to President Nasser's visit to Sana'a. During Nasser's visit it was announced that the YAR President had decided to delay second official trip to the Eastern bloc, scheduled for the following month, in order to attend the Aswan dam celebrations in Egypt on 14 May 1964.⁶⁵ In Cairo, President Sallal succeeded in persuading Egypt that a further tour of the Eastern

bloc would be fruitful and he left for Warsaw on 20 May and for Budapest on 26 May. It was reported later that he had arrived in Beijing on 9 June.⁶⁶ This is evidence that the UAR which had until now had preferred to keep the Eastern bloc as far as possible from peninsula affairs, now chose to engage it more directly in the Yemeni conflict in order to secure additional support for Republican Sana'a.

On 25 May 1964, Washington instructed its Embassy in Cairo⁶⁷ to express concern over the failure of the UAR to make even a token withdrawal and to urge it to do so.⁶⁸ But the situation on the ground continued unaltered. The American Embassy in Ta'iz noted that unless the 2nd Nasser-Faisal summit resolved the Yemen question, the prospects for escalation of the Yemen conflict in the south as well as in the north were "more alarming than at any time since before the disengagement agreement."⁶⁹ The US government supported a Faisal-Nasser reconciliation because this would mean a containment of the Nasserite and of the Soviet threat of greater involvement in the Arabian Peninsula.⁷⁰

During an Arab summit in Alexandria on 14 September 1964, President Nasser and Crown Prince Faisal jointly pledged cooperation to settle the Yemen dispute. The communique they issued called for a seven-month armistice during which the UAR would begin to withdraw its troops; the KSA would cease support for the Royalists who would meet with the Republicans to discuss a reconciliation. Yemen Republicans and Royalists met under Egyptian and Saudi auspices without any concrete results but with indications that a formula for national reconciliation would be found.⁷¹

Following the 14 September 1964 Nasser-Faisal communique, the Yemen government clarified to the US government its aims for a peaceful solution. During a visit by Ambassador al-'Aini to the US Assistant Secretary of State, the former outlined the following points: Washington should use its influence on both parties to promote a settlement in Yemen; the settlement should involve the elimination of the Hamid al-Din family, and as a necessary quid pro quo, the YAR would expel Al-Sallal; a conference of up to 300 representatives of various Yemeni factions would be held outside Yemen to determine the new government; UAR troops would withdraw from the YAR and the KSA cease its interference in Yemeni affairs; a joint Arab force from countries not involved in dispute might be required in Yemen for a limited period of time; the UAR and KSA would divert a percentage of their military budgets to economic and developmental assistance for the YAR; the solution was not to be imposed by outsiders; and the fact that Republican moderates interpreted the Nasser-Faisal communique which had divided Yemen into spheres of influence as an indication of an intent to play off the YAR government against the wishes of its people. As far as the south was concerned, al-'Aini repeated his government's willingness to accept a demilitarised zone, UN observers and even demarcation, provided these were part of an overall settlement in which Britain recognised the YAR and conceded rights to the people in the south to choose their own government. In the name of the YAR Foreign Minister, Muhammad Sirri, al-'Aini conveyed Yemen's assurances that it would not exacerbate the situation on the border, even though it was being pushed unwillingly in this direction by the UAR.⁷²

On 3 November Yemeni Royalists and Republicans met at Erkwit in Sudan to discuss the

means for convening a reconciliation conference and forming an all-Yemen government. Washington showed its good will towards the Yemeni people by sending on 7 November another shipment of American wheat which arrived in the port of Hudaidah (3,000 tons as part of a 20,000 ton gift). But it became clear that the events in Washington, Riyadh and Aden did not serve to improve the YAR-US relations.⁷³ On 1 December the Erkwit conference broke down in disagreement over use of the term "republic" and the future status of the royal family.

Following the failure of the reconciliation attempt in Sudan, the Yemeni Republican opposition leaders continued to make unofficial side contact with the US government. In order to obtain US support to solve the Yemeni crisis by political means, they even promised to cease support to the southerners if the US succeeded in getting the UAR troops to withdraw. On 13 December, the US Embassy in Ta'iz reported that Ahmad Nu'man, the President of Madjlis al-Shura [parliament], had summoned him to his residence in Sana'a where Kadi al-Iryani, the leader of the moderate Republicans and a member of the Cabinet, joined them. Both confirmed their resignation from the government "because it was [the] powerless puppet of the UAR, and made [a] renewed impassioned plea for western and particularly [for] US help to save Yemen from Egyptian bondage; they asserted [that] all responsible Yemen leaders wanted to stop the fighting and effect [a] UAR withdrawal, which would bring [an] immediate end [to] interference in SAF over which they now have no control." Nu'man and al-Iryani also stressed that the key to the solution was that the US should persuade the UK and the KSA to deal with the national Yemen government.⁷⁴

There was no concrete co-operation between Sana'a and Washington for a long period following the assassination of President Kennedy, mainly due to the YAR-UAR alliance. Dana Adams Schmidt, an American historian, claims that during October 1964, Egypt asked the US for assistance to help solve its foreign exchange problems, but the State Department refused, and pointed out that the war in Yemen was draining Egyptian finances; there was clearly a paradox in Egypt opposing the policies and interests of a superpower and at the same time seeking its help.⁷⁵ On 26 November Egyptian demonstrators attacked the US Embassy in Cairo protesting against Washington's role in helping to rescue white hostages in the Congo.⁷⁶ In December a private American aircraft was shot down over Egypt for intruding into its airspace; the US retaliated by postponing shipments of food assistance to the UAR.⁷⁷ In January 1965 the Johnson Administration revealed that it had secretly approved the sale of West German tanks to Israel, which outraged the UAR.⁷⁸

In early February 1965 the US Charge d'Affaires Clark met President Sallal and his Foreign Minister A. Hamim to discuss US efforts to "promote peace and progress in Yemen and emphasize recent US steps toward resumption of PL-480 shipments and construction of [the] Rahidah spur road."⁷⁹ Clark expressed Washington's concern "at rumours reported to US that in face of this dramatic support for Yemeni independence, peace and progress, some YAR officials still questioned US good faith and friendship."⁸⁰ The Charge also expressed his concern at the arrest of a local employee, Yahya al-Dailami, who had assisted the Embassy in talks regarding US assistance and friendship.⁸¹

Al-Sallal took the opportunity to express Yemen's appreciation of US assistance and Yemen's trust that the US was helping Yemen "out of sincere friendship."⁸² Al-Sallal also stated that he had given up hope of an improvement in relations with the UK because the new Labour government had failed to heed his Foreign Minister's pleas for cooperation with the YAR. Al-Sallal believed that Britain was still "following 19th century imperialist policies", and in his country was committing a "crime of supporting discredited forces of reaction and oppression" whereas the "US had demonstrated its support of popular movements by recognizing the YARG." The YAR President thought the UK was a "great power but had misused its power and thereby had lost the world."⁸³ Clark's reply was that "it should be easy for Yemen to settle its problems with the UK if it was willing to take meaningful steps to relax tensions."⁸⁴

Clark raised the issue of Vietnam and the Yemen media's anti-US coverage. Al-Sallal expressed neutrality, and from that day the Yemeni media either ignored or treated temperately all reports about American action in the Vietnam War. This was an indication that Sallal was willing to come to an understanding with the US as long as it supported the political status quo in his country. Clark reported Al-Sallal's comments as being "noteworthy and more in keeping with traditional cautious Yemeni attitude than might be expected", and hoped that the "YARG neutral stance continues since it probably best we can hope for in view considerable and growing Soviet and CHICOM presence and massive bloc aid programs" in Yemen.⁸⁵

Following the failure of the Republican-Royalist negotiations, fighting in the Yemen intensified and in early March 1965, UAR planes bombed Saudi depots inside Saudi territory.⁸⁶ Washington instructed its Embassy in Cairo to express its disappointment over the breakdown of the cease-fire, and to stress US support for the integrity and independence of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh and Cairo were urged to continue discussions. On 2 April, having been informed by the Saudis of another air strike, the American Administration asked the Embassy in Cairo to "express our concern over these reports of violation of Saudi integrity and to note our commitment to Saudi security."⁸⁷

On 25 April 1965 Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Nu'man was appointed Prime Minister. Nu'man informed the US administration that he aimed to improve the YAR's relations with the KSA and the UK.⁸⁸ Some observers saw his abolishing of the Ministry for the Occupied South as a gesture towards London.⁸⁹ He initiated his premiership by sending "a peace delegation" on a tour of Arab countries. On 10 May he sent a telegram directly to King Faisal publicly offering to hold informal talks with the Saudis and asking the King Saud's assistance in establishing peace in Yemen.⁹⁰ His proposed was rejected even though he asked Kuwait, Jordan and Syria to mediate.⁹¹

On 1 May 1965 the US Attache paid his first visit to the newly re-appointed YAR Foreign Minister, Muhsin al-'Aini. During this call, the YAR Foreign Minister expressed friendship for the US and urged the US government to stand by the YAR. He said the Nu'man government represented what the Yemeni people had hoped for when the 1962 revolution

broke out but had been prevented from realising by the Egyptians. The new government, he claimed, had the backing of the entire Yemeni nation but lacked an army and was beset by many obstacles. It was believed in Sana'a that the UAR wanted to discredit the group of politicians under Nu'man and the proposed Republican-Royalist conference in Khamir, which al-'Aini believed would succeed and would lead to some changes in the government and in the powers of the Presidential Council where President Al-Sallal was trying to thwart Nu'man's policies. According to al-'Aini the YAR really wanted peace with the KSA and the UK and that if only they would adopt more understanding attitudes, peace would come and UAR troops would be withdrawn. Furthermore, although the YAR wanted good relations with the UAR, it did not want to follow Nasserite policies. He pointed out that Nu'man had taken a brave step in dropping the post of Minister of the Occupied South Yemen. Nu'man was under pressure from the UAR to restore it and the new Prime Minister, despite Al-Sallal's objections to ending criticism of other Arabs, was trying to control the media in an effort to stop criticism of KSA and the SAF. However, because he was accused of being an imperialist tool, he was obliged to move cautiously. Al-'Aini urged King Faisal to be understanding and patient until Nu'man won this battle, but he could not do so if Riyadh continued its support of the Hamid al-Din family who had no chance of returning to power. The US, therefore, could help best by convincing Britain and especially King Faisal of this fact because otherwise the Nu'man government would fall and UAR policies would triumph. Al-'Aini advised Clark not to call on the YAR Prime Minister because such a meeting would endorse Egyptian propaganda that Nu'man was a US stooge.⁹²

After this meeting Clark informed Washington: "we earnestly hope that SAG and UKG would realize that the present opportunity is a golden one and that if lost is not likely ever to recur." He concluded: "I recommend US do its best in Riyadh and London to enlist the 'understanding attitude' al-'Aini seeks."⁹³

The course of YAR-US relations continued to be affected by fears that Washington was trying to undermine the Republic through diplomatic means. On 2 May 1965 the US Embassy in Ta'iz reported to Washington that a "sizeable" "UAR intelligence type" pro-NLF (National Liberation Front of South Yemen) and anti-Nu'man demonstration was taking place in Ta'iz and had passed in front of the US AID and the American Embassy offices. The demonstrators opposed the Khamir conference on Yemeni reconciliation which was due to start on the next day as well as Nu'man's policy of seeking reconciliation with the UK and the SAF. The report also mentioned that several Aden leaders: A. al-Asnadj, H. Kadi, and A. Badhib, were in Ta'iz to attend a counter-Khamir conference.⁹⁴ According to a Ta'iz US Embassy note, Ahmad Dahmash who had been appointed Director General of YAR Broadcasting in early May 1965, was the first anti-Egyptian Yemeni official to criticize the Nasser-Faisal agreement at Djiddah on the grounds that Yemenis had not been part of it.⁹⁵

At the request of Prime Minister Nu'man, in May 1965 the Yemeni Republican forces held a conference in the town of Khamir, the capital of the Hashid tribal confederation, in order to agree on a peaceful settlement with the Yemeni Royalists. But Nu'man's efforts failed when he was forced to resign a month later on 1 July 1965. Three days earlier Nu'man and

many of his supporters had flown to Cairo in an attempt to persuade Nasser of their point of view, but they had been put under house arrest; the Egyptian leadership knew it could not depend on Nu'man to achieve its policies in Yemen.⁹⁶

The replacing of Nu'man did not solve the Yemeni dispute and the UAR found itself more involved in the military encounter in the Yemeni arena where the number of its troops reached nearly 70,000. After Nu'man's arrest in Cairo, Sheikh 'Abd Allah bin Hussein al-Ahmar and around 250 of the main pro-Republican tribal leaders were forced to leave Yemen through Beihan, a border British protectorate on 20 July, where they announced they would travel to the KSA to meet King Faisal.⁹⁷

In March 1965 Faisal had attempted to ease internal Saudi resentment about corruption within the KSA by reducing Saud's status to that of a figurehead and by taking virtual control over the government; in November he acceded to the throne and pressed Washington to approve the sale of an air defence system to his country.⁹⁸ The US supported the Saudi purchase of modern British aircraft worth over \$100 million with Washington supplying related missiles and communications equipment. In June 1966 Faisal visited Washington and was rewarded with a contract to buy some \$100 million worth of military vehicles.⁹⁹

Following reports that Saudi Arabia had received the first large sale of aircraft and other modern military equipment from both the US and the UK¹⁰⁰, President Nasser visited Djiddah in Saudi Arabia on 21 August and signed the Djiddah agreement with King Faisal

on 23 August. This was welcomed by the Johnson administration:

In the Middle East, we are happy to see the statesmanlike agreement between King Faisal (of Saudi Arabia) and President Nasser (of the United Arab Republic) which seems to offer great promise of a peaceful settlement in Yemen. This crisis has long been a disruptive element in the relations between our two friends. We share their confidence that this long-festering issue is on the road to settlement by negotiations rather than force.¹⁰¹

This Djiddah agreement called for: an immediate ceasefire in Yemen under the auspices of a KSA-UAR peace committee; a plebiscite to be held in Yemen by November 1966; a Republican-Royalist conference to be held in the town of Harad in Yemen to agree on a provisional government; the departure of UAR troops in 10 months beginning on 23 November 1965; the cessation of KSA military assistance to Royalists, and prohibition on the use of Saudi soil against Yemen.¹⁰²

On 23 November, a third Republican-Royalist conference convened in Harad with UAR and KSA observers in attendance. This conference lasted until 24 December when it was announced it had failed. This put an end to further political efforts to solve Royalist-Republican differences. It had become clear during the last two weeks of the conference that neither side was prepared to reconcile its beliefs and objectives without a fight. Meanwhile there were indications that the Egyptian-Saudi agreement on the Yemeni dispute did not actually solve the Yemeni problem and that the UAR and the KSA were willing to support their allies by all means. On 21 December, Riyadh announced it had signed letters of intent (subsequently implemented) with US and UK companies for a \$400 million air defence project which would include British interceptors, US Hawk missiles, ground radar and communications equipment.¹⁰³

The war worsened as a direct result of the support given to the counter-revolution by the KSA; Egyptian casualties were greater than at any time previous. This appeared to be part of a tougher American policy toward Nasser's Egypt:

The Johnson administration didn't display as much patience toward Arab affairs as President Kennedy had, and President Johnson's identification, in Arab eyes, with a pro-Israel position made it difficult to continue the same openness of dialogue in Cairo that had emerged during the negotiations on Yemen¹⁰⁴.

Despite the failure of the Djiddah agreement which had only been reached under US pressure on both Cairo and Riyadh, the US Administration tried to revive it. US Secretary of State Dean Rusk told the UAR Parliamentary Speaker, Anwar al-Sadat, who was then in Washington, that he felt the agreement was not dead, and urged further Egyptian-Saudi efforts to implement it. The same views were expressed in an exchange of letters between the King of the KSA and the US President who considered the Djiddah agreement "an act of statesmanship which still affords the best approach for peaceful resolution of the Yemen conflict."¹⁰⁵

In late February 1966, press sources linked the simultaneous visit of both Prince Sultan bin 'Abdul-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia and Anwar al-Sadat to Washington, indicating that the US was mediating in the Yemeni conflict.¹⁰⁶ The same sources added that Dean Rusk was on his way to Cairo and Riyadh. The earlier US mediation efforts in the Yemeni conflict seemed to have paved the way for a reconciliation during 1966. ¹⁰⁷.

While the Yemeni conflict was moving toward a solution, London announced on 22 February

that it would withdraw from the southern areas of Yemen in 1969. This encouraged Egypt to strengthen its forces in the YAR at the cost of Cairo's "readiness against the Israelis."¹⁰⁸ On the same day, Nasser announced that he would keep his forces in the YAR for a few years more to protect the Yemeni revolution against "imperialist and reactionary conspiracies."¹⁰⁹

On 15 March 1966 the US informed the UAR that the KSA sincerely wanted a settlement and Washington "wished to avoid becoming a party to negotiations and did not espouse any particular formula for implementing the agreement."¹¹⁰ In the spring of 1966, Kuwait began to mediate. The US Administration instructed its Embassies in Cairo, Riyadh and Kuwait to encourage the UAR and the KSA to make some concessions in order to reach a fruitful and peaceful settlement.¹¹¹

At the same time the Johnson Administration continued to pursue a tough policy towards Egypt. Ambassador Hart justified this policy saying that the Egyptian President who "followed the policy of maintaining a kind of equilibrium between the Soviet bloc on the one side and the Western bloc on the other...gave encouragement to the formation of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference, which had a very pronounced left-wing anti-Western, anti-U.S. flavour, really was almost Communist-dominated from the beginning. This puzzled Washington. And he did things of that kind."¹¹²

The US wheat shipments¹¹³ to Cairo were reduced while more military and political support

was given to Saudi Arabia and Israel. This situation, as was revealed later, was a result of mis-understanding or exaggeration by some members of the Egyptian government. 'Ali Sabri,¹¹⁴ for example distorted facts to Nasser, and he then attacked the United States in one of his speeches. The deterioration of relations between Cairo and Washington at that time led to a more rigid US stance against both the UAR and the YAR and greater support to both Israel and the KSA.¹¹⁵

On 22 June 1966, King Faisal arrived in Washington where President Johnson reaffirmed US interest in Saudi Arabia "and Faisal's personal security."¹¹⁶ Both sides determined "to guard the free nations against the threat of international Communism."¹¹⁷ Johnson also told Faisal that "though we had difficulties with President Nasser, we believed it was prudent to leave room for dialogue and not force Nasser further toward the Communist countries." On the Yemeni issue Johnson urged Faisal to maintain self-restraint and expressed his conviction that "he doubted Nasser would dare attack Saudi Arabia without provocation."¹¹⁸

This appeared to coincide with some improvement in YAR-US relations. On 2 July 1966, the US Charge d'Affaires visited the acting YAR President, Muhammad 'Ali 'Uthman (Sallal was summoned by Cairo), during which the former presented an explanation and justification for the US bombardment of storage depots in North Vietnam. The Charge noted in a telegram to the US Department that though the Yemeni media had become once again influenced by Cairo and which "was sharply critical of US bombing and other actions in Vietnam, 'Uthman seemed understanding of US goals and action, and receptive to our position." The YAR

acting President also passed on to the Charge what he believed to be secret information: that the Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin during his recent visit to Egypt had advised Cairo to improve its relations with the US as well as to seek wheat aid from it.¹¹⁹

During the second half of 1966, the US Embassy in the YAR maintained contact with the anti-Egyptian Yemeni Republican leaders. Records of meetings show cautious US sympathy for politicians such as Muhammad 'Ali 'Uthman, currently acting President, who "desire to free themselves from UAR embrace." The US Embassy official dealings with the Republican leaders were cautious, expressing moral support and advising them to contact the Saudis, but withholding any political or financial support because "among other major considerations would be effect on overall US-UAR relations of our backing openly anti-UAR coup in Yemen."¹²⁰ The instructions of the US Secretary of State to the US Embassy in Ta'iz in August stressed the following points to be communicated to the Republican leaders: (1) the US sympathised with those Yemenis who desired to be their own masters; (2) it was not US policy to become involved in Yemeni internal politics; (3) Kuwaiti mediation efforts offered the best hope for the withdrawal of UAR forces from Yemen and for the overall settlement of the conflict, and the US therefore hoped the YAR would cooperate with the KSA and the UAR; (4) as the US Secretary had promised the YAR Foreign Minister, Dr Hassan Makki, in 1965, the US would help the Yemenis to an extent possible once the settlement was achieved and a broad-based regime was set up.¹²¹

US Secretary of State Dean Rusk also informed the American Embassy in Ta'iz of the

following:

American involvement in 'Uthman scheme¹²² would entail major US political and financial commitment to group we have little fundamental reason to trust and whose chances success on surface at least seem extremely slim. Expect \$700 thousand monthly figure would be only beginning Yemeni financial needs. Political consequences our involvement would far exceed limits Near East... While we do not wish push 'Uthman back into UAR arms, they should be given clearly to understand USG unprepared become involved in factional Yemeni politics.¹²³

Apart from its cautious approach in its dealings with Yemeni factional politics, one of the implications of this policy toward the YAR Republican opposition was that Washington was not interested in Sana'a and would not, therefore, provide 'Uthman with the monthly \$700,000 he asked for to help some Yemeni Republican leaders to counter UAR influence in the YAR.

A report from the US Embassy in Ta'iz, dated 14 August 1966, addressed to the US Assistant Secretary of State, Raymond Hare, informed the Department that the YAR moderate leaders "widely known to be working to reduce UAR control may be reluctant to be seen meeting him."¹²⁴ Dinsmore left for Sana'a the same day in order to be able to meet 'Uthman and to convey to him the message from Secretary Rusk, "so they will know exactly where we stand."¹²⁵

The cautious US sympathy with the Republican opposition shows that Washington was also continuing its efforts to establish better communication with the pro-UAR Republicans.

President Sallal, who, on 12 August returned from a semi-exile in Cairo, also made a new move towards Washington. A few days before his return to Sana'a from Cairo, the Yemeni President stated publicly: "We do not plan to implement Socialism here. We have no capitalism. All are poor here". In the same statement he expressed his appreciation of the Eastern bloc as well of the United States for their unconditional assistance.¹²⁶

Severance of Diplomatic Relations

Sallal's return led to a dispute with Prime Minister Hassan al-'Amri, his cabinet, and other high ranking officers. The dispute reached its climax in mid-September when the Egyptian army captured the opponents of the Egyptian policy, among them 40 officers, the Prime Minister and his cabinet, and sent them all into exile and detention in the UAR capital. Sana'a Radio announced on 16 September that Premier al-'Amri had resigned. President Sallal formed a new cabinet whose members were mostly supporters of the UAR.¹²⁷

These internal developments, which showed enormous UAR influence in the YAR, had a negative effect on the YAR's foreign relations which had been initiated during the Nu'man and the 'Amri governments. As the relationship between Nasser's UAR and the Johnson administration was deteriorating at this time, YAR-USA relations were also badly affected. Evidence of the deteriorating relations between Sana'a and Washington appeared on 28 September 1966, when the YAR government declared a USAID employee who was an American citizen, **persona non grata**, and the US Embassy failed to have the decision

reversed.¹²⁸

Another encounter between the Yemeni opponents of UAR policies in Yemen and al-Sallal's government took place in October 1966, when the Egyptian forces executed the Minister of Tribal Affairs, Muhammad al-Ru'aini, and four other high-ranking officers, on fabricated charges of having "plotted against the Republican and progressive orientation of the YAR."¹²⁹ The executions were followed by anti-US demonstrations and strong anti-US campaigns in the YAR and UAR media.

On 11 October 1966, the YAR Foreign Minister, Muhammad 'Abdul-'Aziz Sallam, who was attending the UN General Assembly in New York, visited Washington, where he met US Assistant Secretary of State, Raymond Hare, and USAID Assistant Administrator William B. Macomber. During this meeting Hare denied his country's involvement "in any attempts to manipulate the internal affairs"¹³⁰ of the YAR. Following Sallam's talks in Washington, the US Administration informed its Embassy in Sana'a of the "firm intent to continue to maintain the US presence in Yemen in order not to leave the field open to Russian and Chinese Communist penetration, and to continue to provide a major Western alternative to Arab reliance on Communist powers."¹³¹

Meanwhile, in November 1966, the first Hawk battery arrived in Saudi Arabia. Following UAR air attacks on Saudi depots in Nadjran, the US, deployed a supply unit to the town of Djizan in mid February 1967. It also instructed the US military training mission to assist the

Saudi air defence units in the border with the YAR, and confirmed in principle the Saudi commitment to a US agreement to provide Riyadh with air-to-air missiles.¹³²

Despite these setbacks to its relations with the YAR and the UAR, in early April the US proposed a US mission of mediation to meet all the parties involved in the Yemeni issue. Cairo and Riyadh "agreed to accept Ambassador Hare, but final agreement on terms of reference were never reached."¹³³

25 April 1967 witnessed the climax of the crisis between Sana'a and Washington. The YAR announced on this day that two USAID employees, Liapis and Hartman, had been arrested allegedly entering a military warehouse in Ta'iz, which had resulted in the killing of a Yemeni and an Egyptian soldier.¹³⁴ The US Embassy asked the Yemeni authorities to allow an Embassy officer to remain with the detained men. The YAR media claimed a US plot to destroy the city. Demonstrations followed the announcement of the so-called offensive and Yemeni students attacked the American Embassy in Ta'iz with stones "and AID offices were broken into and ransacked."¹³⁵ The anti-US propaganda arising from the case of the USAID employees' in Ta'iz worried the US. The Ta'iz Embassy suggested that a US Presidential letter, and Arab and Eastern European mediation on a humanitarian basis, might solve the problem. The Attache expressed sorrow that in the light of UAR influence at that time: "[As] far as we know not one Arab government has put in sympathetic word for us in right places."¹³⁶

David Ransom, the official in charge of Arabian Peninsula affairs in the Department of State in early 1990 who in 1967 was a junior officer in the US Embassy in Ta'iz, remembered:

I was sitting in my house at night. Knocks. "Beit al-Halali." I went to the door and it was a messenger of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 10 o'clock at night. I took the note. I had only had a little Arabic, and he said I had to deliver it at night. It was a very dark night, dark in the streets. No lights outside. No traffic. I opened the note and I couldn't understand it...It was a long list of names and there was one phrase which I couldn't translate: "ashkhas gheir marghoobeen" [*personae non grata*]. I didn't know what it meant. My wife and I had the dictionary out and we were looking it up. Suddenly we realized that this was a long list of names, 26 names of people who were being asked to leave...then I walked over to the Charge's house, at midnight, knocked at the door and gave him the note... and the result was that the American government withdrew most of the American mission.¹³⁷

The YAR Foreign Minister at the time (Ambassador to the UN in February 1990) subsequently revealed to this author that the whole story had been fabricated:

It wasn't true that two USAID employees tried to storm explosives warehouse in Ta'iz in April 1967. I have never heard of such a warehouse. What happened was that Tal'at Hassan, Commander of the UAR Forces in Yemen, who used to consider himself the real ruler of Yemen, called at my place after visiting the Interior Minister, Muhammad al-Ahnoumi, and asked us to accompany him to Ta'iz. He even prevented us from asking permission from President Sallal to leave the capital for Ta'iz. There Egyptian intelligence said that the two Americans tried to storm a military warehouse in order to sack the city of Ta'iz and that they were caught just in time. They did not show us this imaginary warehouse.¹³⁸

Sallam also revealed he had attended part of the interrogation of the two US AID employees, who complained to him that they had been mistreated and beaten by the Egyptians. He continued: the "Egyptian intelligence had arranged the burning of the American Embassy, a decision which was not sanctioned by the Yemeni government." He maintained that what happened was a reflection of the Egyptian-American relations at that time, and did not serve Yemen interests. "The UAR wanted to wreak revenge on the Americans in Yemen." To justify his position and that of his government, Sallam made it clear that "at that time there

were 70,000 Egyptian troops in the country and if any objected to Tala't Hassan's decisions" they would "manufacture an accusation and execute us as traitors of God and Yemen."¹³⁹ He also said there was little he could do to express good-will towards US employees serving in Yemen:

I went myself to their homes to arrange with them their departure, in order to avoid further complications that would harm future mutual relations, because I was sure that such Egyptian policies were not serving Yemen's interests.¹⁴⁰

The US Secretary of State immediately ordered all AID personnel and dependents of other US government personnel to leave the YAR, and announced that there was to be an immediate reduction to a skeleton staff in the US Embassy. By 1 May all Americans except the nine diplomats were ordered to remain had been flown to Ethiopia.¹⁴¹ According to Muhammad Sallam, YAR Foreign Minister at the time, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk wrote a warning letter to the UAR Foreign Minister saying that he would take retaliatory action "against the forgery of the incident and the mistreatment and beating of the two USAID employees", and he ended his letter by saying that "what happened would not pass without retaliation."¹⁴²

The release of the two USAID employees on 16 May and their departure the next day, calmed the crisis, preventing further deterioration in the relationship between the YAR and the US. According to a well-informed Yemeni security source the crisis had been created by both Yemeni and Egyptian intelligence, in reaction to US policies toward the UAR and YAR¹⁴³; it was meant to halt any further contact between Sana'a and Washington. It succeeded in that relations between the two nations were virtually frozen for a period.

On 5 June 1967 the Israeli-Arab Six Day War broke out. Cairo saw it as "an American-Israeli war against the anti-Western movement in the area."¹⁴⁴ The US, which had supplied Israel with tanks, bombers and fighters for the first time just a few months before, succeeded in striking at the Arab nationalist movement from Tel Aviv and in reducing the Nasserite influence in the region.

By involving itself in the YAR, the UAR acted upon its national obligation to support liberation movements against colonialism and imperialism but it did not calculate that its military involvement would last for long. Nasser stated later: " I sent a squadron to the Yemen, then I needed to consolidate it with 70,000 men"¹⁴⁵. The Six Day War came at a time when Egyptian resources and forces were nearly drained by their long involvement in the Yemeni arena. An ex-UAR War Minister, Muhammad Fawzi, wrote in his memoirs:

During the first few days of the North Yemeni revolution Egypt assessed that a few planes and a small force of 1,000 men were enough to assist the revolution for a period of three months, but the foreign military, and economic and political support to the Royalists, led to the expansion of the Yemeni civil war, and consequently the number of the Egyptian troops in Yemen had to be raised to 70 thousands in 1964. It was the American stance that led to this extension of the war and thus to the draining and weakening of the Egyptian forces in this war¹⁴⁶.

On 6 June 1967 Sana'a, in common with several other Arab states, officially severed its diplomatic relations with Washington and with all other pro-US countries ostensibly because of "Washington's blind support to Israel against the Arab cause in Palestine". According to the US Department of State "following the lead of the UAR, the Yemeni government called in our Charge d'Affaires and delivered a memorandum charging US participation with Israel in attacks against the UAR, and severing Yemen's diplomatic relations with us. The Yemenis

asked the remaining staff of our Embassy to depart. By June 9, the last person had left, and the Italian Embassy in Yemen accepted responsibility for US affairs."¹⁴⁷

The total dependence of the YAR on the UAR had led to Egyptian interference in domestic Yemeni affairs to the extent that the Revolutionary Commanding Council and Yemeni Cabinet meetings were attended by an Egyptian secretary who reported every detail to Cairo.¹⁴⁸ According to a former US Ambassador to Yemen "the trouble with the Republic was it was in the wrong hands at that time." He expressed his belief that "if it had been in the hands of Ahmad Nu'man or Muhammad Zubairi it would have been in good hands, and it would have been very much easier for the British to recognize it."¹⁴⁹ This judgement ignores the fact that without UAR support during the first two years of the revolution it was unlikely that the Republic would have survived. On the other hand, without UAR influence, Sana'a-Washington relations might have not deteriorated to the point of complete severance of relations which was not in the YAR's interests.

Up to June 1967 the US achieved its objectives in the region, "for the Yemeni revolution was prevented from bringing about either the instability of Saudi Arabia or a direct UAR-KSA military clash, and the oil resources of the Gulf were not jeopardized."¹⁵⁰ On this issue Ambassador Hart commented:

It didn't gain us very much to stay either because we really never accomplished anything in the Yemen during that period. ['Abdallah al-Sallal] was a man you couldn't accomplish any business with...They finally threw us out in '67. We'd put our money in and we hated to give it up. We had a position there; the Russians were trying to move in; the Chinese, the Red Chinese were there; the Egyptians were there. What we would have missed by being thrown out was intelligence take and the

informational take that we were able to get over that occupational period. And that was useful for us to have it.¹⁵¹

Yemen's dissatisfaction with the US during 1967 was mainly a result of Washington's policies towards Republican Yemen. Although Yemen's decision to break relations with the US was consistent with Arab policies at that time, as a result of the American attitude towards the Palestinian cause, it was mostly the outcome of the deterioration in bilateral relations.¹⁵²

In conclusion, it is clear that when the Yemen civil war began, as a consequence of the revolution and the counter-revolution, Yemeni-American policy was highly influenced by the Soviet, Egyptian, British and Saudi positions. The Americans saw the Yemeni revolution as a communist threat in the peninsula and consequently chose to support the KSA and other conservative claims in the Arab world. For them it was a matter of securing their interests through confronting the USSR in the area and safeguarding the Saudi monarchy. To achieve these objectives, US tactics aimed at getting the United Arab Republic out of the peninsula, preventing the USSR from having any real influence, curtailing Nasser's nationalist expansionist aims, and taming the Yemeni revolution so that it would not affect American allies and interests in Saudi Arabia, Aden and the protectorates, and Jordan. The American Ambassador in Cairo, John Badeau justified this stance: "...the object of American diplomacy was to create a situation in which the integrity and stability of Saudi Arabia and Jordan would be protected from the shock waves of civil war in Yemen. By entering the fray on behalf of the royalist cause, the two countries were committing their resources to a prolonged and uncertain struggle, and inviting an even sharper Egyptian response. Given this

involvement, the question the United States faced was how civil war in Yemen could be confined to Yemen and defused as a threat to neighbouring countries."¹⁵³

However, the benefits of the YAR-US relations during their first phase were very limited for Yemen, because Washington's policy in the Yemen was subordinated to its general policy in the Middle East as a whole. As David Ransom subsequently commented:

What we were trying to do in the Middle East as a whole was to prevent a split between the conservative Arab countries and the progressive Arab countries, a split between the Soviet Union on one side and us on the other. It was called at that time a pluralization, which means that any dispute could become a broader, very serious, dispute. And in Yemen, we tried with recognition, to stand with one foot in both camps. And in fact what happened was that neither the Saudis nor the Egyptians were happy. Each kept pulling us. The situation was difficult for the US. Yes, because the situation was difficult in the Arab world. You have to remember the attacks from Egypt on Saudi Arabia and on Jordan... Anyway the policy failed, because, we think, the government of Egypt went too far. Although to my mind, this is a all speculation. After we were thrown out of Yemen, the British had already announced that they were leaving South Yemen, and the Egyptians were very confident and decided to stay. They also felt that they were coming into a new era where they have the backing of the Soviet Union, where no Arab could oppose them, and where they would be able to expand their influence in the Arab world.¹⁵⁴

Notes

1. In several telegrams from US Taiz embassy to the US Department of State dated 14 September 1964, **National Security File, Volume II**.
2. **Yemen** (an Administrative history, prepared US Department of State for the White House at the Close of the Johnson Administration).
3. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiyyah**, p. 491.
4. **Al-Djumhuriyyah**, Ta'iz, 12 January 1963.
5. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1963.
6. Riyadh-London relations were broken off during the Suez crisis in 1956. According to Safran, in June 1963 a British military mission arrived in the KSA to help improve the training of the Saudi National Guard and later that year they provided planes, pilots, and surface to air missiles to the Saudi army, **Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security**, p. 97.
7. Beihan was on of the British protectorates in the southern areas of Yemen.
8. **John F. Kennedy, Central White House File, Box No. 6**.
9. **New Republic**, 23 January 1963, p. 10.
10. **US Department of State Bulletin**, Volume 68, No. 21, January 1963, pp. 90-91.
11. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
12. Oral History Interview with Ambassador Badeau, p. 16.
13. **US Department of State Bulletin**, 28 January 1963, p. 91.
14. Document No. 44 in **Sanawat al-Ghalayan**, pp. 927-8.
15. **American University of Beirut Bulletin**, Beirut, 19 January 1963.
16. *Ibid.*, 28 January 1963.
17. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1963.
18. *Ibid.*, 7 February 1963.
19. **The Yemen Crisis**, p. 13.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

21. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
22. "The War in Yemen: Did Nasser Lure the US out on a Limb?," *ibid.*, p. 10.
23. **Arabia Without Sultans**, p. 122.
24. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 18 and p. 39.
25. Author's interview with Dr Stookey.
26. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
27. Ibid.
28. **Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963: A Case Study of Mediation**, p. 11.
29. Letter from President Kennedy to Crown Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia, **Department of State Bulletin**, Volume 68, No. 1231, 28 January 1963, pp. 144-145, Annex 9.
30. **Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963: A Case Study of Mediation**, p. 2.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. **Yemen**.
34. Quoting an unofficial translation of the letter, released to this writer by the US Department of State.
35. Ibid. In this letter Nasser assured President Kennedy that the UAR was "in possession of the documents proving that some American pilots participated in the transportation of troops and equipment from Jordan to Saudi Arabia to the Yemeni borders."
36. **The Yemen Crisis**, p. 21.
37. Ibid., p. 21.
38. Oral History Interview with George McGhee conducted by the Kennedy Library, 13 August 1964, p. 13.
39. In telegrams from US Ta'iz Embassy to the US Department of State dated 14 September 1964, **National Security File, Volume II**.
40. Ibid.
41. **Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963: A Case Study of Mediation**, p. 11.

42. Ibid., p. 11.
43. **Saudi-Yemeni Relations**, p. 63.
44. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
45. Press Conference by Dr Ralph Bunche, **The Guardian**, London, 5 March 1963.
46. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 50.
47. Former US ambassador to Brazil and India, who was successful to help settle the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, **The Yemen Crisis**, p. 21.
48. Oral History Interview with Ambassador George McGhee, p. 13.
49. US Secretary Dean Rusk's News Conference, 8 March 1963, **Department of State bulletin**, Volume 68, No. 1239, p. 437.
50. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
51. **Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963: a Case Study in mediation**, p. 50.
52. Ibid.
53. In telegrams from the US Taiz Embassy to the US Department of State dated 14 September 1964, **National Security File**, Volume II.
54. **Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963: A Case Study of Mediation**, p. 51.
55. The UN mission in the YAR was established in June and began its operation on 4 July, McMullen, *ibid.*, p. 46.
56. **American University of Beirut Bulletin**, 2-19 January 1963.
57. Benson Lee Grayson, **Saudi-American Relations**, Washington DC, 1982, p. 95.
58. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
59. US Department of State instructions to US Embassies in London, Cairo, Djiddah, Taiz and Bahrein, 23 July 1964, **National Security File**, Volume II.
60. In addition to participating with the British in a \$1400 million air defence program, the US also authorized in 1965 an agreement for the US Corps of Engineers to supervise the construction of a vast network of military facilities, and in 1966 sponsored a \$100 million program to provide combat vehicles, mostly trucks, to increase the mobility of the Saudi armed forces, **Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security**, p. 119.

61. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. **American University of Beirut Bulletin**, 14 April 1964.
65. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. The US Ambassador in Cairo was also the US Ambassador to the Yemen after the YAR revolution. In Sana'a no US Ambassador was nominated. James Cortada, the US Charge was accorded the rank of Minister on 16 October 1963.
68. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
69. In several telegrams from the US Embassy in Taiz to the US Department of State, 14 September 1964, **National Security File**, Volume II.
70. *Ibid.*
71. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
72. US Secretary of State's circular to the US Embassies in Cairo, Djiddah, London, Taiz, USUN and Aden Consulate, **National Security File**, Volume II.
73. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 11 November 1963.
74. US embassy telegram to the State Department, 13 December 1964, **National Security File**, Volume II.
75. **Yemen: The Unknown War**, p.200.
76. **Saudi-American Relations**, p. 97.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
79. In a telegram from the US Embassy in Taiz to the State Department, 10 February 1965, **National Security File**, Volume II.
80. *Ibid.*

81. Following this meeting al-Dailami's "chains were unlocked and he was permitted to visit his family in Taiz escorted with a soldier", *ibid*.
82. In a telegram from the US Embassy to the State Department, 10 February 1965, **National Security File, Volume II**.
83. *Ibid*.
84. *Ibid*.
85. See US Charge's telegram to the State Department dated 9 February 1965, **National Security File-Country File, Volume II**.
86. **Yemen**, *ibid*.
87. *Ibid*.
88. *Ibid*.
89. **The Two Yemens**, p. 210.
90. **Al-'Ilaqat al-Yamaniyyah al-Sa'udiyyah**, p. 168.
91. *Ibid*.
92. See incoming telegram from the US Embassy in Taiz to the US Department of State, 30 April 1965, **National Security File-Country File, Volume II**.
93. *Ibid*.
94. See US embassy telegram to the US State Department, 2 May 1965, *ibid*.
95. US Embassy telegram to the US Department of State, 3 May 1965, *ibid*.
96. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
97. **The War in Yemen**, p. 148.
98. **Saudi-Yemeni Relations**, p. 96.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
100. Lawrence Mosher, "Nasser's Drive for South Arabia," **The Reporter**, 9 February 1967, pp.24-27.
101. **Department of State Bulletin**, Volume 53, No. 20, september 1965, p. 476.

102. **The Reporter**, 9 February 1967, pp. 24-27.
103. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
104. **The American Approach towards the Arab World**, p.146.
105. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
106. **Al-Hayat**, Beirut, 22 February 1966.
107. *Ibid.*
108. **Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security**, p.121.
109. **Al-Dawr al-Misri fi al-Yaman**, pp. 418-19.
110. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*
112. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 35.
113. The wheat issue was very sensitive to Egypt because Cairo used to pay 75 percent of the price in Egyptian pounds. At the same time, this percentage was considered as a long term loan to Egypt at 4 percent interest to be directed to infrastructural projects according to a special agreement between the two governments. The other 25 percent of the price used to be paid in hard currency to cover the expenses of the American mission in Cairo. It is of interest to note that Egypt used to get \$100 million worth of wheat every year. This wheat loan used to be directed to infrastructure projects preceding 1959, but of this year the same amount of loan was used to finance development projects. See Muhammad Hassanein Haykal, "Bisarahah" **Al-Ahram**, 22 July 1966 as in **Al-Dawr al-Misri fi al-Yaman**, p. 320.
114. **Azmat al-Ummah al-'Arabiah**, pp. 314-24.
115. *Ibid.*
116. **Yemen**, *ibid.*
117. **Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents**, 27 June 1966, p. 820.
118. "**Yemen**", *ibid.*
119. US Embassy telegram to the US State Department, 3 July 1966, **National Security File-Country File**, Volume II.
120. See telegram from the US Department of State to the US Embassy in Taiz, 11 August 1966, *ibid.*

121. Ibid.
122. The telegram (ibid.) suggests that 'Uthman has demanded \$700 thousand a month from Washington to help the so-called "moderate Republicans" resist UAR influence in the YAR.
123. Ibid.
124. In a telegram from the US Embassy in Taiz to the US Department of State, 14 August 1991, ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. **American University of Beirut Bulletin**, 5 August 1966.
127. **Al-Siyasah**, Kuwait, 17 September 1966.
128. "**Yemen**", ibid.
129. **Al-Siyasah**, Kuwait, 30 October 1966.
130. **Yemen**, ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
134. Colonel 'Abdul-Rahim 'Abd-Allah, **Memoirs**, Beirut, 1987, pp-67-68.
135. **Yemen**, ibid.
136. US Embassy telegrams to the US Department of State, 7 May 1967, **National Security File-Country File**, Volume II.
137. Author's interview with David Ransom, Washington DC, 8 February 1990.
138. Author's interview with YAR Ambassador to the UN, Muhammad 'Abdul-'Aziz Sallam, New York, 20 February 1990.
139. Ibid.
140. Ibid.
141. **Yemen**, ibid.
142. Ibid.

143. In a talk with Brigadier Muhammad 'Ali al-Akwa', the military leader of the 5th November 1967 coup d'etat and ex-director of the YAR Intelligence Service, Sana'a, September 1988.
144. "Al-Siyasah al-Amrikiyyah wa Muhawalat Ihtiwa Al-Thawrah fi al-Yaman", in **Al-Siyasah al-Amrikiyyah wa al-'Arab**, p. 171.
145. Ahmad Hamroosh, **Kissat Thalatha wa-'Ishreen Yuliu: Abdul-Nasser wal 'Arab**, Cairo, n.d., p.2.
146. General Muhammad Fawzi, **Harb al-Thalath Sanawat**, Beirut, 1983, pp. 22-24.
147. **Yemen**, ibid.
148. Ahmad al-Kibsi, **Political Participation Pre-and-Post-Revolutionary Yemen**, Unpublished PhD Thesis, USA, University of Denver, 1984, pp. 159-160.
149. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, pp. 61-62.
150. **The American Approach towards the Arab World**, p. 146.
151. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 60.
152. Stated in a special interview with this writer by the then Minister of Defence, 'Abdul-Karim Al-Sukkari, Sana'a 1987, and statements by General Hassan al-'Amri, the then Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, in **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, December 1967 and January-February 1968.
153. **The American Approach towards the Arab World**, p.135.
154. Author's interview with David Ransom.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESTORATION OF RELATIONS

The severance of relations between Sana'a and Washington in June 1967 isolated the YAR more than ever before. Many Yemeni leaders were aware that cutting off direct communications with the US did not serve the best interests of their country, especially since the decision had been taken under UAR influence. They decided that one of their major tasks, after achieving an internal reconciliation, would be to repair relations with the rich and developed west as events within Yemen and the region after severance demonstrates.

Interlude

One month after the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, an Arab summit took place in al-Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. At the end of this summit, President Nasser and King Faisal agreed to the formation of a tri-partite committee on Yemen to prepare plans to guarantee UAR troop withdrawal and the suspension of Saudi support for the counter-revolution. Nasser and Faisal reached a modus vivendi by which Cairo decided to come to terms with Riyadh and withdraw its forces from the YAR, paving the way for Saudi Arabia and Washington to give more assistance and backing to the Royalists. This happened because Egypt had become financially dependent on Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya in its struggle to overcome the consequences of the Six Days War.¹ Kuwait, the KSA and Libya pledged an annual sum totalling of £135 million to help the UAR and Jordan recover from their economic losses of the war. Riyadh's

share in this pledge was equivalent to \$98 million² every year in return for Nasser's assurances to withdraw completely. David Ransom, former senior diplomat in the YAR and later Director of Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the US Department of State, told this author:

I think Nasser made a terrible mistake when announcing that he was closing the Strait of Tiran and putting his forces into the Sinai. Everybody knows what happened after that. I am not saying anything about who fired the first shot, but those two moves by Nasser were a great mistake. After the defeat in June, Nasser withdraw from Yemen. This was part of the price for dealing with Saudi Arabia, but it was also necessary, because his dreams were finished. After the withdrawal, the friends of Egypt in South Yemen lost... Those decisions created the modern situation of Yemen, I think, [stuck] between the most radical state in the Arab world and the most conservative state.³

The YAR dependence on the UAR between 1962 and 1967 left Sana'a alone to deal with its own internal and external problems. The Republican leaders who had been detained in Cairo since 15 September 1966 returned to Sana'a where they on 5 November deposed the President and his government. By early December 1967 all Egyptian troops had withdrawn. This was followed by increased Royalist military activity around Sana'a in preparation for a planned final assault on the capital. The Royalists, backed by the Saudis and British directly and by the US indirectly, launched the strongest attack of the civil war and layed seige to Sana'a for seventy days between 28 November 1967 and 8 February 1968. The YAR Prime Minister and Commander General of the Armed Forces officially accused the US of continuing its supply of arms to the Royalists, stating "the Republican forces had captured some American arms which were different from those supplied by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."⁴ During the siege the YAR government also issued a communique stating that mercenaries from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and the US were the real organizers of the strong offensive against Sana'a. The communique also accused Washington

of supervising the siege.⁵ In fact there is no evidence that the US was providing the Royalists with arms to counteract the Republican government; it was the KSA which financed American arms from various sources as well as arms from its own stocks and made them available for the counter-revolution.

Some American military advisors participated in the civil war as individuals, not as representative of official US government policy. Among them was Bushrod Howard who, through contacting the Royalist Prime Minister, Hassan bin Yahya Hamid al-Din, offered his services in propaganda and political work in the US, and who succeeded in campaigning against Egyptian intervention inside the Senate and in cutting American aid to Nasser. These American individuals may have had contact with American intelligence agencies. Thus the US sought to contain the Yemeni conflict, but avoided any military Vietnam-like involvement. The US Minister to Yemen in 1962 later stated:

Some boxes bearing the AID handclasp symbol and some weapons or pieces of military equipment were found or captured from the Royalists by the Republicans...[but] basically the weaponry did not come from our sources. It came from other places, old miscellaneous this and that they'd picked up all over the place (there was a great deal of help given by Iran, eventually), but it was small arms weaponry of miscellaneous kinds.⁶

Based on an agreement signed by President Sallal and the Soviets in September of that year, Moscow provided Sana'a with aircraft and other military supplies.⁷ On 1 December the Royalists claimed that they had shot down a Soviet-piloted MiG, and evidence was published in the British press to prove direct Soviet military participation.⁸ The US Department of State confirmed on 13 December 1967 that the USSR had supplied arms to the Republic in addition

to the participation of Soviet pilots.⁹ The Yemeni revolutionary forces, supported by Republican Sayyids, some tribal leaders and army officers sympathetic to the Republican front, eventually defeated the siege.¹⁰ Soviet support of the YAR was severely criticised by Washington, and the US Department of State warned the Soviet Union that it would not permit the continuation of Soviet interference in the Yemeni conflict.¹¹

Two contacts between the YAR and the US government occurred between June 1967 and March 1968. While no details were released about the first meeting, the US Department of State revealed that during the second March, meeting the YAR had "suggested to the Department's Arabian Peninsula Country Director that the United States assign an officer to the Italian Embassy in Yemen, and asked us to communicate to the Saudi Arabian government the interest of the Yemeni government in ending the war."¹² The Yemeni representative, 'Ali Lutf al-Thawr¹³, told the American officials that "Yemeni Republican leaders were worried over the threat from leftist-radicals." ¹⁴ The US representative "assured the Minister of our of basic friendly intentions and noted that our recognition of the YAR had not been withdrawn," but pointed out that "the continuing civil war created a serious problem for the United States in considering any resumption of diplomatic ties." "We did not", he affirmed, "wish to become involved on either side of the Yemen conflict."¹⁵

Kadi 'Abdul-Rahman al-Iryani stated clearly in late July 1968 that the two revolutions in the south and the north of Yemen were "being exposed to aggression perpetrated by the same enemy"¹⁶ and that both revolutions were "facing the same imperialist and reactionary

forces."¹⁷ While in early 1968 the YAR continued to accuse the United States of being a "colonialist and imperialist" country, these accusations were toned down after the internal crisis of August 1968, which witnessed the military defeat of the Yemeni left by the "moderate Republicans". However, no American response was forthcoming during 1968, possibly because the US wanted to ensure that the Yemeni left was completely defeated. In early 1969 some official statements expressed the YAR's wish to restore relations with the US, and in an official statement the Yemeni Foreign Minister unveiled an initiative to restore relations with Washington. He justified this step by saying "Yemen was compelled by other forces when it severed its ties with the US in 1967"¹⁸ and that these "foreign partners were to blame for the decline of the relations in the past".¹⁹ In September 1969, under pressure from the growing strength of the People's Republic of South Yemen (PRSY), which was getting aid from the Soviet Union, and due to the need for the American aid, Prime Minister 'Abd Allah al-Kurshmi announced that Yemen would welcome the restoration of relations with the US if the latter showed good intentions.²⁰ Two months after the Prime Minister's widely quoted statement, an official meeting between foreign ministers of the two countries was held in the United Nations after which the Yemeni Foreign Minister said they had "discussed the issue of restoring relations."²¹

The Seventy Day Siege of Sana'a in 1967-1968 was the basis for a reconciliation with the forces which opposed Egyptian involvement in Yemeni affairs. The civil war came to an end in April 1970 and a compromise was reached which retained the Republic and brought back some former Royalist leaders, apart from members of the Hamid al-Din family. In early 1970

while a Sana'a-Riyadh reconciliation was being negotiated, it was reported that on a YAR initiative an American diplomatic office was to be permitted to open within the Italian Embassy in Sana'a. The US reciprocated the Yemeni initiative by permitting a Yemeni political office to open within the Somali Embassy in Washington.²² When Sana'a and Riyadh reached a compromise in 1970, it was expected that Sana'a-Washington relations would be quickly restored. But there seemed to be no pressure from the US to do so; this was perhaps because Washington had no reason to feel any threat from the YAR, since the general situation in the Middle East was already dominated by the American presence. The US Department Director of the Arabian Peninsula Country Desk stated other reasons for US caution towards the YAR after 1967: the possible influence of many other nations and the unstable political situation in Sana'a and the rest of the country.²³

The same attitude towards Sana'a prevailed in Riyadh. YAR-KSA reconciliation was greatly affected by the poor relations between Aden and Riyadh, which had resulted in a limited military encounter during the last few days of 1969. This confrontation did not seem to affect US policies towards North Yemen during this period. The American administration left the Republican regime in Sana'a to the KSA to tackle. Faisal continued to use tribal leverage against the Republican forces, but after the proclamation of the PRSY and the Royalist failure of the siege of Sana'a, he recognised the YAR and became reconciled with its leaders. However, Faisal continued to use his influence on the tribal and traditional forces in North Yemen in order to address the more radical forces in Aden, which started to threaten the Sheikdoms of the Peninsula.²⁴

Political developments within the two Yemens in 1970, it seemed, started to attract some US political interest in the YAR. On 29 April 1970 it was reported that Robert McClintock, the Second Secretary at the US Embassy in Sana'a before the break-off of relations in 1967, had returned to work in the American interests section of the Italian Embassy.²⁵ The famine which affected some two million people in many North Yemeni provinces in the summer of 1970 added more problems to the Yemeni economy. The famine was caused by three consecutive years of drought which dried up the country's complex irrigation and well system. The low-lying Tihama region along the Red Sea was the worst affected. The US was the most active country in the international relief operation which lasted for more than a year.²⁶

On 25 May 1971, the YAR's economic plight was highlighted by Prime Minister Ahmad Muhammad Nu'man, who told the Yemeni Parliament, the Consultative Assembly, that a deficit of 90 million riyals (£8 million) was foreseen for that year's budget which estimated an expenditure of 170 million riyals while exports would cover only 10 percent of the annual import bill. He also said that "appropriations needed for schools, hospitals, development and the maintenance of roads have been excluded from the budget." Premier Nu'man warned that the government had to repay a debt of £78 million which had been accumulated since 1956, of which £51 million had come from the Soviet Union and China²⁷. Nu'man made it clear that he was in favour of restoring relations with the US in the hope of receiving economic aid.

By 1972, several factors affecting the balance of power and oil interests in the region had aroused US interest in restoring relations with the YAR. In 1971 the British withdrew from the Gulf two years after the announcement by Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson, leaving a political vacuum threatened by the growing Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf area, South Yemen and the Horn of Africa. Another factor was the Arab boycott of the US following the 1967 Six Days War. David Ransom, Yemen Desk Officer in the US Department of State, whose "recommendations brought Secretary Rogers to Sana'a in 1972"²⁸, told this author that a major reason for the US to restore relations was "to break the front of the Arab world against the US"; thus relations with Sana'a were "the first step by an Arab country after the 1967 rupture...at that time that was important." He also said that the US had contacted the governments of Sudan and Algeria recommending that they follow the path of the YAR in restoring relations with the US. Both agreed to do this but ultimately only Khartoum did so.²⁹ The US was also concerned about the attempted 1969 coup in Saudi Arabia which, although it had been crushed, had aimed to replace the monarchical regime by a republican one.³⁰ In Libya, a successful revolution in 1969 had overthrown the monarch; President Kadhafi's anti-Western attitude led to the evacuation of the US air force base at Wheelus Field and the nationalisation of the marketing facilities of four North American oil companies as well as the cutback of the production operations of three other ones. Developments in the oil market were another factor. In December 1970, a decision had been taken in Caracas to raise oil prices and there was talk in Riyadh of nationalising ARAMCO. There was pressure on the Nixon administration from a number of US oil companies which assured the US government that there existed a real need for Arab oil to

supplement the declining domestic resources. The drift of the YAR towards Saudi Arabia resulting from its rivalry with South Yemen had led to a deterioration in relations with the USSR making it a suitable buffer zone between the US oil interests in the most important country to Washington, the KSA, and the most anti-US Arab country, the PDRY.³¹

Also very important was the rise of a radical South Yemen which severed relations with Washington on 24 October 1969. Aden started to enjoy increasing Soviet military and economic assistance and to incite the YAR opposition based in Aden to launch guerilla attacks to overthrow the YAR government. Ransom told this writer that Washington saw that the Soviet Union had gained a military foothold in South Yemen and therefore decided not to see another YAR challenge to Saudi Arabia, or to other friends in the Peninsula.³²

The rise of a radical pro-Soviet South Yemen in 1969, the beginnings of a leftist opposition guerilla war on YAR territory in an encounter with the strong Saudi influence in Sana'a, and the YAR's support of the PRSY opposition can be seen as the most important factors behind renewed US interest in the YAR. In a reaction to some anti-PRSY activities by neighbouring states inside its borders and as a result of its ideological orientation, the 1969 South Yemen government decided to give full support to national liberation movements in neighbouring states and Sheikhdoms, mainly in Oman with its borders on the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz. The Western powers, especially the US, recognised this to be a destabilising factor in the area. The Western media reported that the Soviets were using Aden as a military base and the British-built airfield outside the city as a base for their reconnaissance. It was

alleged that Moscow had constructed on the Island of Socotra a naval radio station and ammunition depot. Soviet and Cuban military advisors and East German police advisors were reported at work in the PDRY. In November 1969, limited border clashes between Saudi Arabia and the PRSY demonstrated KSA military superiority. From 1968, the Revolutionary Democratic Party (RDP) of Yemen based in Aden, launched a guerilla war in "al-manatik al-wusta" or the central areas of the YAR in order "to restore the revolution in Sana'a"³³ which had been undermined by the KSA. This ended a phase of cordial relations between the two Yemeni states which had characterised the period following the independence of South Yemen on 30 November 1967. The RDP guerilla operations escalated throughout 1971 and 1972 with the Southern Yemeni armed forces reportedly supplied with modern Soviet equipment. This situation in Aden, which gave Moscow a strong foothold in the PDRY, heightened once again the concern and alarm of the KSA and USA which both sought to tie Sana'a closely to them to use it as a "buffer zone" and as a weapon against the radical PDRY. Following the Saudi recognition of the moderate Yemen Arab Republic in 1970, Riyadh gradually became able to affect the political outcome in Sana'a. In an effective move against radicalism and revolution in the Yemen, a Saudi military delegation visited Sana'a in May 1972 to prepare for direct military cooperation to accompany the financial aid and tribal subsidies which tied the YAR tightly to Saudi Arabia. This Saudi initiative, which widened the political gap between Sana'a and Aden and Sana'a and Moscow, two months later brought the YAR closer to the US.

Renewal of Diplomatic Relations

On 1 July 1972 diplomatic relations were restored between Sana'a and Washington ostensibly following a Yemeni initiative. This was a significant move by the YAR which had been the first Arab country to sever its ties with Washington. The YAR government sought to restore its relations with the US for political and economic reasons. Sana'a calculated that good relations with Washington would lessen the threat and pressure from the post-1969 radical PDRY government, as well as compensate for the rapidly deteriorating relations with its old ally, the Soviet Union, which curtailed its economic aid and arms supplies to the country in 1970 and 1971. Kadi 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Yahya al-Iryani, Chairman of the YAR Republican Council 1967-74, emphasised that his country "which suffered a lot during the civil war, found itself in need of aid from any source...therefore it restored its relations with the US."³⁴ The YAR Prime Minister at the time later affirmed that the other reason was political: some of his government colleagues believed that such a step would help Sana'a counter the Marxist threat from the South.³⁵

The prompt, positive American response to the Yemeni initiative indicates that renewed US interest in the YAR reflected Washington's wider concerns in the area. The US objective was to break the anti-US front in the Arab world at that time. There is some evidence to suggest the US indirectly pushed Sana'a to seek a restoration in relations as the YAR Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in 1972, Muhsin Ahmad al-'Aini, revealed to this author:

At that time I was hesitant to undertake any action in this direction because the other Arab countries were all boycotting the US. I was thinking how can we alone resume these relations. I was always asking myself what is the importance of Yemen to the US. Other Yemeni politicians were very enthusiastic to take this step, especially since

relations with Aden were deteriorating. There were those who used to argue that America would support us and give us a lot because our economy was in a very bad state. I still remember that the late Muhammad Nu'man and his father Ahmad Nu'man used to whisper to Kadi al-Iryani that our government would get \$30 million at once if it restored US relations. They even decided the amount. My reply was "If you get a million Bukshah (Cents) then I know nothing in politics. You are wrong." In the mean time the Italian Ambassador, who was in charge of American interests, called on the Chairman of the Presidential Council, 'Abdul-Rahman al-Iryani, and told him "If you restore relations, you will get lots of aid." A few days later I received letters from the National Assembly, from the Army and from President al-Iryani. All three letters urged me to restore relations. I called a Cabinet meeting...the Cabinet insisted on the re-establishment of relations with the US.³⁶

The importance to the US of good relations with the Arab world was also indicated by America's decision to approach Egypt in July 1972. Cairo made a sudden move towards the West later in the same month when President Muhammad Anwar Al-Sadat ordered all Soviet advisors out of Egypt. The US had clearly decided to take a firmer stand in the Middle East against the Soviet Union and the anti-US element because it perceived its economic and political interests to be seriously threatened.

Between 1967 and 1972 there were many indicators of the growth in influence of the USSR, and the nationalist and radical elements in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. It was this that caused the US to renew its interest in the YAR in early 1970s. US policy was also affected by Washington's concern to protect American oil interests in the KSA and the Sultanate of Oman and its determination to counter the USSR in the PDRY. As David Ransom, told this author:

We were interested from the beginning as soon as it was clear that the Republic was going to survive as an independent government from attacks from both the south and the north - we were interested. The Yemeni government moved slowly, step by step, and in the end, Yemen took the step on its own initiative - the first step by an Arab country to renew relations with the US after the 1967 rupture. I think it was in the

interest of Yemen to do that.³⁷

Secretary of State William Rogers in Sana'a

On 1 July 1972, US Secretary of State William Rogers arrived Sana'a to restore relations between the two countries. Rogers who described the occasion as "historic...marking a new beginning of mutually beneficial ties", revealed his hope it would "contribute in a modest way to stability and tranquillity in the Arabian peninsula", and said his discussions with the YAR Prime Minister and other Yemeni officials would concentrate on "the prospects for cooperation among neighbouring countries of the peninsula."³⁸ Rogers stressed that his country's response to the YAR initiative "reflects a US policy...in the area" and that Washington "looks forward to the day when the few remaining states in the Arab world will take a similar step."³⁹

At a dinner given in his honour on the night of his arrival Rogers said that his country intended "to continue its efforts to promote a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, based on full implementation of the UN Security Council resolution of November 1967, number 242."⁴⁰ In his speech of reply the YAR Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Muhsin Ahmad al-'Aini, announced the resumption of diplomatic relations, and stressed that his country had never forgotten that the US was one of the first few countries to have recognised the first Republic in the Arabian peninsula, and it had been due to this recognition that "we were able to occupy our seat in the United Nations, in spite of the fact that the General Assembly session was nearing its end."⁴¹ After mentioning what he described as

"useful" US-initiated projects in parts of Yemen, he pleaded the Arab cause in Palestine saying:

The Yemeni people, being part of the Arab nation, cannot on this occasion but draw attention to the important problem that affects all our Arab people and its threat to international peace and security; that is, the problem of Palestine. All we ask in this regard is the implementation of the United Nations resolutions and complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied Arab land and the people of Palestine be given their legitimate rights. It is also our duty to ask the USA as a great nation and a permanent member of the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility by exerting greater efforts in this direction.⁴²

The YAR government's enthusiasm for the restoration of relations with the US reflected several factors: 1. It doubted the justice of the severance decision because it had been dictated by the UAR. This was stated clearly by Kadi 'Abdul-Rahman al-Iryani, the second President of the YAR, three months after Rogers' visit when he told foreign correspondents that severance had not been a Yemeni decision.⁴³ 2. The YAR was convinced that any substantial development aid could be better obtained from the Western powers. 3. The YAR, situated between the closest friends of both Superpowers in the Arab world, needed to break the seige. 4. The UAR's plea for the Arab cause in Palestine reflected Sana'a's earlier belief that the Arab-Israeli conflict could not be solved without the participation of the US government which had the greatest influence in the area. The YAR government did not expect or ask for prompt aid in return for the restoration of the relations. Al-'Aini told this author that the American government did not promise any aid: "Promises came from others, on my part I was aware that to get paid for restoring relations with a big country is degrading and an insult to the small country - as if they had paid for these relations." But he stressed that the important thing was that the mutual relations returned to normal as they should be.⁴⁴

A leading article in **The Washington Post** on 11 July 1972 welcomed the decision of the YAR to become the first Arab League member to resume formal diplomatic relations with the US since the Six Day War, but pointed out that "Yemen being the small, poor, strife-plagued country it is, of no particular strategic importance with the Suez Canal closed, the step is no coup for the US." It added that the restoration decision was of greater importance for Yemen which "presumably welcomes the extra political propping against neighbouring South Yemen." It stressed that a symbolic measure of balance was being restored to a part of the world which had seemed to be tipping against America and toward Soviet interests: "If only psychologically, it is good to see an American Ambassador headed back to Sana'a," and pointed out that the most interesting aspect of the development was "its evidence of the increased irrelevance of the Arab-Israeli dispute to those Arab countries not directly involved in it." It concluded by expressing the belief that the resumption of relations between Sana'a and Washington, and the expected restoration of relations with Khartoum, was a blow against Egyptian policy which wanted to isolate Washington and TelAviv, but which actually resulted in Egypt being isolated and penalised.⁴⁵

On 14 July 1972 Secretary of State William Rogers announced that the decision had been taken following appropriate consultations with Congress and that his government intended "to resume economic assistance programs patterned on our previous programs in Yemen."⁴⁶ In the autumn of that year, a US team arrived in the YAR "to review Yemen's development priorities and discuss how the United States might best support the international effort to help [the country] with its pressing social and economic problems."⁴⁷ The aid programme was

resumed from 1973.⁴⁸ After Rogers' visit to Sana'a, Washington announced it would give the YAR a few million dollars for irrigation, and later provided grants for mineral exploration and for a new drinking water system for the city of Ta'iz. According to the Yemeni Prime Minister "The US did not aid Yemen even with one dollar" until early October 1972.⁴⁹ But al-'Aini later stated that economically the YAR had benefited indirectly from restored US goodwill: the Department of State recommended the YAR to the International Monetary Fund, the International Food Program and other international organisations largely financed by the US. Al-'Aini concluded "Rogers' recommendations paved the way for the flow of international aid to the YAR."⁵⁰

The restoration of relations between Sana'a and Washington also opened the YAR to US scholars, journalists and politicians who furthered American understanding of the country. For example, Robert Stookey, formerly the US Charge d'Affaires in the YAR told this author he visited the country at this time "as a Fulbright-Hays senior research scholar, microfilming unpublished manuscripts in private libraries and following political developments."⁵¹

Inter-Yemeni War Follows Restoration of Relations

After the restoration of YAR-US diplomatic relations, a point of high tension was reached in Sana'a's relations with the PDRY. These had been deteriorating since July 1968 when South Yemen claimed Washington was providing the Southern opposition with arms and training inside Saudi Arabia and the YAR for the overthrow of the "Revolutionary regime in the Yemeni arena."⁵² The Northern opposition forces stationed in the PRSY⁵³ reacted by

launching attacks in the central areas of the YAR. In early December 1970, the Secretary General of the ruling National Liberation Front (NLF) announced the PDRY's support for all "liberation movements" in the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁴ This drove an even greater wedge between the YAR and the Soviet-backed South and provided the US with the opportunity to challenge Soviet influence in the PDRY. The NLF perceived the renewal of YAR-US relations as an aggressive act and a threat to its "revolutionary" orientation from "reactionary and imperialist forces."⁵⁵ The resumption of YAR-US diplomatic relations was responsible for this heightened tension and distrust between the two Yemeni states.

The first inter-Yemeni war broke out on 26 September 1972. It continued until 13 October as a direct result of the tension and the border clashes which had been escalating since the assassination on 21 February that year of Sheikh 'Ali Bin Nadji al-Ghadi, a leading Sheikh of the northern Bakil tribes,⁵⁶ and more than 60 of his followers. According to an official YAR statement the South Yemenis had invited the Sheikh to a banquet where he and his party had been killed. Rumours in Sana'a at the time claimed that mines had been planted beneath the tents of the Khawlan⁵⁷ guests before the feast and they had been killed while asleep that night. The immediate cause of the outbreak of war on 26 September was an attack on southern areas by the southern armed opposition forces stationed in the YAR. Prime Minister al-'Aini told this author that the KSA persuaded the Southern opposition in the YAR to attack Southern areas while he was out of the country.⁵⁸ But according to a statement by Sheikh 'Abd Allah al-Ahmar the paramount Sheikh of the Hashid tribes confederation and advisor of the President and the Chairman of the Parliament "Madjlis Al-

Shoura" (The Consultative Assembly), the YAR parliament had decided even before the eruption of war to reunite Yemen by use of force.⁵⁹

In part this inter-Yemeni war can be seen as a consequence of super-power rivalry. Riyadh feared that stable and strong regimes in the more populous YAR and PDRY could exert a serious threat to its monarchy and security; the Libyan support to the Front of Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) forces in the YAR was also a contributory factor. Yet another factor was the opposition armed groups to the two Yemeni republics were stationed under supervision in both capitals. The restoration of YAR-USA relations exacerbated the situation: the US was judged by its willingness to counter radicalism in the Arabian Peninsula to safeguard its own interests in such a highly volatile region.

The military government of the YAR which took power in 1974 found itself subjected to increasing Saudi influence and confronted by deteriorating relations with both the PDRY and the Soviet Union. In this year the hundred Soviet advisers employed to train the Yemeni army became isolated. The expulsion of the Soviet advisers from Egypt by President Sadat pushed Moscow to send more arms to Aden to defend and help its "people's revolution" and strengthen its foothold in this strategic part of the Western sphere of influence. All this occurred in the wake of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war which created an oil boom and gave Saudi Arabia a greater opportunity to exert influence in the Middle East. It was evident that the wealthier Saudis, encouraged by the US, became more influential in the YAR and more dependent on it for their labour force and consequently more able and more willing to

attempt to contain the USSR in the PDRY and the Red Sea region.

YAR-USA relations, were affected by the Saudi policy of offering aid to Sana'a which promoted and utilised the political instability in the YAR for its own ends. Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim al-Hamdi who assumed power in Sana'a on 13 June 1974 was considered pro-Riyadh. Yet he tried to lessen the heavy Saudi hand on his country by seeking American arms and economic assistance, as had his predecessor. In August 1975 al-Hamdi confirmed that his country was negotiating with the US for a package of arms including several F5 fighters worth nearly \$100 million. In 1977 the deal was increased to a total of \$138 million of arms to be financed by and channelled through Saudi Arabia.⁶⁰

Riyadh Vetoes Direct YAR-US Dealings

Despite a united Riyadh-Sana'a stand against a radical threat from the PDRY, there were many long-term political, territorial and religious differences dating back to the 1920s⁶¹ between the YAR and the KSA which inhibited any amelioration in their relationship. Sana'a's efforts to have direct dealings with Washington were intercepted by the KSA, which did not want to weaken its own influence in the internal affairs of the YAR. KSA leaders calculated that if the Yemenis were to gain political stability, economic independence and military strength, there would be an attempt to recapture the three bordering provinces which had been annexed by King 'Abdul-'Aziz in 1934.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia could not forget the insecurity it had experienced during the

five years following the outbreak of the YAR Revolution in 1962. It became alarmed by the prospect of a stronger, more radical PDRY, which might gain control of the YAR. An anti-Saudi government in North Yemen had always been the main fear of the government in Riyadh and it therefore concerned itself with all developments in Sana'a. On this, the **London Financial Times**⁶² wrote "The Saudis fear Yemen's political volatility, which is made important for them by the fact that the Yemeni population of some [10]⁶³ million is...bigger than their population. One specific fear is that there might be a left wing coup d'etat in Sana'a. Even more alarming is the thought of a union of the two Yemens, with a combined population of some 13 million, under a left wing government." In the words of a Saudi senior intelligence official "Saudi Arabia views events in North Yemen as having a major influence on Saudi internal security, whether positively or negatively."⁶⁴

Direct relations between the YAR and the US started in 1974 through some small-scale military dealings. But against the YAR's wish, these military dealings soon became indirect as they were channeled through Saudi Arabia. This Saudi policy towards the YAR was approved by Washington when in this year the KSA forwarded to the United States a YAR's list of new weapon requirements. This eventually led to the despatch of an American military team to study the Republic's military needs, although negotiations for a long-scale US arms deal with Sana'a did not start until near the end of 1975.⁶⁵ Early in 1975, the YAR's President al-Hamdi asserted his government's willingness to accept arms without conditions from any source.⁶⁶ He also showed eagerness to ease military ties with the USSR and to expel the Soviet experts if the US would provide the necessary arms. His efforts were ignored

because, according to Yemeni sources, the Saudis continued "to delay in making a firm commitment on which arms will be purchased for Yemen despite warnings that delay could be disastrous for Colonel Hamdi's still weak central government"⁶⁷. Due to this complex situation, the US Embassy in Djiddah prodded the Saudis "to be swift and generous in helping bolster Colonel al-Hamdi's position with arms."⁶⁸ In early 1975, to overcome this problem, President al-Hamdi, expressed his hope that "a new friendship with the US will exist," and sought to consolidate relations with Riyadh at the cost of further deteriorating relations with the PDRY. Relations with Washington improved as a result. In the same year the US prepared a plan to provide the YAR with arms to be financed by Saudi Arabia; a trilateral agreement to provide Sana'a with a package of modern American arms was signed in 1976.

This agreement with Saudi Arabia to modernise the YAR's armed forces indicated that the US had "approved and encouraged Saudi Arabia's desire to become a leading force in the region of the Persian Gulf to tackle radicalism."⁶⁹ At this time it was reported that South Yemen had begun to receive modern tanks, planes and naval vessels from the Soviet Union to counter the Saudi-American supply of arms to the YAR. On 11 February 1976, the leftist Northern opposition in the YAR formed the National Democratic Front (NDF) with Sultan Ahmad 'Umar as its Secretary General, indicating that the opposition supported by the PDRY was willing to escalate its military operations in the YAR. The US consequently put strong pressure on Saudi Arabia to finance the arms deal since it perceived the YAR to be "a useful Western-orientated buffer state between the traditionally-ruled oil-producing states of the Gulf

and South Yemen."⁷⁰ But the idea of providing the YAR with free arms was not acceptable to Saudi Arabia which continued to depend on the belligerent northern tribes to implement its policies towards Sana'a. In the words of the American Military Attache in Sana'a: Saudi Arabia had caught itself in the impossible bind of wanting a North Yemen that was "strong enough but not too strong."⁷¹ In the words of US Ambassador George Lane: "the Saudis wanted the North Yemenis to have guns that will only point South."⁷²

Because Riyadh was not convinced it should provide Sana'a with modern arms, it tried to contain the threat from South Yemen by other means. The Saudi government responded to a two-year old PDRY initiative to establish relations based on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's affairs. Saudi Arabia and the PDRY established diplomatic relations just one month after the formation of the NDF. A joint communique was broadcast in both Aden and Riyadh on 10 March 1976 in which the two Arab and Islamic states expressed their "desire to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding to serve their causes and those of the Arabian Peninsula...in affirmation of the importance of safeguarding and consolidating relations among all the states of the region in an atmosphere of mutual respect for the sovereignty of every state over its territory."⁷³ It confirmed that both states had reviewed their relations "in present circumstances" and concluded that Riyadh and Aden "declare their intention to establish normal relations between them on the basis of Arab fraternity, good-neighbourliness, unity of destiny and non-interference in internal affairs, in a manner that realises the security and stability of the Arab peninsula and the interest of the Arab nation, away from foreign influence."⁷⁴ PDRY internal political and economic

problems, its need of getting some Saudi assistance, its plans to activate the strategic Aden harbour after the reopening of the Suez Canal, and the mutual KSA-PDRY concern over the growing Iranian military presence in Oman, pushed the two countries towards cooperation for the first time. The Saudi response had a calming effect on the NDF and the People's Liberation Front of Oman (PFLO) guerilla war taking place in the YAR and in Dhofar, a southern province of Oman. This development gave Saudi Arabia an excuse to argue with both Washington and Sana'a that arms were not needed in Sana'a. Riyadh also convinced the US of the feasibility of initiating some contacts with the PDRY instead of providing the YAR with arms that could be used to control the YAR northern tribes or to point North. As Robert Burrowes, an American specialist on the YAR, concluded, the Saudis "have sometimes acted in each of the Yemens through the other Yemen."⁷⁵

All these Saudi manoeuvres, talks, hopes, and promises, resulted in nothing of any significance in either the military or the economic fields of cooperation between the YAR and the US in the period 1972-1976. During the years following the resumption of diplomatic relations Washington provided Sana'a with only \$16.8 million in economic aid and \$200,000 in military aid, while Riyadh provided the YAR with more than \$400 million as development assistance.⁷⁶ According to American military scholar Major John B. Lynch, Washington gave Sana'a only a limited amount of aid because it wanted "to keep taut the string of relationship with Saudi Arabia."⁷⁷ The US Ambassador to the YAR 1983-1987, William Rugh, assured this author that despite "the Saudi-American connection, we don't determine our policy towards Yemen based on what anybody else tells us to do. We determine our

policy towards Yemen with Yemen, based on our concerns for Yemen", stressing that Saudi Arabia is obviously "terribly important to the United States, and the position of Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula has to take into account the role of Saudi Arabia."⁷⁸ Concerning the level of aid to Yemen, Rugh stated that this was constantly debated in Washington with several factors in mind but the foremost was always: what is the national interest of the US?⁷⁹ Despite all the rational analyses, the fact is that it was the oil boom of 1973⁸⁰ which gave Saudi Arabia the upper hand in the Yemeni arena and this was reflected in the YAR-USA relationship of that period.

Bloody Events in the Yemen and US Concern

In 1977, in reaction to Saudi policies and in order to put some pressure on the US, President al-Hamdi visited Europe and sought French arms in "an attempt to break out of the diplomatic pattern largely dominated by Saudi Arabia and the United States".⁸¹ When he returned home he contacted the US Ambassador in Sana'a, Thomas J. Scotts, to complain that Saudi Arabia was delaying the delivery of arms under the agreement. The US then urged the Saudis to deliver some arms to Sana'a.⁸² Robert Burrowes, a US scholar who worked for several years in Sana'a during this period told this author that Ambassador Scotts⁸³ was very much concerned about the American stance in Yemen. Scotts argued for US mediation between Saudi Arabia and Yemen to protect al-Hamdi from the Saudis. This caused tension between the Department of State and the Ambassador. Scotts opposed the arms delay, wanting a prompt delivery to protect al-Hamdi from the sceptical American policy. But he was told "We won't upset relations with Riyadh for a small country like Yemen." In his

belief, the US "wanted to have the Yemen on the cheap and wanted the Saudis to pay for its friendship even when American interests were threatened by Aden."⁸⁴ President al-Hamdi, who saw the Saudi pronouncements as a waste of time, became convinced he could not rely on Riyadh to reorganise and equip his army in order to establish central government control over the northern tribes who were more loyal to the Saudi money or to help him uproot the Saudi political influence in his country. He decided to break the Saudi stronghold in the YAR by forming closer relations with the PDRY.

At the height of al-Hamdi's efforts to break through this "pattern largely dominated by Saudi Arabia and the US"⁸⁵, al-Hamdi, and his brother 'Abd Allah, were assassinated during the night of 12 October 1977, a few hours before his first scheduled visit to Aden to proclaim with his southern counterpart a new step towards Yemen unification. This incident put an end to the YAR's efforts to be independent of the KSA for about two years. Robert Burrows later wrote: "Despite this event which brought Col. Ahmad al-Ghashmi, more responsive to Saudi Arabia, to power, Saudi policy toward the reorganization of the Yemeni army did not apparently change. One year later, it was observed that the YAR army was much weaker than it was in 1974. The Saudis had played political football with the program and used it...to manipulate Yemen's politics and its leaders to their ends."⁸⁶

On 24 June 1978 President Ahmad al-Ghashmi also met his predecessor's fate. According to Sana'a sources, Salem Rubiyya' 'Ali, the Chairman of the Presidential Council of the PDRY, had telephoned al-Ghashmi on 23 June to inform him that he was sending a special envoy

to Sana'a. When the envoy arrived in Sana'a airport the next morning, he was directed to President Ghashmi's office where he opened an explosive-filled briefcase killing both men.⁸⁷

On 26 June a military struggle broke-out between political factions in South Yemen during which the 43-year-old President Salem Rubiyya' 'Ali lost his life. According to the official announcement on Aden Radio, the Central Committee of the ruling Unified Political Organisation of the National Front (UPONF) had held an emergency meeting on the evening of 25 June to discuss developments in the North but Rubiyya' refused to attend and instead sent his resignation. When the meeting reconvened the next morning to discuss this resignation, Rubiyya' ordered forces loyal to him to bomb the Committee headquarters in an attempted coup d'etat; the Central Committee retaliated by ordering a military attack on Rubiyya'. Within a few hours the Committee ordered the execution of Rubiyya' and two of his close associates.⁸⁸

In Sana'a the leading officers and political elites chose 'Abdul-Karim al-'Arashi, Speaker of the Assembly, as acting president for a two month period until presidential elections could take place. On 17 July the People's Constituent Assembly elected Lieutenant Colonel 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh as the new President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, upgrading him to the rank of Colonel. The fifth President of the YAR immediately began to reorganise the divided, ill-equipped, army and to contact the Sheikhs and persuade them the political elite to work towards permanent stability. Saleh survived an attempted assassination a few days after his election.⁸⁹ Three months later, on 15 October 1978, Saleh survived

another attempt on his life by a Libyan-backed Nasserist faction headed by Colonel Mudjahid al-Kuhali. The Minister of Social Affairs, 'Abdul-Salam Mukbil, and other senior army officers were subsequently sentenced to death; others fled the country. In Aden the execution of President Rubayye' in June was followed by the creation of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) in October in succession to the Unified Political Organization of National Front (UPONF). Elections to the Supreme People's Assembly were held in December. 'Abdul-Fattah Isma'il, a hardline Marxist, became the Chairman of the Presidential Council and the Secretary General of the YSP.

Following the success of the hardliners in the south the NDF re-started its armed attacks inside the YAR and was calling for the overthrow of the "reactionary" regime in Sana'a. These guerilla operations were supported by Isma'il, whose Congress of October 1978, attended by the NDF Secretary General, publicly declared support for the NDF. These Yemeni developments which made the situation critical in southern Arabia caused much concern in Riyadh, ever fearful of Communist expansion in the region.

The US also became concerned, especially since three years of Saudi-US efforts to moderate the PDRY had clearly failed. The US moderating attempts began in 1974 when Republican Congressman Paul Findlay had been invited to Aden to discuss the release of American teacher Ed Franklin; the latter had been jailed for taking photographs of Aden harbour without permission during a transit tour stop of his ship. Findlay handed to the PDRY Foreign Minister, Muhammad Saleh Muti' and President Rubiyya' a letter from US Secretary

of State Henry Kissinger, which presented Washington's desire to achieve "a just and durable peace in the Middle East." An alleged case of espionage that same year, resulting in the imprisonment of several Americans working in South Yemen and President Ford's decision in 1975 to supply the YAR with modern US arms, brought all indirect US-PDRY communication to halt. The establishment of relations between Aden and Riyadh in March 1976 was followed by a Saudi attempt to promote talks between Washington and Aden, but the US replacement of the British in Masyarah air base in neighbouring Oman and the break of the Somali-Ethiopian war in the Horn of Africa⁹⁰, which created diverse South Yemeni, Saudi and US responses, prevented any immediate dialogue. Congressman Paul Findlay met President Rubayye' again at the United Nations Assembly in September 1977 when the latter addressed that year's general Session. According to Findlay, Rubiyya' "restated his desire for renewed relations with the United States and suggested that I report our discussion to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance."⁹¹ Encouraged by Saudi Arabia, Cyrus Vance also met with the PDRY Foreign Minister on UN premises and it was agreed that the US would send a mission to Aden to discuss the issue of restoring relations between the two states. Between January 13-15 Findlay visited Aden for the second time and held talks with both Muti' and Rubayye' on the prospects of mutual relations.⁹² Findlay carried back to the Carter administration a verbal response from Rubayye'.⁹³ Clearly the US was almost convinced of the feasibility of restoring relations, especially since this would offer Washington an opportunity to confront the Soviets from their only stronghold in the peninsula. In a letter dated 26 January 1978 to the US National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brezezinski, Findlay wrote: "Thanks very much for receiving Mrs Meyner, Leo Ryan and myself in regard to

Palestinian and South Yemen policies. I am reassured by your statement that the Executive Branch will check further with Saudi Arabia with regard to diplomatic relations with South Yemen. This is, it seems to me, very prudent for us to have a listening post there reinforcing the one already established by the Saudis...."⁹⁴

On 26 June 1978 a State Department official announced that the director of the Arabian Peninsula Desk, Joseph Twinam, "was on his way to Aden when President Rubayye' was deposed" and was therefore only able to visit Saudi Arabia.⁹⁵ With Rubayye' out of the way, YSP Secretary General 'Abul-Fattah-Isma'il consolidated his power, announcing his willingness to adopt a clear pro-Soviet line and to put PDRY resources into a confrontation with "imperialism, reaction and conservatism in the area".⁹⁶ Tension escalated with Oman as a result of PDRY support to a leftist revolution in Oman at a time when the NDF restarted its guerrilla operations in the YAR. In Aden it was announced on 5 January 1979 that the "13th June front"⁹⁷ had decided to join the NDF.⁹⁸ Moscow's position on the Horn of Africa may have been behind the Soviet willingness to enhance its presence in the PDRY. Stephen Page, a Canadian historian, saw that Moscow's loss of access to facilities in Somalia in November 1977 increased Aden's importance to Soviet strategy, leading to the creation of a more radical pro-Soviet leadership in the PDRY.⁹⁹ One month later Aden became involved in the Soviet support of Ethiopia. A small number of PDRY forces were despatched to the battle field near Oghadin in support of Ethiopia against the new Saudi ally, Somalia. Failure of Riyadh-Washington efforts to contain the PDRY by the diplomatic instrument resulted in the emergence of a harder US stance against the PDRY; Washington believed Moscow to be

behind the crisis of June 1978 in Aden in order to block relations with the US and KSA. In this scenario, entirely consistent with Cold War politics of the time, Moscow would have wished to preserve its foothold in the area, especially in the Yemen, by any means. The American Administration was therefore prepared to defend its own foothold in the YAR both militarily and politically.

The change in the government of South Yemen was viewed in Washington as a new challenge to the US strategy of reducing the Soviet role in the oil-rich area. The American Embassy in Sana'a "viewed the political turmoil in late June 1978 from the perspective of North Yemen's vulnerability to military action from the South."¹⁰⁰ The Embassy strongly recommended that "with a minimum of effort by the United States, quantities of weapons already purchased for Yemen by Saudi Arabia could be shipped by air to Yemen on an expedited basis, thus significantly improving North Yemen's defensive posture." The American Military Attache stated: " Since Saudi Arabia was paying the bill, our only hurdle was to convince them of the feasibility of our initiative. Accordingly, a conference was arranged (with the approval of State) to be held in Riyadh in late July."¹⁰¹

The choice of Riyadh as the venue for this conference on Yemen defence needs reflected US concern for the security of Saudi Arabia. John Ruskiewicz, the US Military Attache in Sana'a, travelled to Riyadh in late July to work out the arms deliveries with the US Military Assistance Mission in Saudi Arabia "prior to presenting our concept to the Saudi military." The conference, attended by representatives of a number of Department agencies from

Washington, discussed the American proposal to improve the YAR's defense capabilities and developed a programme for the use of the American equipment by Sana'a which meant an increase in the US presence paid for by the Saudis. This conclusion by the conference aimed at "supplanting" the Russians completely from the YAR as well as challenging the Soviets in South Yemen.

The American media openly stated that the US was "accelerating its military aid to North Yemen as a response to the recent tightening of Soviet influence in South Yemen," and that "the Carter administration is also considering sending a military advisory mission to North Yemen to try to reorganize and train its army. So far, that army has not been able to make proper use of U.S. ... military equipment that Saudi Arabia is paying for it"¹⁰². Both the US and Saudi Arabia governments expressed interest in an increase in US commitment. Instead of only supplying arms and training a few officers, the Saudis and Americans suggested that a US military advisory mission could be established in the YAR to take direct responsibility for building up the armed forces and improving the air force. With the approval of Congress, Saudi Arabia transferred from its stocks four trainer versions of the American-made F-5 fighters to the YAR. Also discussed was the possibility of "following up the trainers with a dozen F-5 jets."¹⁰³

The American proposal was not welcomed in Sana'a. Both the Americans and the Saudis asked the YAR to cut its links with the USSR, but Sana'a wanted to maintain at least minimal links with Moscow. The cost was considered to be too high since the programme

did not include necessary items like aircraft, tanks, artillery and modern rockets similar to those being delivered to the PDRY by the Soviet Union. In early 1979 President Saleh told a Kuwaiti journal "Our current acquisition of US arms is limited and we have not received what we really need from the US."¹⁰⁴ It took the Saudi government, which was not convinced of the feasibility of the new package to the YAR, three months to decide what to do. Eventually, as a result of American pressure, they submitted the Letters of Offer and Acceptance for the new equipment in January 1979 when the situation in Iran was alarming both Washington and Riyadh more than that in Sana'a.

On 10 February 1979, US Defence Secretary Harold Brown visited Saudi Arabia. On his arrival the Saudis suggested a larger US presence and commitment in their region, a matter for which Washington was not prepared. Saudi intelligence assured Brown that the Soviet threat to the Kingdom was real and "produced information that large numbers of South Yemeni tanks and artillery were moving into a remote area of North Yemen, supported by air strikes"¹⁰⁵ which the Americans were "unable to confirm." On 12 February Brown delivered to Saudi Crown Prince Fahd Bin 'Abdul-'Aziz a letter from President Carter to King Khaled "suggesting periodic consultation between Washington and Riyadh on matters affecting the security of the Gulf region".¹⁰⁶ Washington officials stated: "Saudi Arabia has been urging the United States for months to take a firmer stand in the region to counterbalance Soviet influence in Afghanistan, South Yemen and Ethiopia." In both Riyadh and Dhahran Brown held talks with his Saudi counterpart Prince Sultan. He also made an aerial inspection of the nearby oil fields. The discussions concentrated on weapons' sales for

North Yemen and Sudan, which were considered "the first tangible result of a new US pledge to consult more closely with Saudi Arabia on defence matters." A report from Washington revealed that the United States was prepared to sell twelve F-5 fighters to Yemen and was willing to consider additional F-5s, tanks and armoured personnel carriers in a package totalling about \$300 million, all to be financed by the Saudis. According to the same report the deal "would be subject to Congressional approval".¹⁰⁷

Notes

1. The KSA participated in paying Egypt \$154 million annually out of a total Arab subsidy that was \$266 million.
2. According to US Department of State, **Yemen**, *ibid*.
3. Author's interview with David Ransom.
4. **The New York Times**, 13 December 1967.
5. The full text of the communique is cited in **Thawrat al-Yaman 1948-1968**, pp. 188-9.
6. First Oral History Interview with Ambassador Hart, p. 15.
7. It is worth noting that the Soviet Union, influenced by the Yemeni Left, hesitated in providing the YAR with arms after the 5th of November coup d'état of 1967. A Yemeni delegation to Moscow, it was said, returned empty handed, but when Republican Sana'a faced real danger a delegation headed by Yemeni Vice Premier, Hassan Makki, visited Moscow in early December and achieved success. The USSR provided the YAR that month with arms including 24 MiG 19s and many Russian pilots and military experts who with Syrian pilots operated the new arms and bombers. For more details see Sultan Nadji, **AL-Tarikh al-'Askari li al-Yaman 1939-1967**, Beirut, 1985. After the lifting of the siege, relations with the USSR deteriorated and the YAR tried to replace Moscow with Beijing, but it was reported that Premier Al-'Amri cancelled a scheduled visit to China in early March 1968 after a meeting with the Russian Ambassador in Cairo.
8. **Yemen**, *ibid*.
9. *Ibid*.
10. The Republicans insisted that the conditions for ending the civil war were to maintain the Republic and to exclude the return of any member of the Hamid al-Din family.
11. Aryeh Yodfat, **The Soviet Union and the Arabian Peninsula**, London, 1983, p. 3.
12. **Yemen**, *ibid*.
13. Author's interview with David Ransom.
14. *Ibid*.

15. Ibid.
16. President 'Abdul-Rahman al-Iryani, 30 July 1968, ME/2837/A/5/, 2 August 1968.
17. Ibid.
18. **Record of the Arab World**, Beirut, p. 190.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., September 1969, p. 2645,
21. Ibid.
22. Joseph Malone, "The Yemen Arab Republic's Game of Nations", **World Today**, 12 December 1971, p. 545.
23. Author's interview with David Ransom.
24. To the Saudis, Yemeni unity was a serious threat to their security. They saw that a united Yemen or a strong YAR would endanger KSA security and integrity of Saudi territories. Halliday observes that the external American pressure and the tribal and military forces pushed the post-1962 North Yemeni Republic "in a direction radically different from the popular transformation possible at the start". He added that "North Yemen became a component of the capitalist world, with a pro-imperialist foreign policy and economic relations, and capitalist relations at home", **Arabia Without Sultans**, p. 115.
25. See "Background for Vice President Bush on US-Yemeni Relations," A telegram from the US Embassy in Sana'a to the US Department of State; **The New York Times**, 9 April 1970.
26. In 1970 this writer was employed for several months by the American Catholic Relief Service (CRS), to monitor the distribution of the American shipments of flour and dried milk throughout Tihama. The Yemeni people much appreciated the American relief in that very difficult period. It is of importance to note that the famine of 1959 in the same area forced the Imams to seek American aid for the first time. The American aid at that time was followed by the establishment of the first US diplomatic and aid missions in the country.
27. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 26 May 1971; **Financial Times**, London, 27 May 1971.
28. Author's interview *with David Ransom*.
29. Author's interview with David Ransom.
30. **Saudi-American Relations**, p. 103.

31. The YAR Prime Minister Muhsin al-'Aini revealed in late 1974 that the country had not received any Soviet arms since 1970. **Al-Hawadeth**, Beirut, 18 January 1973; **Arab Report and Record**, London, 16-31 January 1973.
32. Author's interview with David Ransom.
33. Quoting the first President of the Peoples Republic of South Yemen (PRSY) Kahtan Muhammad al-Sha'bi as reported, **ME/3605/A/7**, 9 February 1971.
34. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 18 October 1972.
35. Author's interview with Ambassador Muhsin al-'Aini.
36. Ibid.
37. Author's interview with David Ransom.
38. "Remarks by Secretary Rogers", **Department of State Bulletin**, 7 August 1972.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a , 2 July 1972.
42. Ibid.
43. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 18 October 1972.
44. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
45. **International Herald Tribune**, Paris, 11 July 1972.
46. **Department of State Bulletin**, 7 August 1972.
47. **USAID Presentation to Congress 1973**.
48. Ibid.
49. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 12 October 1972.
50. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
51. Author's interview with Dr Stookey.
52. **Al-Nahar**, Beirut, 2 December 1970.

53. As of the beginning of December 1970 South Yemen's official name became the Peoples' Democratic Republic of South Yemen (PDRY) in Socialist bloc style, as a consequence of the left's accession to power on 22 June 1969.
54. **Al-Nahar**, Beirut, 2 December 1970.
55. **14 October**, Aden, July-August 1972.
56. The YAR's northern tribes fall into two tribal confederations: Hashid and Bakil.
57. A leading tribe of the Bakil confederation.
58. Author's interview.
59. **Al-Hayat**, London, 1990.
60. **Revolution and Foreign Policy 1967-1987, The Case of South Yemen**, pp. 116 and 117.
61. The Saudis are Wahhabis, from the Sunni sect of Islam, while the ruling governments of the YAR were Zeidis, from the Shiite sect of Islam.
62. **Financial Times Supplement**, London, 27 November 1984.
63. According to the YAR census results of 1986 the total population of the country was 9,274,173. "Central Planning Organisation Statement", Sana'a, 1988. Until today the KSA did not announce the size of its population.
64. **The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict Over North Yemen 1962-1970**, pp. 98-99.
65. **International Herald Tribune**, 29 April 1976.
66. *Ibid.*, Paris, 3 August 1975.
67. *Ibid.*
68. **The Yemen Arab Republic: The Politics of Development 1962-1986**, pp. 80-85.
69. Lieutenant Colonel John Ruskiewicz, "How the US Lost its Footing in the Shifting Sands of the Persian Gulf - a Case History in the Yemen Arab Republic", **Armed Forces Journal International**, September 1980, p. 64.
70. **The Daily Telegraph**, London, 5 August 1975.
71. Ruskiewicz, *ibid.*, p. 62.
72. Author's interview with US Ambassador to the YAR 1978-81, Dr George Lane, Worcester MA, 16 February 1990.

73. ME/5156/A/8-9, 11 March 1976.
74. Ibid.
75. Robert Burrowes, "The Other Side of the Red Sea and Little More: The Horn of Africa and the Two Yemens", unpublished essay, 1990.
76. **Middle East Yearbook**, London, 1979, p. 233.
77. "The Superpowers' Tug of War Over Yemen", **Military Review**, Volume 61, No. 3, March 1981.
78. Author's interview with US Ambassador to the YAR 1983-1987, Dr William Rugh, Washington DC, 9 February 1990.
79. Ibid.
80. It was reported that the oil boom of 1973 increased Saudi revenues by 400 percent, nearly \$22.5 billion. At the end of May 1975, that Riyadh's gold and foreign exchange holdings surpassed those of the US for the first time, reaching about \$20.5 billion against the Washington holdings of about \$16.7 billion. In 1976 the Saudi oil production rose to 8.7 million barrels per a day, and in 1980 to 10 million barrels per a day, **Saudi-American Relations**, p. 182.
81. **The YAR: The Politics of Development 1962-1986**, p. 182.
82. **Air International**, 19 January 1978.
83. Scotts resigned in mid-1978 for personal reasons.
84. Author's interview with Dr Robert Borrows, Washington DC - Seattle WA (by telephone), 21 February 1990.
85. **The YAR: The Politics of Development 1962-1986**, p. 182.
86. Ibid.
87. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 30 June 1978. This author travelled to Sana'a following al-Hamdi's assassination to report for the Kuwaiti daily **Al-Siyasah** to interview President al-Ghashmi and other Yemeni officials. Rumours in Sana'a at that time claimed that President Rubayye', who attended the funeral of al-Hamdi unexpectedly, swore that he would take revenge on the assassins. It was later rumoured that Rubayye's' opponents in the PDRY had exchanged his envoys briefcase with another one.
88. Press Communique of Central YSP Committee, **14 October**, Aden, 29 June 1978.
89. **Al-Nahar**, Beirut, 12 September 1978.

90. Eruption of Somali-Ethiopian war in the Horn of Africa had brought misfortune to the PDRY. The restoration of relations between Aden and Riyadh was followed by a Saudi of \$1 billion of economic assistance, including the supply of the Little Aden refinery with crude oil, but the diverse responses towards the Somali-Ethiopian war, inter-PDRY factional rivalry, and the Cold War between the superpowers caused the PDRY's reconciliation with its influential and wealthy Arab neighbour to fail.
91. Paul Findlay, **They Dare to Speak Out**, Chicago, 1989, p. 9.
92. **They Dare to Speak Out**, pp. 5-12; **Revolution and Foreign Policy, The Case of South Yemen 1967-1987**, pp. 83-90.; **Conflict in the Yemens and Superpower involvement**, pp. 1-2.
93. **They Dare to Speak Out**, p. 10.
94. **White House Central File, Box number 5032.**
95. **The New York Times**, 27 June 1978.
96. Quoting Secretary General 'Abdul-Fattah Isma'il's statement following the YSP Central Committee, October 1978.
97. Norther army officers and politicians who fled the YAR after the failure of the Libyan-backed attempted coup against Saleh on 15 October 1978.
98. ME/6010/A/1.
99. Stephen Page, **The Soviet Union and the Yemen**, New York, 1985, p. 71.
100. Ruskiewicz, *ibid.*, p. 66.
101. *Ibid.*
102. **The Washington Star**, 25 July 1978, p. 1.
103. *Ibid.*
104. **Al-Rai al-'Aam**, Kuwait, 25 January 1979.
105. **United States Arms Policies in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea Areas: Past, Present and Future. Report of the American Staff Survey Mission to Ethiopia, Iran and the Arabian Peninsula**, 85th Congress, Ist Session, December 1977, p. 77.
106. A report by Norman Kempster from Zahran, **International Herald Tribune**, 12 February 1979.
107. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER FIVE:

DEVELOPMENT OF A US INTEREST IN THE YAR

Tension between the YAR and the PDRY increased in January 1979, reaching a climax in February when war broke-out on the 23rd of the month. This tension was reflected by the National Democratic Front (NDF) guerrilla attacks, military preparations in both capitals, President 'Abdul-Fattah Isma'il's tour to Syria, Kuwait, Iraq and Libya where he secured financial support from Libya for the NDF, and several official statements from both Yemens. On 8 February Colonel Ali Ahmad Nasser 'Antar, reserve member of the Political Bureau and Defence Minister of South Yemen, issued a decree calling up the sixth group of those obliged to perform national service as well as those who had just completed their term of service. He also instructed the General Mobilization Department to implement his orders "in coordination with the state sectors, establishments, public and quasi-state corporations and other organs."¹ A few hours later, the YAR President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh released "all political prisoners arrested before and after the '13 June Corrective Movement'², those involved in the 'abortive 15 October conspiracy.'³ Minister of Interior of the YAR, 'Abdul-'Aziz al-Barati, commented that "the decision refutes all the allegations brought by the information departments of the ruling clique in Aden, whose jails are full of thousands of innocent citizens."⁴ Five days later, the YAR Foreign Minister confirmed that his government had asked for arms and ammunition from the US "for purely defensive purposes."⁵ Saleh told **The New York Times** on 18 February that his country was in urgent need of American arms to ward off Communist threats from the PDRY which received substantial Soviet-bloc support, but noted "such deliveries would be effective only if they were accompanied by American economic

assistance." Recalling that post-war economic development in Western Europe, Japan and South Korea had "constituted a positive factor" in blocking expansion, he concluded:

We believe that armies alone, no matter how powerful, cannot defeat the tide that is going through the area.... American business investment could be as important as military aid in insuring stability in the YAR and in the rest of the Arabian peninsula.⁶

The justification for such a statement in the context of deteriorating relations between the two Yemeni states was that, unlike the PDRY, the YAR was becoming more oriented towards the Western countries and opening the doors to Western investors.

The first two weeks of February witnessed frequent clashes along the YAR-PDRY borders. American sources confirmed that the Yemeni government had summoned US diplomats in Sana'a and told them that Aden, assisted by the Soviets, was attacking YAR territory. Within a few days the CIA office in Sana'a confirmed the seriousness of the situation. But the military office reported it was being exaggerated. Two weeks later the American Ambassador, George Lane, "decided to go along with accounts of a very serious situation and make policy recommendations to Washington accordingly"⁷ In mid-February, Washington sought informal consent from Congress to most of the items of the \$390 million arms package financed by Saudi Arabia to the YAR.

During the second half of February 1979, the US government announced "a more active policy to shore up the security of the Arabian Peninsula in the light of events in Iran."⁸ It also expressed concern "about the recent flare-up in fighting between North and South Yemen." But on 27 February President Carter stressed that he did not intend to deploy US

troops anywhere in the Middle East, and denied press reports that his Administration had proposed setting up a military base in Saudi Arabia, making it clear that America intended to provide only encouragement to its friends in the area to defend themselves and to protect US interests against Iran and South Yemen.

In the third week of February 1979 Washington confirmed that \$100 million worth of American arms to the YAR had been despatched by air, "mainly infantry support weapons such as anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns."⁹ On 23 February YAR and PDRY troops became engaged in open warfare. On 28 February the Department of State announced it was increasing arms supplies to the YAR for "defensive" use against "invading PDRY forces"¹⁰, and notified Congress of its intention to waive the waiting period for these. The Carter Administration also informed the Saudi government of its decision to deploy a squadron of F-15s and two AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia "to bolster the security of Saudi airspace." It ordered a carrier task force headed by the **Constellation** from the Seventh Fleet into the Western Indian Ocean to demonstrate US concern for the security of the Arabian Peninsula, and "to deter any possible South Yemeni advance into the North, should the opportunity for this on the ground appears."¹¹ In late February and early March US military teams started to arrive in Sana'a to assist the Yemen armed forces in learning to operate and maintain the new equipment which arrived when the war was over.¹² State Department spokesman Hodding Carter revealed that "word has been received from diplomats in Saudi Arabia that military personnel in the desert Kingdom which borders North Yemen had been ordered to report for duty"¹³, indicating that the US administration was determined to accelerate arms

deliveries to North Yemen without Congressional approval "to show United States' resolve to our Yemeni friends...our willingness to protect vital national interests in that part of the world to our Saudi ally, and finally, to send a signal to the Soviets we were serious about meeting Soviet encroachment into the Arabian Peninsula."¹⁴

On 3 March 1979, while the war was still going on, PDRY Foreign Minister Muhammad Saleh Muti', stressed that what was going on in the North was a conflict between the Yemeni people led by the NDF in the North, and the regime in Sana'a.¹⁵ An NDF spokesperson told Aden Radio a few days later that "the client reactionary regime in Sana'a has assembled a strong force of regular troops and mercenaries, led by a notorious warmonger [and] has attempted to recover a number of areas under the control of the revolutionary people's forces."¹⁶ This source expressed the will of the NDF to continue the war "against imperialist reactionary influence and to bring about the establishment of a democratic national regime in the YAR."

The border "mini-war" between the two Yemeni states of 1979 in which Washington believed the North "didn't show well"¹⁷ unquestionably heightened the sense of insecurity in the region, alarming the US which feared the YAR would impose once again, as it had during the 1960s, a threat to its interests in Saudi Arabia. President Carter increased his country's involvement in South Arabia politics and offered the YAR protection and arms which had been already "in the pipeline"¹⁸ against the PDRY.

David Ransom, Deputy Director Office of the Secretary of Defence during the 1979 inter-Yemeni war of 1979, confirmed to this writer that the US stance towards the YAR in 1979 was both military and political. Recalling what happened when he was advising the Secretary of Defence, he said:

The most important initiatives of the US towards the YAR were during 1979 and 1980. When the South invaded the North after the deaths of al-Hamdi and al-Ghashmi, the northern army fell apart, and it looked to us that the South which was in a strong position was trying with Soviet help to push over the new government, to take it over. The YAR and the other Gulf states requested us to do something, the Saudis requested even more, and we did something military and political: we sent the **Constellation**, we sent planes over Aden so they would not mistake our seriousness. We sent a message to the head of the Soviet Union privately, warning them that we saw no cause or justification, for the problems from the South to spill over into the Arabian peninsula. It was not a threat but it was unusual to send a message. We also went into the UN, and coordinated with the Arab league. We shipped weapons and advisors very quickly. We also airlifted tanks in 1979, one tank in one plane.¹⁹ This was so amazing, we have never ever lifted tanks to anywhere before.²⁰ We supplied intelligence about who was where. It was a very large range of diplomatic and military efforts, and it succeeded. It was a symbol, but an important symbol of what we were preparing to do if the situation got worse.²¹

William R. Crawford, the first US Ambassador to the YAR, also justified the US belief in the seriousness of the situation in the YAR during February and early March 1979. He said that the fighting, which began on 23 February, was "more serious than past incidents"²² and that it was "clearly a carefully planned, coordinated and amply supported campaign with the apparent intention of seizing and occupying North Yemeni territory and destabilizing the North Yemen government. The timing of the attack may have been related to South Yemen's desire to exploit its current superiority in equipment before our announced military assistance reaches and is integrated into the North Yemeni armed forces."²³

The situation in the Yemens in February and early March 1979 was viewed in the United States in terms of global Washington-Moscow relations. Ruskiewicz stated: "President Carter has to take a stand somewhere in the region, and he can do it cheap in Yemen because Saudi Arabia is paying all the bills."²⁴ Quoting his Desk Officer in Charge Affairs, Lieutenant Colonel David Holmes, he added: "If Yemen had not happened at that particular time, it would have been invented."²⁵ He also said: "our modest proposal to improve Yemen's defence capability hit Washington at a time when the Administration was apparently casting about for some way to present a stronger image in the region. North Yemen presented itself as likely place for the United States to take a stand against Communist encroachment from the Horn of Africa, and had become the subject of a national security memorandum."²⁶ Ambassador George Lane quoted Zbigniew Brzezinski as saying at that time that if the YAR-PDRY "mini-war" hadn't occurred, "the US would have wanted to invent something like it as a way of being able to demonstrate that we are serious against the Soviets who were backing their man, 'Abdul-Fattah Isma'il as pushing at the edges of a key country for us, Saudi Arabia", which was "producing 10 million barrels of crude oil everyday and hosts our military bases."²⁷

Lane also indicated that the US Arms package was designed to serve the security of Saudi Arabia and nothing else: "The US was trying desperately to persuade Saudi Arabia to support the Camp David agreements [peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979], and the Saudis were saying 'no'. The Saudis asked us to support 'Ali 'Abd Allah. If we didn't then the Saudis would say don't ask for our support any more, [on oil prices] from oil to Camp

David."²⁸

The inter-Yemeni war of 1979 was viewed seriously in Washington because it coincided with many other events that negatively affected implementation of US foreign policy in the Area. These main events were: the Arab opposition to the Camp David agreements; warfare in the Horn of Africa in 1977-78 as a result of the Ethiopian revolution which announced its socialist orientation on 11 February 1977²⁹; the revolution in Iran³⁰ which ended the role of the Shah of Iran as a US "policeman" in the region, the Soviet influence in Afghanistan³¹; the growing importance of the Bab al-Mandab straits following the reopening of the Suez Canal throughout the 1973 Arab-Israeli war during which Sana'a declared war against Israel; the alleged transfer of some of the Soviet Union's military capability from Somalia to the PDRY; and the Carter Administration's determination to bring about peace between Egypt and Israel to end the Soviet influence in the former.

Aden Condemns the US Naval Movements

On 9 March a PDRY Foreign Ministry spokesperson confirmed the despatch of the US aircraft carrier to the Arabian Sea and the passage of several US naval units through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea: "[Aden] sees a clear indication of America's aggressive policy towards the peoples and countries of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula and the resolve of the imperialists to create and expand hotbeds of war and fan regional conflicts in an attempt to harm the national sovereignty of the Arab states and peoples and to push them into preoccupation with regional issues and conflicts."³² He added: "They do it in an attempt to

pave a course for Sadat to complete the negotiations with Israel." He viewed the US despatch of its warships from the Indian Ocean and the airlifted arms from the West to Sana'a aimed "to bolster up the YAR government at the cost of the peoples revolution", as a "flagrant interference in the internal affairs of the northern part of the homeland" which "exposes hostile designs against Democratic Yemen."³³

Debate in the US Congress Over the US Arms Package to the YAR

On 12 March 1979 the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East chaired by Lee H. Hamilton³⁴ held a hearing on the proposed transfer of the 12 F-5E aircraft, 50 armoured carriers, 64 M-tanks and two C-130 transport aircraft to the YAR. (These transfers were considered by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and other executive branch agencies to represent a necessary and prudent response to the military situation in Yemen.) The following witnesses were questioned during the Sub-committee session: William R. Crawford, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Department of State, who had served as the first Ambassador to the YAR (1972-1974); David Ransom, Deputy Director, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs; James Michel, Deputy Legal Adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State; and Alan A. Platt, Chief, Arms Transfers Division, US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The meeting was also attended by Joseph W. Twinam, Director of the State Department Bureau of Arabian Peninsula Affairs. This meeting in itself indicated that the US was seriously concerned by events in the Yemens.

The situation in the YAR was a serious threat to US interests in Saudi Arabia. The effect of the situation on US security interests was one of the major topics of the debate:

Mr. Fountain. I happen to agree with you, right or wrong, that the national security interests of the US are affected by what may happen there. You say Saudi Arabia's security is directly affected by the situation, and neighbouring North Yemen.

Mr. Crawford. Yes.

Mr. Fountain. How is it directly affected?

Mr. Crawford. Remember the million North Yemeni workers who are in every aspect of Saudi Arabia and its life. It is the strong feeling of the government of Saudi Arabia, I think shared by ours, if because of subversion - more than subversion, actual invasion - from the PDRY, North Yemen were to be destabilized to the extent that you have a hostile pro-Soviet regime in North Yemen, all of those million workers in the oil fields and every other aspect of Saudi life would be hostage to the political dictates of the government back home. In other words, they could become a very harmful force in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. So, there lies the interest of Saudi Arabia in maintaining a government with a politically moderate orientation.³⁵

Another aspect discussed was the Soviet presence in South Yemen and its influence in the area, and the failure of Washington-Aden contacts to moderate South Yemen during the life time of President Rubayye'. The witnesses expressed concern about intelligence estimates of from 800 to 1000 Soviet advisers, about half of which were regular military personnel, between 500 and 700 Cuban advisers, and more than 100 East Germans primarily concentrated on internal security intelligence.³⁶ They emphasised the strategic importance of South Yemen: "You only have to look at the map to know how important the whole area is to the United States."³⁷

This fact was emphasised by all the witnesses, but the complexity of the situation was clearly revealed. Like the Saudis, American officials were not sure if the arms delivered would be used to defend Saudi and US interests. Congressman Platt said: "We cannot afford to turn our backs on the legitimate defence needs of the YAR. At the same time, it is not in our interest

to supply arms to the YAR without limit."³⁸

During a debate on the use to which military equipment sent to the YAR would be put, the same problem was raised by committee members such as Congressman Fountain, who said:

I am not sure whether we are shipping to friend or foe. You have Russian advisers in North Yemen, and apparently the Saudis are concerned about the impact of the South Yemeni efforts against North Yemen. Just who will get hold of these tanks and planes, and so forth; do we know?³⁹

To some Americans, the YAR was an unreliable ally because although its government was not pro-Soviet, nor was it pro-Western.

This debate indicated that the main objective of the US equipment to North Yemen was political rather than military:

Mr. Bowen⁴⁰: ...That was a rather impressive list of aircraft and equipment that you recited to us earlier, in the possession of South Yemen, equipment which is manned, experienced, and operational. Do our defense experts calculate that the equipment which we are now discussing to be provided North Yemen is sufficient to defeat South Yemen, to deter aggression, to reconquer lost territory? Just what can it accomplish? I might add, when will it be prepared to take such action? Presumably it is not now, since we do not have pilots ready, or other personnel needed. To what extent, in other words, is this simply a showing of the flag on the part of this country, as opposed to an actual capable, operational force which can achieve a specific calculated objective?⁴¹

This was a relevant question for the US arms package in itself was useless, but intended simply to interrupt the YAR-Soviet military connection and to achieve a listening post in the YAR army. On 13 March, the US State Department confirmed that about 65 American military advisors would be sent to North Yemen, and stressed that they were ordered not to become involved in clashes with PDRY forces. This move was condemned in Congress by

a Wisconsin Democrat, Leslie Aspin, who considered it a "dangerous" switch in US foreign policy. Aspin added that Department officials were saying that the atmosphere was "reminiscent of Vietnam in 1963." He said that the US Administration was "about to change its foreign policy from relatively passive to intensively active yet in [a] highly arbitrary fashion".⁴² But the Administration ignored such criticism and announced that it was sending a General to Saudi Arabia to coordinate the emergency shipments of Saudi and US weapons to Yemen.⁴³

On March 15, Tom Reston, the State Department spokesman, stated that the "military instructors would play only a limited role."⁴⁴ He added: "Twenty American advisers are already in Sana'a, and 70 more are on their way", and emphasised that America's "primary objective is to see that this problem is resolved by peaceful means."⁴⁵ But following the arrival of the American military advisors, rumours spread in Sana'a that US advisors who were training the YAR army to use the American arms, were at the same time training commandos to blow up bridges in the south, and to use ground-to-air the Vulcan weapons, against personnel and against villages. There were also rumours outside the YAR which suggested this was a part of a wider plan by the governments of the YAR, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to overthrow the PDRY government.

Political observers in Washington believed the swift American response to the situation in the YAR to be due to the seriousness of the threat to American interests in Saudi Arabia.

...the Saudis evidently need to be elaborately reassured that they and their gold would be safe there. This reassurance campaign has now led the Carter administration to rush some expensive military equipment and several score of US instructors to Yemen, a Saudi dependency at the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula... Yemen is a frail stage for [a] demonstration of US power. But it is important to the Saudis, either as a buffer or as a weapon against their other neighbour. Southern Yemen has been raising hell throughout the region in the decade since the British left. Its radical leaders seem responsive to anyone who wants to cause the Saudis trouble. They are also well supplied with Soviet arms and have recently augmented their corps of Soviet and Cuban advisers....⁴⁶

The eventual ceasefire mediated by the Arab League was a result of American, Soviet, Saudi, Syrian and Iraqi pressure on the PDRY. The NDF and PDRY forces returned to their bases in the South by 23 March, leaving the few border town and villages they had occupied to YAR forces. The withdrawal of forces started on 17 March following a meeting in Sana'a between the two Chiefs of Staff the previous day.⁴⁷ Despite this development, on 11 April 1979 the US State Department said that "the withdrawal would not affect plans to increase the number of military advisers in North Yemen", that "if the ceasefire between North and South Yemen is held, shipment of the weapons might be made by sea instead of by air", and that "the aircraft carrier, **Constellation**, and a task force of ships would remain in the Arabian Sea indefinitely, as a reaction to the fighting."⁴⁸

Yemeni Talks on Reunification and US Response

After the ceasefire the Arab League arranged for the two Yemeni Presidents to meet in Kuwait on 11 March 1979.⁴⁹ Instead of merely discussing normalisation of relations between the two states, both Sana'a and Aden stressed that unity, "the solution for all Yemen's tragedies"⁵⁰ was on the agenda. On 26 March President 'Abdul-Fattah Ismai'l, the Secretary General of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's

Council in the PDRY, stated that the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the US, "the enemy of the Arab people, is reflected in the protection of their joint interests" which was "the continued flow of oil and insuring the protection of Israel." The PDRY President also mentioned that "the gravity of the Arab political situation arising from the signing of the treaty of surrender between the Zionist enemy and the Sadat regime will require Saudi Arabia and the Arab oil-producing countries to take practical measures to strengthen Arab solidarity. Foremost among these measures is the oil weapon as confirmation of the clear Arab stance on the Camp David agreement." President Isma'il accused the US of creating the 1979 inter-Yemeni war "by sending arms to the region before and after the events between the two parts of Yemen, Washington "did not merely aim to avert what had happened in Iran and to preserve its interests, but also to frustrate the efforts of the Arab peoples and transform the Arab-Israeli war into an inter-Arab and inter-Yemeni war, like that which happened in Lebanon. "⁵¹

It would seem that Ismai'l was suggesting that the US encouraged the inter-Yemeni war to threaten Saudi Arabia, to ensure it would not use the oil weapon against Washington in reaction to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty as it had under the leadership of King Faisal in 1973. But if this is what he thought, a pertinent question is why was the PDRY unable to stop the NDF operations inside the YAR in order to counter the "imperialist conspiracies" of which the PDRY Cabinet spoke one day later?⁵²

Instead, the YAR and the PDRY tried to counter these "conspiracies" in their own way. Between 28-30 March President Saleh and his Southern counterpart met in Kuwait and decided to begin a new phase in inter-Yemeni relations. On 29 March President Isma'il revealed that the PDRY had proposed a unity plan at the very beginning of the summit.⁵³ The President of the YAR told the Kuwaiti newspaper **al-Rai al-'Aam** that the US arms package to his country during the war had been the subject of four years negotiations and had nothing to do with the recent war. He stressed that his country "deals with the US in the same way it does with the Soviet Union on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs."⁵⁴ On 30 March President Saleh and President Isma'il announced a new unity accord. Their joint statement asserted a determination "to consolidate the just pan-Arab struggle against the common enemy represented by the imperialist-Zionist-US alliance and treason."⁵⁵ In the wake of the summit, as a gesture of good will, President Saleh dismissed his Foreign Minister 'Abd Allah al-Asnadj, and his Minister of Culture and Information, Muhammad Salem Basindwah, who were among the leaders of FLOSY. Rumours in Sana'a said that al-Asnadj opposed President Saleh's attempts to normalise relations with the South and had started cooperating directly with Saudi Arabia in order to influence President Saleh. Alarmed by this development and by the movements towards unity, Saudi Arabia promptly stopped the flow of US arms to Sana'a. The US did not welcome the unity plans because of its strong connections with Saudi Arabia and because they contradicted Washington own plans to counter Soviet influence in the PDRY.

Minimal YAR-US Relations

When the war ended in March 1979, YAR-US relations were interrupted: American interests in Saudi Arabia were no longer under threat, and the Saudis, who had better connections with Washington and who had financed the US arms package to Sana'a, saw that continued cooperation between Sana'a and Washington would not protect KSA interests. In early 1979 the US took the situation in Yemen seriously mostly because it was considered important in Riyadh⁵⁶. This was stressed by the first US Ambassador to the YAR, William Crawford, who stated: "We felt that this situation was of sufficient gravity... [to] enter the arena of United States-Soviet global relations. We sought to serve clear evidence to the Soviet Union that we regarded the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia as vital to the interests of the United States: that the security and integrity of North Yemen is important because it is in return regarded as vital by the Saudis."⁵⁷

Another factor was that in the weeks immediately following the ceasefire and before the South Yemeni threat to Saudi Arabia eased, the US was reportedly training North and South Yemeni commandoes to carry out sabotage raids in South Yemen.⁵⁸ When YAR and PDRY leaders started to discuss unity, however, American policy was forced to change. Political sources in Washington revealed:

US intelligence organisations have concluded that the North Yemeni government of President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh, which is receiving emergency shipments from a US arms package worth \$500 millions, is likely to collapse within the next six months ...intelligence reports circulated within the Administration conceded that US analysts are uncertain who will succeed the erratic and unpopular President Saleh and take control of the F-5e jet fighters, M-60 tanks and other weapons now being supplied to the North Yemeni army...the uncertainty about a successor...[has] initiated discussions in the State Department, National Security Council, and [the]

Pentagon about slowing the emergency shipments authorised by President Carter on March 9, during border fighting between North and South Yemens... US analysts have concluded that the South Yemeni military thrust into North Yemen was not an attempt to occupy the country but was aimed at destroying Saleh's credibility and embarrassing his army so severely that it would turn against him.⁵⁹

The change in US policy was clearly a reaction to the Yemeni unity talks. These talks slowed down the transfer of American arms to the YAR still in Saudi Arabia, creating misunderstanding between Sana'a and Washington. In March 1979 rumours circulated in Sana'a said that except for two air force personnel all American military advisors had left the country, and that their departure was connected with Sana'a's efforts to get arms from the Soviet Union.

Consequently, during the same month, Saudi Arabia agreed to resume the supply of American arms demonstrating that the KSA did not dictate US policy when the strategic interests of Washington were concerned. This was subsequently confirmed by Major Ruszkiewicz, the US Military Attache in Sana'a, in his personal account of the events in this period.⁶⁰ Despite opposition from Riyadh the US administration removed some constraints on the provision of military aid to Sana'a in order to restrict military relations between Sana'a and Moscow. This, however, was not enough to satisfy the needs of the YAR.⁶¹ On 12 April **The Washington Post** reported that a squadron of 12 F-5E had been delivered to Saudi Arabia for reassembly and shipment to North Yemen.⁶² It was then confirmed that the last items of the \$390 million arms package, hurriedly authorised by President Carter when war broke out in February, had been delivered by the US Navy. US Defence Department spokesman Tom Ross

was quoted saying "the ship began unloading 32 M-60 tanks and 50 armoured personnel carriers at Hudeidah", that "the 80,000-ton aircraft carrier **Constellation**, despatched to the Indian Ocean to show the American flag, had been relieved by the carrier **Midway** from the South China Sea", and that "the US mobile teams in North Yemen numbering 21 men, will continue to instruct North Yemenis in the use and care of US arms."⁶³

But part of the US arm package was delayed in Saudi Arabia. Riyadh, fearing the influence of Sana'a on its Yemeni client tribes in the North, which were its lever in YAR affairs, decided to constrain the power of President Saleh and his government by restricting the supply of American arms. The Saudis justified their position by raising the issue of the YAR-KSA border dispute and the presence of military advisors in Sana'a. This "Saudi unwillingness to transfer the weapons either quickly or fully indicated the continuation of certain basic differences between Riyadh and Sana'a on security matters."⁶⁴ According to Ambassador Lane, "after the war there was a major problem between the United States and the Yemen because the Saudis were no longer interested in sending the weapons to the Yemen, because the danger from South Yemen ceased. President Saleh was terribly interested in building up his military forces so as to make sure that what happened in February 1979 could not happen again."⁶⁵

Originally, the US and the KSA saw that it was in their interest to provide Sana'a with only a limited amount of defensive weapons to provide military protection in the event of pro-Soviet invasion. A Department of State memorandum⁶⁶ issued in August 1978, which

referred to the 6 August meeting of Ambassador West with Prince Sultan the Saudi Defence Minister and Prince Saud al-Faisal, stated that the scope of the military program to the YAR, "which essentially involves accelerated and more effective introduction of already approved and funded equipment, will fall short of meeting Yemeni expectations." It stressed that the US-KSA air-lift to accelerate delivery of artillery and anti-aircraft weapons would "demonstrate in a politically effective manner" the two countries' support for the YAR. The memorandum continued:

At the moment we are facing numerous technical problems characteristic of trying to implement a program such as this in a country like North Yemen in cooperation with a government like Saudi Arabia, but no basic policy problems are involved. Down the road we face the question of whether we will be able to accede to the general Saudi desire that we put up at least a token amount of the financing of our participation in training the YAR forces on specific items of equipment as well as the issue of how to handle inevitable Yemeni requests for additional weapons and equipment... For the moment, however, we are launched on asserting a limited but direct US role in North Yemen, related to introducing specific, Saudi-funded equipment in a way which can build the Saudi confidence in our desire to cooperate fully with them while demonstrating to North Yemen that our support is tangible.⁶⁷

The North Yemeni government continued its efforts to establish direct dealings with Washington. In mid June 1979, President Saleh, in a letter that his top political adviser, 'Abd Allah al-Asnadj, personally handed to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in Washington, asked for the despatch of senior US military advisers to help train his armed forces in the use of the American equipment. He also appealed "for a more direct US military role in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf region". In an interview in Washington al-Asnadj called on Americans to "liberate themselves from the Vietnam complex" by actively defending "certain political values" in the Peninsula. Al-Asnadj also said that "the 30,000-man Yemeni army, which largely has been trained and equipped by the Soviet Union over the past decade, was having

trouble converting to US material and methods and would benefit from a reorganization program that would be directed by US officers stationed in Yemen". Mentioning that between 30-50 military instructors had been roistered on short-term postings, and that members of a military planning and command-structure team headed by Major General Richard Lawrence stationed temporarily in Saudi Arabia had also visited Sana'a to survey defense needs, al-Asnadj said that "Yemen would welcome a similar planning mission and predicted that permanently stationing senior U.S. officers in the area would not draw criticism from other Arab countries."⁶⁸ According to political analysts in Washington, al-Asnadj's statements "indicated irritation with slow deliveries of the US arms through Saudi Arabia"⁶⁹ for he emphasised "that any increased U.S. presence in Yemen should be made in the context of the trilateral military arrangement."⁷⁰ A few days later **The Christian Science Monitor** quoted the Yemeni envoy as saying "North Yemen would do nothing to undermine US peace efforts in the current Egyptian-Israeli talks to implement the Camp David agreements."⁷¹ By making such a statement, al-Asnadj was trying to convince the American Administration of his government's commitment to the West. But his argument was not as strong as that posed by US business interests in the KSA.

Although the YAR slowed down unity talks as a result of Saudi pressure Al-Asnadj's mission was not successful⁷², nor did he succeed in representing the Yemeni point of view concerning direct YAR-US contacts and he was forced to talk constantly about trilateral relations.⁷³ The following month the YAR Prime Minister, 'Abdul-'Aziz 'Abdul-'Ghani, travelled to the US where he met US Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Zbigniew Brzezinski on 28 August to discuss "the arms package, the bilateral relationship and relations as a whole"⁷⁴, according to Ambassador George Lane who was also present. Due to the stronger Washington-Riyadh relationship, demonstrated by Saudi Arabia's helpful oil policy at a time when Washington was trying to persuade Riyadh to accept the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David agreements, US policy did not alter. Ambassador Lane stressed that during this period Saudi daily oil production reached nearly 10 million barrels at \$32 per barrel, \$4 less than the OPEC price.⁷⁵ No real understanding between Sana'a and Washington developed because the two countries did not share the same strategic outlook regarding threats to security. As was the case of many countries in the area Sana'a believed the main threat to its security came from Saudi Arabia and a radical South Yemen as well as from Israel, whereas the US believed the chief security threat to its interests in Saudi Arabia and Israel came from the Soviet Union and the radical Arabs.

US military and political arrangements successfully contained the PDRY and Soviet threats to its interests in Saudi Arabia throughout the inter-Yemeni war period of 1979. This was achieved in part through alternative strategic assets, its bases in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Masirah in the Sultanate of 'Oman, making the need to arm the YAR redundant. While opposed to the latter policy the KSA had no objections to the former. This provides one possible explanation for Washington's negative response to the YAR's demands. The events of 1978, 1979, (and later of 1986) in the two Yemens also weakened the hardliners in the PDRY and the country as a whole, indicating that US bases around the PDRY were sufficient to protect US interests. The outcome was that the YAR felt forced to respond

positively to Soviet initiatives during and after the second inter-Yemeni war of 1979.

Sana'a Seeks Soviet Arms

Creating US Concern

On 5 October 1979, YAR Foreign Minister Dr Hassan Makki confirmed that Sana'a had invited US military advisors to join Soviet experts in training his country's army. He added that negotiations were in process for a new agreement to supply the North Yemeni army with US weapons. At the same time Makki confirmed the USSR was still supplying arms and military advisors concluding: "We cannot forget the role played by the Soviet Union in helping us and providing us with weapons when the revolution was under attack. We are proud of our friendship with the Soviet Union, which is based on mutual respect and the preservation of the interests of the two people."⁷⁶ This can be interpreted as indirect criticism of the US. In Sana'a proposals to obtain more Soviet arms were justified because the US refused to supply equipment directly; Washington only approved an annual aid budget to be spent on training YAR personnel in American military academies and on the maintenance of the US military equipment previously sold to the YAR. Yemen apparently accepted this kind of aid in order to avoid American conditions. Washington may have favoured a presence in the YAR on an equal footing to Moscow, but Makki's statement indicates that Washington had become less interested in arming and reorganising the Yemeni army.

Two months later the US press made it clear that Sana'a had moved towards Moscow in

return for more arms and military advice. The **Washington Post** commented: "Yemen's President, having pocketed the [nearly half a billion] US arms, is now taking even larger doses of Soviet arms, and advisers... This development is no small embarrassment for Washington. The administration perhaps thought it was buying a Yemen. It turns out it may have been only renting a Yemen, for uncertain time."⁷⁷ It seemed strange to many Western observers that what they considered to be their Yemeni ally should seek arms from their enemy. Yemeni needs were never discussed.

Despite this, the YAR continued to be of significance to the US because of its position on the Red Sea and its location between the rich oil resources of the KSA and the radical PDRY. This is why, according to Ambassador Lane, Sana'a was "the only country in the world where in the morning the United States had a training program for Yemen pilots on the F5 planes at Sana'a airport, and in the afternoon the Soviets had a training program for Yemeni pilots on the Sukhoi 22."⁷⁸

Correspondence between the White House and Congress shows that YAR-US military cooperation could not be developed simply because it did not serve US national security purposes. Arming the YAR was opposed by many influential Americans who criticised President Carter for his decision to waive congressional authority in order to expedite the delivery of military supplies to Sana'a. Letters dated 3 and 4 April and 30 May 1979, signed by a number of Congressmen⁷⁹ demonstrate strong objections and raised the following points: any reasonable review of the facts in the Yemeni situation supports the view that

Presidential powers had been misused; the State Department was unable to state exactly what national security interests were involved in the Yemen; although US intelligence on the fighting between North and South Yemen was meagre, it had been confirmed in early April that the YAR could not utilize, maintain or absorb any of the US equipment quickly, for few, if any, of its military personnel were acquainted with the equipment the US was proposed to sell; the use of the waiver to avoid the 30-day review procedure and the expedited deliveries could not affect the military conflict which had been defused by the Arab League mediation efforts; if the Administration felt a need to support the Saudis and to show America's firm resolve, there were more appropriate steps which would not distort the law; had Congressional debate taken place, serious questions would have been raised about the wisdom of sending sophisticated arms. The YAR was described as "a feudal society with an army divided along tribal lines" and "the most unstable country in the Middle East", therefore there was "grave danger that the weapons will fall into hostile hands, as they did in Iran." Only Jonathan Bingham's letter expressed the view that "the administration could have felt our national security interest in Saudi Arabia's oil reserves and hence in the continued pro-Western orientation of the Saudi Arabian government required that the United States respond in a vigorous and decisive way to [a] South Yemeni attack on the Yemen Arab Republic."⁸⁰

In reply to these letters and others from Douglas J. Bennet, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, to Clarence Long, Chairman of the US House of Representatives, Lee Hamilton, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House, the US Department of State argued that the Administration had

concluded by September 1978 it was necessary to provide arms to Sana'a, but that the Congressional calendar delayed notification until the new Congress convened in 1979. It also pointed out that although the ceasefire of mid March was successful and the PDRY withdrew its troops, after the Arab League ceasefire of March 8 was unsuccessful, the PDRY rapidly took possession of some strategic YAR territory, hence prospects for sustained peace remained uncertain. Thus the American government believed that the equipment provided important reassurance to the YAR government during the war and served as a signal to regional friends that the US was a dependable partner in their quest for stability and enhanced security, and that the US action had an ongoing impact in helping deter renewed PDRY aggression. It concluded that "the level of sophistication involved does not match that provided to Iran or other regional states over the years"; while the Department did not believe the risk of its equipment falling into hostile hands was high, "the limited numbers involved and our control over spare parts, munitions and supply equipment would preclude the equipment becoming a threat to our friends in the area."⁸¹

The shift towards the USSR indicates that the YAR government believed that it was in their interests to maintain good relations with Moscow because the US was not willing to organise and equip the YAR's army without the approval of Riyadh which footed the bill. US objectives were seen to be merely to "minimize any further threat against Saudi Arabia, reduce Soviet influence, and counteract the PDRY's radical government."⁸² It was clearly only Washington's concern for Saudi repercussions which made it decide not to send more arms to the YAR. Al-asnadj's and 'Abdul-Ghani's subsequent visit to Washington shows that

Sana'a tried to deal directly with Washington during June 1979, but when this failed the Yemeni government turned the very next month to Moscow, where a major arms agreement was signed. Between 26 and 28 October 1979, President Saleh visited Moscow personally to seek more arms. The Soviets agreed to provide the YAR with many of its military needs in order in support of their policy that aimed at "neutralization of the ...Gulf, Red Sea and Indian ocean area."⁸³

On this subject, Professor Robert Stookey has stressed that "the special relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia formed after the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict had repercussions on Yemen-American relations." It therefore "became customary for the United States to take significant action toward Yemen only after close consultation with the Saudis."⁸⁴ Stookey also wrote:

Since some Saudi policies in the YAR are actually determined to [restrict] the authority and freedom of action of the Sana'a government, this is resented by the Yemenis, who would prefer a more direct, and broader, relationship with the United States. The United States appears to oppose the Soviet presence in Yemen, without acknowledging its value to the Yemenis as a counterweight to the tight Saudi embrace and its contribution to Yemeni national security.... The YAR was reluctant to sever its military ties with the USSR, prompting the Saudis to delay the delivery of American arms and ammunition and also to suspend financial aid to the YAR government. To the consternation of the United States and Saudi Arabia, substantial shipments of Soviet arms and equipment began to arrive at the port of Hudeidah in October 1979.⁸⁵

David Ransom, the Director of Arabian Peninsula affairs in the US State Department in January 1990, commented that the Soviets felt they were going to lose their position in the North, "so they offered a very big arms package to Yemen."⁸⁶ When asked if he thought this was a result of the negative US attitude towards the YAR, Ransom replied: "Yes. And the

Yemenis accepted [the Soviet offer], but the Soviets gave more aid and more weapons to the South than to the North and provided more advisors until 1986. In 1986, 1987 and 1988 the curves cross. Now the Soviets provide more to the North than to the South, because the South is a failure."⁸⁷

Even though the YAR had received strong US military support, its leaders felt they had no choice but to remain on good terms with the USSR. If they had been expelled from the YAR, the Soviets would no longer have had any incentive to restrain Aden's military ambitions against Sana'a. Events in the Horn of Africa set a precedent: when the USSR attempted to mediate between Ethiopia and Somalia both allied to the Soviet Union but opposed to each other the Soviets had been expelled from Somalia in 1977. Moscow then gave all its support to Ethiopia leaving Somalia unable to receive comparable support from Washington. Somalia had been trying to seize territory from Ethiopia, the YAR, however, merely wished to protect territory it already had. The YAR leadership, therefore, felt it was essential to their country's security to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union.⁸⁸

Sana'a's relationship with Moscow worried the US Administration but its interests in Saudi Arabia were secure. Washington wanted the YAR as an ally but "at a cheap price."⁸⁹ On 5 February 1980, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said before the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee that the US "faced an important and troubling situation"⁹⁰ because of the signs of growing Soviet influence in Yemen, and as a consequence a special envoy had been sent to the YAR for talks with President Saleh. Calling the political situation

in Sana'a "very delicate and fragile", Vance said that Soviet arms deliveries to the country, along with the presence of Soviet advisors there and talks with Aden over political unity, had led to new fears of Soviet gains in the oil-producing Arabian Peninsula. He asked members of the Committee to help the Administration remove restrictions on providing military and economic aid to certain countries such as the YAR. He told journalists the Soviets were "prepared to fish in troubled waters"⁹¹.

The YAR-USSR arms deal to break Saudi interference in the Yemeni affairs was the direct result of the Saudis' insensitive handling of the transfer of US arms, the diplomatic situation after the border fight and the unity agreement with South Yemen.⁹² On the Subject of a campaign within the US to keep the YAR pro-Western, former US Secretary of Defence Arthur Schlesinger, then Albert Schweitzer Professor of the Humanities at City University New York, wrote:

It is now a year after the great Yemen crisis of 1979... This anniversary provides an appropriate opportunity to consider what subsequently happened to Mr. Carter's "emergency." In the year since, negotiations between the two Yemens, already underway when the emergency was declared, have turned into unification talks. Colonel Ali 'Abd Alla Saleh, the President of "our" Yemen, has signed an arms agreement with Moscow. Soviet tanks, planes and rocket launchers have arrived in North Yemen. Saudi Arabia, disturbed by the turn of events, has cut back its financial aid to North Yemen. The American F-5E aircraft, M-60 tanks, Vulcan air defence systems, so imprudently rushed to North Yemen, may well, at the next spin of the dial, end up pointed at the Saudis, if not at us...⁹³

President Saleh, in an interview with the Kuwaiti **al-Siyassah**, dismissed these allegations against the YAR, which never mentioned the fact that Saudi Arabia was playing with the YAR for its own objectives; the Saudis succeeded in disturbing military relations between

Sana'a and Moscow and then slowed down the delivery of the US arms package in order to promote further instability in the YAR. On this issue Saleh said "what is surprising is that it is we, and not others, who are the target of campaigns of suspicion and attack, as if by diversifying the sources of arms for our armed forces we have moved from one position to another. Our decision to diversify the sources of arms is dictated to us by Yemen's interests as well as pan-Arab interests."⁹⁴

Soviet "Strategic Advance"

Constrains YAR-USA Connection

What a specialist on Yemen observed during his visit to Sana'a in April 1984 about a Soviet preparation for what he believed to be "another strategic advance" in the area, was applicable to the situation a few years earlier:

The Soviet Union has intervened to help the conservative government of North Yemen crush a left wing guerrilla movement in a move largely unnoticed by the rest of the world and played down here.⁹⁵ The aid in the form of an estimated \$600 million worth of arms delivered from 1979 onwards and hundred of military advisors, has enabled the Sana'a authorities to build an effective central army for the first time in the country's history and inflict defeat on the forces of the National Democratic Front which had been active throughout much of the southern part of this country for some years... The Russians did not want to loose their foothold in North Yemen to the West without a fight...⁹⁶

This was an accurate observation. The Soviets abandoned the NDF and even their greatest ally, 'Abdul-Fattah Ismail'⁹⁷, for their wider concerns in the area; more than just preserve its interests in the YAR, Moscow sought to "reassure the Gulf Arabs of its non-hostile intentions in the wake of the Afghanistan invasion."⁹⁸ On the other hand, in late 1979 after direct USSR involvement in both the PDRY and the YAR, Moscow did not support President

Ismail's policies in South Yemen⁹⁹: instead the YAR realised the necessity of maintaining communication with the Soviet Union and accepting a Soviet presence. It was reported that Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev was opposed to the policies of South Yemen during that period, a matter which contributed to the ousting of Isma'il in 1980. The leadership in Moscow was convinced that "revolution was unlikely in the oil rich states of the Arabian Peninsula."¹⁰⁰ Moscow sought to befriend these conservative governments and supported the fourth PDRY President, Ali Nasser Muhammad, who paved the way for the Soviet Union to establish relations for the first time ever with most of these rich states.

According to Stookey "the Soviets have come to the conclusion, on the basis of their historical experience in various apparently radical countries, that no Arab country, including the PDRY, is a realistic candidate for membership in their community of socialist nations, given the persistent strength of Islamic and Arab Nationalist traditions. They, therefore, now seek to continue mutually beneficial relations with Arab countries regardless of their political complexion."¹⁰¹

In addition to what can be considered a shift in the Soviet position vis-a-vis the US in the Arabian Peninsula, it is also possible to discern the invalidity of the old Soviet strategy of opposition to US influence in the region. Moscow was forced to adopt new policies towards the YAR to prevent the loss of a foothold in the most populated country of the area.

As a consequence of the Soviet initiative, relations between the US and the YAR soured in

mid-1979 and thereafter were at best only minimal. Throughout the early 1980's the US was criticised in the YAR for its subordination of Yemeni interests to those of the Saudis, its strong support of Israel, and for the poor quality as well as the small quantity of its military and economic aid programs. These criticisms were not as strong as they might have been because Yemenis expectations of the US were gradually lowered.¹⁰²

Beginning of "Tangible US Participation"

By the end of 1979 nine private non-profit-making US organisations provided the north Yemeni people with development assistance and material aid. As far as the arms package was concerned most of the equipment arrived before the end of the year. US official figures show that in 1980 the total value of American arms received in Sana'a was US \$316.4 million.¹⁰³ The YAR Ambassador to Washington in 1990 told this author that the total received to date was \$360 million worth of arms.¹⁰⁴ The American F5s were present at the military show in Sana'a the 17th anniversary of the revolution, on 26 September 1979. Ambassador Lane told this author that on that day nine of the twelve planes in the show were flown by pilots of four different nationalities without a common language. There were three Saudis, two Yemenis, two Americans and two Nationalist Chinese (Taiwanese). The Yemenis and the Saudis spoke in Arabic which the Saudis translated into English to the Americans and the Taiwanese.¹⁰⁵

Before the end of 1980 relations between the two countries were shaken yet further when the Yemeni government arrested two American citizens and put them on trial for spying.¹⁰⁶

They were released in early February 1981 after official negotiations between the two countries¹⁰⁷

YAR-US relations in the 1980s were characterised by some modest USAID projects in the country reflecting continued US interest in the country. US governmental and Congressional documents of the first five years of the 1980s reveal that US political interest in the strategically-located Yemen increased during these years as the political stability in the Middle East became increasingly fragile and as Western dependence on Middle East oil continued. The Reagan Administration stressed that in demographic and supply terms the YAR played an important role in the Arabian Peninsula. The YAR's political importance was assured by its geographic relationship to the troubled Horn of Africa and Marxist South Yemen. A pact signed between Aden, Tripoli, and Addis-Ababa in mid-1981 was interpreted in Washington as being explicitly directed at countering US influence; one of the main purposes of the USAID-financed development projects in the YAR was to strengthen forces resistant to a PDRY takeover in the sense that "a strong government in the YAR, friendly to its neighbours enhances US interests in regional stability and security."¹⁰⁸

The nature of US interest in the YAR changed after 1984 as demonstrated by USAID presentations to Congress in 1985 and 1986. These presentations, which referred for the first time to "the potential oil resources in the ill-defined border [area]", also revealed that "a long-term US program of human resources and industrial development seeks to lay a foundation for sustained national development and a stronger friendship between Yemen and the United

States"¹⁰⁹, and stressed the need for "tangible US participation in the economic development"¹¹⁰ of the YAR.

Under pressure from Saudi Arabia to limit its role in Yemen, Washington no longer wanted to supply the YAR with arms and restricted the amount of official aid. But, bothered by USSR influence in the YAR, it permitted private sector oil exploration. In 1980 reports of large oil fields provided the US with a new opportunity to compete with the USSR in the YAR. The Texas based oil company, Hunt Consolidated Incorporation, invested \$4 million to run an initial seismic survey of 1,845 kilometres to determine if there was an oil basin under the sands of Marib in Yemen. On 3 September 1981, the newly formed Yemen Hunt Oil Company signed a production-sharing agreement with the YAR to conduct hydrocarbon explorations of more than 3 million acres of the Marib-al-Djawf basin. Drilling started as soon as the first positive result was achieved¹¹¹ and the first well "was exactly where it should be."¹¹² In the same month the Yemen Oil and Mineral Corporation (YOMINCO) and the Hunt Oil Company of Dallas signed a twenty-five year sharing agreement. The US Embassy confirmed that it informally encouraged and advised the US oil companies to pursue their explorations, "because it's good for the United States."¹¹³ The American press predicted that the oil find in the YAR "might bring a political shift" and that the discovery of oil enhanced "U.S. interests in that country and that the development of oil was likely to reduce Sana'a's financial dependence on Saudi Arabia"¹¹⁴.

Apart from the profits which the US oil companies would get from their investments in the

country the US sought to compensate for the declining YAR remittances from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf by this oil find in YAR territory. Between 1982 and 1985 the oil revenues of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates fell from \$180 billion to nearly \$60 billion as a result of the Iraq-Iran war which consumed part of the modest revenues. This affected Arabian Peninsula aid to the YAR and the remittances of the North Yemeni workers in these countries which fell from \$1.4 billion to just under \$500 million. In terms of its global rivalry with the USSR the US feared that this economic situation might promote a leftist orientation in the YAR, which no longer accepted Saudi strings. Thus it was in Washington's interest to promote oil exploration in the YAR, especially since the Iraq-Iran war was threatening to slow or stop oil production elsewhere in the area.

The Yemen Hunt Oil Company's exploration resulted in a flow of Yemeni oil in July 1984 in "commercial and exportable quantities." This was announced by President Saleh in December, at the beginning of the Islamic Conference Organisation meetings in Sana'a. This find had the biggest single influence in the US interest in the YAR since it promoted the country into a different category in the eyes of the US Administration.¹¹⁵ US imports of oil continued to grow every year giving the YAR new importance especially since, as Hunt sources confirmed to this writer, it was known that there was much more oil to be exploited.¹¹⁶

The outcome was an increase in official US contacts because, as Marjorie Ransom, a former US Cultural Attache and founder of the Yemeni-American Language Institute (YALI) in

Sana'a, confirmed "when our private relationship expands that also affects the formal one."¹¹⁷ Washington doubled its aid to the YAR in 1984 once it became clear that there was oil, in order to exert more influence and to promote trade between the two nations. According to Marjorie Ransom aid programmes promote more knowledge about the country and companies that sell food assistance programs might also become interested in selling products through regular channels.¹¹⁸ According to John Kelly, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in 1990, US aid to the YAR is generally considered to be "in the geopolitical interest of the US" which gives "good access for American oil companies and firms which have an interest there" and "has tended to dilute the Soviet influence."¹¹⁹ The transcript of the press conference given by Kelly in 1990 also reveals political reasons behind the decision to double the amount of aid to the YAR since 1984:

Q. What about development assistance?

A. We provide assistance to North Yemen. The last fiscal year was about \$20 million.

Q. How much [do] we get back from the \$20 million every year? What gain?

A. Oh yes. Well I think over the years, the US, there has tended to dilute the Soviet influence.

Q. \$20 million every year for how many years?

A. This has been up and down. That was the most recent years figure.

Q. We don't get anything back!

A. I think we are. I think we are getting access among other things, good access for American oil companies and firms which have an interest there.

Q. Oil companies should pay then. Should they?

A. Well... We're helping a country that needs some help and development. It is in the geopolitical interest of the US.

The American use of the oil card to make closer contacts with the YAR was interrupted by the Saudi government which claimed the Marib oil was within its own borders and a part of its existing fields.¹²⁰ The Saudi objections apparently went unheard in Washington for the US companies continued to explore vigorously for more YAR oil. The USA had clearly

decided not to leave the YAR to the Soviets who could not compete in developing the economy of the country. Yemeni and American officials confirmed that Saudi Arabia, which used not to have southern borders on its official maps, had laid claim to territory near Marib. A number of border clashes occurred as a result of Saudi support of some Northern Yemeni tribes resisting the authority of the central government in Sana'a. Riyadh resurrected old border claims spanning the new oil fields, and a map was published which put most of the area being explored by the Yemen Hunt Oil Company area inside Saudi borders. It was later revealed that in late 1984 Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, wrote to the YAR Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the YAR, Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani, reiterating these claims.¹²¹ Yemeni sources commented that the Saudi attitude toward North Yemen was "triggered by Riyadh's fear that this poor but populous country could pose a security threat if it finds itself awash with oil", explaining why it had "revived claims to Yemeni territory where the oil was discovered."¹²² A Fellow at the US Institute of Peace warned his government that "if American diplomacy is unsuccessful in moderating Saudi policy toward its neighbours however, then, Washington should consider publicly expressing concern about Saudi actions and providing increased security assistance to Oman and North Yemen. Washington should not remain idle when Saudi policies hurt our, as well as their own, interests."¹²³

Washington, it can be concluded, did not approve of the Saudi reaction because the oil partnership created the first economic incentive for the US private sector to invest in the YAR. The growing US dependency on Middle Eastern oil meant that the YAR had a more

significant position in US foreign policy by the beginning of 1984 than ever before. Yemeni oil revenues encouraged trade between the two states. On 18 December 1985, it was revealed in Sydney that the US had sold to the YAR 50,000 tonnes of American wheat "subsidised by about \$20 per tonne under the Export Enhancement Programme."¹²⁴ The Australian Wheat Board reacted angrily to the sale claiming that "the subsidy was specifically targeted to cut the Australian price by a couple of dollars" and that "the US...have paid the international Louis Grain Trading Company [an American company] a subsidy of more than \$20 per tonne to beat the Australian bid". Another sale of the same quantity took place in May 1986 and the Australian Wheat Board claimed that Washington's wheat export subsidy policies had cost Sydney \$1.32 million.¹²⁵ These cut-price wheat sales to the YAR indicate that the US decided to use an economic instrument to achieve more influence in Sana'a. The importance of the US subsidised wheat sales to Sana'a in the 1980s to Washington's foreign policy towards the YAR can be better understood in the light of similar sales to Egypt in the 1950s and early 1960s and the subsequent withholding of wheat shipments by the Johnson Administration.

YAR-USA relations became more stable as the YAR became an object of interest to many of the major American and multi-national companies involved in petroleum exploration and production. During 1984 one of the famous "seven sisters", Exxon, bought a 49 percent interest in the Hunt Oil Company's concession and agreed to provide several million dollars of capital investment in 1986 and 1987. The YAR government approved this agreement by which Hunt and Exxon set up a joint venture to produce and transport oil from the Alif oil

field, which had an estimated 400 million barrels of recoverable oil reserves. It also called for both companies to explore for additional oil reserves in the jointly held areas. The Hunt land was adjacent to areas held by Exxon which under a separate production-sharing agreement with the YAR government, was not affected by the joint venture.¹²⁶ In the jointly controlled border area of the two Yemeni states, to which exploration rights were awarded to a consortium of multi-national companies, the American Hunt and Exxon companies had the biggest stake at 37.5 percent.¹²⁷

US Vice-President George Bush in Sana'a

On 10 April 1986 US Vice-President George Bush arrived in Sana'a.¹²⁸ The following factors were highly relevant to his visit: First. the Hunt Oil Company which had its headquarters in Bush's home town in Texas, had stimulated US interest in the country;¹²⁹ Secondly. The defeat of the NDF a few years earlier had led to greater political stability after 1982; Thirdly. The inter-PDRY conflict which took place three months earlier had weakened the radical government in Aden and hence Washington's hopes for a less radical government in South Yemen were renewed; Fourthly. The ongoing Iraq-Iran war since September 1980 was creating instability in the region.

On his arrival at Sana'a airport Bush stated: "this is a critical year in world events, especially here in the Arabian Peninsula, where a brutal war has been waged in the Gulf area for five years, and a smaller... but also brutal... one was fought south of here only a few weeks ago. Yet throughout these troubled times the Yemen Arab Republic has vigorously safeguarded

it stability and sovereignty." He added that the Americans had recently "found oil in the Yemen Arab Republic", and that "we look forward to a close and enduring relationship" with Sana'a.¹³⁰ At a dinner hosted by the YAR Vice President and Speaker of the People's Constituent Assembly, Kadi 'Abdul-Karim 'Abd Allah al-'Arashi, Vice President, emphasised the same points:

In recent weeks South Yemen has witnessed a tragic conflict. Many lives were lost; society as a whole suffered a serious setback from which it will take many years to recover. Here in the Yemen Arab Republic, on the other hand, under a practical and far-sighted national leadership, an American oil company took a big chance after years of studying the geology of this country, drilled for oil, and where others had failed, it succeeded. Now the Yemen Arab Republic at last has at its command the resources that have so changed other countries of the Arabian peninsula... Americans are eager to be a part of the Yemen Arab Republic's growth. Americans are eager to be in partnership with your people and your government - a partnership that can help bring a better life not only to this country, but, I am confident, to this entire region. The confidence that the United States government has in this relationship with the Yemen Arab republic is reflected by our decision to build a new Embassy here.¹³¹

In his reply Kadi al-'Arashi stressed that the YAR January dispute was considered by the YAR government to be an internal matter of the PDRY and pleaded the Palestinian cause.

Quoting from the US Declaration of Independence he said:

Through you, we address the values of the American people who believe in freedom, truth, justice and equality. We look forward to the role the US can play in supporting the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent state, on their land, under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to stop Israeli violations of the rights of the Palestinian people who are exposed to mass liquidation both inside and outside their occupied territories and whose lands encounter growing Israeli settlements.¹³²

The next day, at a press conference that followed his meeting with the YAR President and other Yemeni officials, Bush said that he had discussed "the stability of this region", and "the same broad range issues that have concerned me throughout this trip." He emphasised that "this visit is an important milestone in relations between the United States and the Yemen

Arab Republic" and that his country "is committed to assisting the Yemeni people as they work to build a peaceful and prosperous Republic." He announced that his government would double its PL-480 (Food for Peace) commitment to Yemen by \$5 million in 1986.¹³³ The topic raised at this press conference which most interested the Yemeni people was the American definition of "terrorism."¹³⁴ At another event, the US Vice-President called the YAR to work with the US and the Sheikdoms of the Arabian Peninsula to eliminate the "scourge" of "terrorism."¹³⁵ During his talks with the US Vice-President the Yemeni President expressed his hope for better bilateral relations, permanent peace in the area and argued that the US, as a superpower, should play an effective role in bringing the disputes in the area to a happy end. These points were also stressed by the YAR Vice-President at a banquet in honour of George Bush.¹³⁶

The YAR media, especially **Al-Thawrah**, the main YAR government daily newspaper, hailed the Bush visit as the "fruit of the YAR's constant and principled foreign policy", which was based on a "sincere and practical commitment to positive neutrality, non-alignment, and openness to cooperative relations with the countries of the world and peaceful co-existence with their people, as well as friendly relations based on mutual respect and non-intervention in the internal affairs of others and the development of mutual interests." It emphasised that "Our country will remain, in its policy positions and dealings on all Arab, Islamic and international levels, a distinctive country in its sincere and practical implementation of the principle of positive neutrality and non-alignment without relinquishing independence." **Al-Thawrah** went to say that the YAR's positive neutrality was embodied in the YAR's policies

on international issues and events and its dealings with other countries, and concluded "our country has not fallen under the influence of guardianship, subservience or external control... Our young and developing country, the homeland of the September Revolution, has not fallen into the orbit of any external power, is not hostage to anyone, nor does it have external loyalties as some others do..."¹³⁷ It was later reported that at a meeting with South Yemeni opposition leaders in Sana'a on 11 April, Bush had promised to provide them with military aid and other assistance to help them seize power.¹³⁸ Some observers believed that Bush tried to persuade the YAR leadership to allow the opposition to launch a hit and run war against the South, but the proposal had been rejected completely.¹³⁹

Only three countries in the area criticised Bush's visit to the area. South Yemeni criticism of Bush's visit started a few days before his arrival in Sana'a. It was claimed in Aden that Bush's tour of the region "carried poisonous dishes of sedition and separation." The PDRY main daily newspaper, **14 October**, called upon the YAR leadership to deny "the US Administration the chance to achieve its hostile goals and to uncover Bush's intentions, which are aimed at jeopardising the ambition of our Yemen people to restore their unity through peaceful and democratic means."¹⁴⁰ On the last day of Bush's visit to Sana'a **al-Thawri**, the mouthpiece of the YSP, stressed that the US Vice-President had arrived in the Arabian Peninsula "after the largest US aircraft carriers roamed the seas and oceans and stayed in the Mediterranean amid an atmosphere of tension that prevails in the region following the recent increase in US provocations against the Libyan Djamahiriyah (Republic) and the launching of a flagrant and direct aggression against Libyan territory by US aircraft." The YSP

newspaper saw the Bush visit an indication of "the recent change of attitude of the US government towards the Iran-Iraq war."¹⁴¹

The PDRY condemned Bush's visit to the region but avoided mentioning he was actually in Sana'a because it was so close to home. In Tripoli, however the visit was openly criticised because of what Jana, the official Libyan news agency, saw as an attack against al-Djamahiriah "from the territory of the YAR". Jana stated that at his press conference in Sana'a Bush "disclosed aggressive United States intentions against the Djamahiriyah", and disclosed that "there has been a plan drawn up since the beginning of what he called the Libyan terrorism, aimed at destroying the anti-aircraft missile batteries situated on the Libyan coasts". Jana claimed that the US Vice-President had declared war against Libya "from an Arab country which is supposed to prevent him even setting foot on its territory - let alone make his statement from it." The Arab affairs editor of Jana considered that by allowing Bush's statements against Tripoli the YAR "thus insulted itself" and suggested "perhaps President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh has not yet seen the statements which depict Sana'a as an American colony." The Libyan agency ended its editorial criticism by saying "the masses of the Arab nation now demand vengeance for the insult to their dignity and their honour that has been stained by the U.S. imperialists, Zionists, and Atlantists [ie, NATO members] on the basis that the Arab homeland as a whole is a target for the tenth crusade led by the child-killer Reagan and his Western allies. In their hateful crusade they make no distinction between one Arab country and another."¹⁴² In Teheran it was concluded that Bush came to the area to discuss the outcome of the "imposed war on Iran", the deterioration of oil prices

and to assure the Arab gulf states that the US would protect their security.¹⁴³

Bush's visit to the YAR was followed by an increased American presence in the country. An American Embassy attache estimated that the number of US citizens living in the YAR in that year rose to nearly 2,000, but "every week or two you hear about American scholars, American journalists or American officials arriving in Sana'a."¹⁴⁴ On 9 September 1986, Sana'a witnessed an exchange of notes of agreement concerning the provision of training related to defence articles under the US International Military Education (IMET) programme. This agreement (which remains classified) entered into force on 19 May 1987. As far as US participation in YAR development plans was concerned, nothing of huge importance was achieved. The US government remained unconvinced of the need to assist Sana'a with any large development project; according to the YAR Foreign Minister, Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani, it was ready to provide only small-scale "technical assistance."¹⁴⁵ David Ransom, Arabian Peninsula Desk Officer in January 1990, stated: "The Yemeni government has always wanted us to do another road project like the Mocha-Sana'a road, a big expensive capital project. And we didn't think that was as important as the other things we do. We focused on training and technical assistance; water projects, agricultural projects, public administration projects and projects like that, but every year it was about \$20 million. It's not bad."¹⁴⁶ In 1990 the YAR Ambassador in Washington commented on this American point of view:

This is their decision. We need the technical assistance. When Vice-President Bush visited Sana'a in 1986 I accompanied him on his visit to the Yemen American Language Institute. When we left the school, I whispered to him "Your Excellency, we don't have anything else to invite the US Vice-President to, except this school. The Soviet Union, East and West Germany, China and others, all have big projects in the country like roads, hospitals, airports, harbours, schools, etc." When Mr. Bush's

visit was over, I suggested that Washington assist our country with a big project, but their reply was "This is not our policy. Our concern is to help your country in building an infrastructure through training, scholarships, and other basic projects like water, health and agricultural." This is the policy of the US.¹⁴⁷

Evolution of Relations, 1986-1990

Three developments between 10 April 1986 and 22 May 1990 affected YAR-US relationship: more oil was discovered and more American companies became involved in the country; the YAR President's first visit to the US in early 1990; Yemen unity, which marked the disappearance of the Yemen Arab Republic.

With American help the YAR started to export its oil to the outside world in November 1987. Export flow started at 100,000 bpd, rising to 125,000 on January 1988, and then to 175,000 by the end of the year. On 22 May 1990, the Senior Vice-President and Director of Hunt Consolidated Incorporation, Thomas Meurer, estimated the reservoir of Yemeni oil as follows: 300 million to 480 million in Alef, 135 in Asad al-Kamel, 20 to 40 million in Azal, and 5 to 6 million in the smaller fields like bin Dhi Yazan and Thee Raydan.¹⁴⁸ Meurer told this author the Yemen "has a lot of gas" and that "there are some ways which we can make gasoline out of it." On oil prospects, he said: "as the prices go higher we can produce more oil from the existing fields. Because we produce now a round 35 percent of the oil under ground. The new technology will help us to do that. Also, many parts of Yemen have not been explored yet, especially the area between Shabwah and Marib." When asked whether he believed there was more oil in the Yemen, he replied: "Yes and that's why we're spending more money on more exploration."

In the last week of January 1990 the first ever visit by a YAR President to the USA took place. President George Bush received President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh in the White House, where the discussions covered a wide range of bilateral, regional and international topics. Bush expressed satisfaction that the US had been able to help the YAR realise some of its economic and development goals and noted that the US had increased the Food for Peace programme with Yemen in 1990. In response to the YAR President's plea for a just settlement to the Palestinian cause, Bush reaffirmed Washington's desire for peace and stability in the Middle East and outlined continuing efforts to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The American President stressed his Administration's belief that US diplomatic pressure on Egypt and Israel to develop a dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians offered the best hope for moving the peace process forward towards direct negotiations between the parties. The two Presidents discussed the PDRY's and the YAR's ongoing efforts to unite the Yemen. They also reviewed the current situation in Afghanistan and their shared support for self-determination for the Afghan people. They agreed to work together in the continued search for peace throughout the Middle East region.¹⁴⁹

It was announced in Washington that the YAR would get \$47.5 million of US aid in 1990.¹⁵⁰ This represented an increase of nearly \$10 million on than the previous year despite the expectations of US officials that Washington would maintain the same level of assistance, if not actually decrease it.¹⁵¹

The third event of significance to Yemen-US relations was Yemen unification which took

place on 22 May 1990. In Washington this was seen as a victory for both the US and for the politically moderate YAR which had a larger population as well as larger oil revenues than the pro-Soviet PDRY. Despite these expectations, which were coloured by Cold War attitudes, Yemen Unity ultimately had an indirect negative effect on Yemen-US relations. This was due to Saudi objections to the emergence of a Republican, highly populated, multi-party Republic of Yemen (ROY), which had claims on the ROY-KSA border regions Djizan, Nadjran and 'Asir. According to Yemeni allegations, the Saudis tried to promote instability in the Yemen by donating large amounts of money to their client northern tribesmen and to some religious groups which saw unity as an anti-Islamic development and by delaying deliveries of aid to Sana'a. Iraq reacted by providing the ROY with material and political support. This stirred the old enmity between the two neighbouring peninsula states and opened the door for a closer relationship between the ROY and Iraq within the context of the newly formed Arab Cooperation Council. When Yemen unity was announced in Aden on 22 May 1990, it was not welcomed in Riyadh. This created a problem for Washington which was forced to find a way of reconciling its policy towards the ROY with that of its more established and stronger relationship with the KSA in which it had greater interests.

Notes

1. **14 October**, Aden, 9 February 1979; **FBIS**, Washington, 9 February 1979.
2. President al-Hamdi considered his military coup of 13 June 1974 a corrective movement, known as above.
3. The Libyan-backed attempted coup d'état against President Saleh on 15 October 1978.
4. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 9 February 1979.
5. *Ibid.*, 14 February 1979.
6. See also statement of Prime Minister, 'Abdul-'Aziz 'Abdul-Ghani, **The New York Times**, 18 October 1979.
7. Ruskiewicz, *ibid.*, p. 72.
8. **Middle East Survey**, 28 February 1979.
9. See Ambassador Crawford testimony, **Proposed Arms Transfer**, pp. 6-8.
10. *Ibid.*
11. **Revolution and Foreign Policy, The Case of South Yemen 1967-1987**, p. 87.
12. See **Gist**, Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State, April 1979; **International Herald Tribune**, 2 March 1979; **Hsinhua News Agency**, 28 July 1978.
13. **The Daily Telegraph**, London, 1 March 1979.
14. Ruskiewicz, *ibid.*, p. 72.
15. **14 October**, Aden, 4 March 1979.
16. Aden Radio news, **FBSI**, Washington DC, 7 March 1979.
17. **Author's interview with Ambassador George Lane**, Worcester MA, 16 February 1990.
18. **Author's talk with President of AIYS, Dr Sheila Carapico**, Richmond VA, February 1990.
19. Ambassador Lane told this author that each plane carried two planes.

20. In 1973 and during the October Arab-Israeli war, the US airlifted diverse US arms to Israel to replace those were lost during the first few days of the war.
21. Author's Interview with David Ransom.
22. **Proposed Arms Transfers**, pp.6-8.
23. Ibid.
24. Ruskiewicz, *ibid.*, p. 66.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
26. Ibid.
27. Author's Interview with Ambassador Lane.
28. Ibid.
29. On 1 September 1977 the Carter administration withdrew its offer of US arms to Somalia when the latter was at war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden issue.
30. On 1 February 1979 Ayatollah al-Khomeini returned to Iran from France. See **ME/6032/A/6**, 31 January and 2 February 1979. In a statement following his arrival he confirmed that the new government would no longer deal with the Western oil consortium. Iran Radio quoted some revolutionary sources that the Islamic government intended to increase oil prices by some 30%, **al-Siyasah**, Kuwait, 2 February 1979.
31. In April 1978 the government of Afghanistan was overthrown in a military coup and a new government was established under the leadership of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.
32. **ME/6064/A/2**.
33. Ibid.
34. And attended by Benjamin S. Rosenthal, Donald J. Pease, Gerry E. Studds, Michael D. Barnes, L. H. Fountain, Paul Findlay, Millicent Fenwick and Larry Winn.
35. **Proposed Arms Transfers**, p. 35.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

39. Ibid., p. 34.
40. David Bowen a Congressman from Mississippi and Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives.
41. **Proposed Arms Transfer**, p. 37.
42. **The Daily Telegraph**, London, 14 March 1979.
43. **International Herald Tribune**, 14 March 1979.
44. **The Daily Telegraph**, London, 16 March 1979.
45. Ibid.
46. **International Herald Tribune**, 17-18 March 1979.
47. ME/6070/A/2.
48. **Arab Report and Record**, London, 11 April 1979.
49. ME/6065/A/1.
50. ME/6082/A/2.
51. **Al-Kifah al-'Arabi**, Beirut, 26 March 1979; **FBIS**, Washington, 27 March 1979.
52. Ibid.
53. ME/6082/A/2.
54. **Ar-Rai al-'Aam**, Kuwait, 30 March 1979.
55. ME/6082/A/3.
56. On 1 March, Saudi Arabia ordered a partial mobilisation. Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Foreign Minister, declared "The Royal court, fearing that the fighting between the Yemenis might escalate to involve the oil states of the Arabian peninsula, ordered all vacationing soldiers and officials to return to their posts immediately" and said "The Government has begun pulling out its forces from Lebanon." **Al-Nadwah**, Saudi Arabia, 2 March 1979.
57. **Proposed Arms Transfer**, pp. 4-5; **USAID Presentation to Congress 1980**.
58. In a reaction to the 1979 southern war against the YAR, the US did organize a sabotage operation inside the capital city of the PDRY. The PDRY representative in the UN told this author in February 1990 that the American saboteurs were planning to explode oil storage installations in Little Aden by using plastic explosives. It was also revealed later that the CIA

and British experts trained the saboteurs in Saudi Arabia. See **Revolution and Foreign Policy: The Case of South Yemen 1967-1987**, pp. 91 and 111.

59. **The Guardian**, London, 12 April 1979.

60. Ruskiewicz, *ibid.*, p. 72.

61. **Financial Times Supplement**, 27 November 1984.

62. **The Washington Post**, 12 April 1979.

63. **MEED**, Cyprus, 9 May 1979.

64. Mark Katz, "North Yemen between East and West", **American Arab Affairs**, Volume 8, September 1984, p. 105.

65. Author's Interview with Ambassador Lane.

66. **Department of State Briefing Memorandum on US-Saudi Cooperation in the YAR**, 8 July 1978.

67. *Ibid.*

68. **International Herald Tribune**, 14 June 1979.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *Ibid.*

71. **The Christian Science Monitor**, 19 June 1979.

72. On April 14th the NDF said that the Saudis through cutting the financial aid to Sana'a and through their influence in the Islamic front had succeeded in delaying the unity talks. President Isma'il indicated on the 27th that the YSP Central Committee had fully realised that "imperialist circles, through their agents in our homeland would not stop their conspiracies against the Yemenis and the diversification of their interference in the internal affairs of the Yemeni people, in an attempt to accomplish their goal - to destroy the gains of our Yemeni people." **ME/6094/A/9; ME/6104/A/1.**

73. Al-Asnadj recently revealed the disagreement he had with the YAR President, 'Ali Saleh, for he believed that any arms dealings with the US should be through the KSA. He claimed that President Saleh was importing Soviet arms from different sources while he was despatched to Washington to negotiate direct YAR-US military cooperation. He also claimed that \$ 300 million the Yemeni President paid on one occasion in cash for Soviet arms, a matter of which he did not approve and led to his expulsion from the government. See **al-Magallah**, London-Djiddah, 7-13 November 1990.

74. **"White House statement" in Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, Vol. II, 1978, p. 1485; Author's interview with Ambassador George Lane.**
75. Ibid.
76. **Al-Rai al-'Aam, Kuwait, 5 October 1979.**
77. **International Herald Tribune, 24 December 1979.**
78. Author's Interview with Ambassador Lane.
79. Les Aspin, Michael D. Barnes, Don Bonker, Dante B. Fascell, Floyd J. Fithian, William H. Gray III, Lee H. Hamilton, Leon E. Panetta, Donald J. Pease, Joel Pritchard, Benjamin S. Rosenthal, Stephan J. Solarz, Gerry E. Studds, Jonatham Bingham and Clearance D. Long.
80. **White House Central File, Box No 5032.**
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. **Al-Thawrah, Sana'a, 29 October 1979.**
84. Robert Stookey, **Arabian Peninsula, Zone of Ferment**, California, 1984, pp. 106-107.
85. Ibid.
86. Author's Interview with David Ransom.
87. Ibid.
88. "North Yemen between East and West," *ibid.*, p.106.
89. Author's interview with Dr Robert Burrowes.
90. An official statement by Secretary of State, Cyrus R. Vance, **The New York Times**, 6 Feb 1980.
91. Ibid.
92. **The YAR: The Politics of Development 1962-1986**, p.105.
93. **The New York Times**, 20 April 1980.
94. **Al-Siyassah, Kuwait, 13 February 1980.**

95. Five factors led to the defeat of the National Democratic Front in 1982. They were: 1. USSR and USA military, political and economic support; 2. Soviet disapproval of the NDF war against Sana'a for fear that Sana'a might ask for direct American assistance; 3. Large scale assistance given to the YAR army by the powerful Bakil and Hashed confederations which got subsidies from Saudi Arabia; 4. The limited appeal of the NDF beyond the immediate border area; 5. The defeat of the NDF coincided with the extremely heavy flooding that occurred in the Southern Yemeni state during this year, which, it appeared, pushed the PDRY to compromise. See also Katz, "North Yemen between East and West", *ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

96. Fred Halliday, "Russians Help to Defeat Left-wing Guerrillas", *The Guardian*, 3 May 1984.

97. Ismai'il was originally from North Yemen, where the Shaf'i sect to which he belonged was deprived of its political rights by the Zeidi Imams. The North Yemenis in the south were treated contemptuously and as foreigners with no political rights until 1967. Anti-Northern sentiments continued in South Yemen after 1967 and the anti-left orientation in the North following the Egyptian defeat in the North may have been behind the very strong appeal of Leninism-Marxism for the YSP Secretary General, 'Abdul-Fattah Isma'il, became the symbol of the radical Leftist element in both the South and the North. President Isma'il started the year 1979 with the conclusion of a two-year co-operation agreement between the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution of Cuba and the Peoples Defence Committee of the PDRY; the PDRY attended the Comecon as an observer; between 16 and 17 September Isma'il hosted the Soviet Prime Minister, Aleksey Kosygin, and by the end of the year a twenty-year friendship cooperation treaty was signed between the PDRY-USSR Governments, ratified by the PDRY parliament on 10 February 1980. In the last week of September 1979, in an interview for the American TV company NBC, Ismai'il expressed his hope that the USA "would benefit from the lesson it had learnt in Vietnam" and that it should not attempt to learn it again in any other region particularly in the Arabian Peninsula". On 29 November he invited the Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam and they signed a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation on 3 December. Despite all that, South Yemeni politics, the anti-Northern sentiments, the attitude of Arab nationalist countries like Iraq and Syria which had good relations with Moscow, and the Saudi-US stance in the YAR forced Moscow to set Ismail and his policies aside, and he was forced to resign in April 1980 and leave for Moscow on 28 June.

98. **Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security**, pp. 387-88

99. In fact Isma'il tried to communicate with Saudi Arabia, Oman and other Arab countries to break the isolation of his government, but all his efforts failed because of his reputation as an atheist in an Islamic society and Communist hardliner. Even his ally during the 1979 inter-war, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Kadhafi, left President Isma'il in his corner. In June 1979 the Libyan President visited Sana'a to turn a new page in the relations of his government with the YAR.

100. Mark Katz, "Camel and Commissars", *The National Interest*, Winter 1988-89, pp. 121-124.

101. **Arabian Peninsula: Zone of Ferment**, pp. 106-107.

102. Ibid.
103. US Department of Defence, **Area Handbook: The Yemen Country Studies**, Washington DC, 1966.
104. Author's Interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
105. Author's Interview with Ambassador Lane.
106. **Al-Rai al-'Aam**, Kuwait, quoting a highly diplomatic source in Sana'a, 2 October 1980.
107. The two released American citizens were William Thomas and Duwayne Terrel. For more details see **International Herald Tribune**, 18 February 1981.
108. Ibid.
109. **USAID Presentations to Congress 1982-1986**.
110. Ibid.
111. Author's Interview with Moudjib al-Malazi, London, 8 November 1989.
112. Author's interview with Ambassador Rugh.
113. Ibid.
114. **International Herald Tribune**, 1 January 1985.
115. Author's talk with the President of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies, Dr Sheila Carapico.
116. Author's Interview with Tom Meurer, Senior Vice-President/ Director, Hunt Consolidated Incorporation, London, 22 May 1990.
117. Author's interview with Marjorie Ann Ransom , former US cultural Attache in the YAR, Washington DC, 8 February 1990. In early 1990 she was USIA Yemen Desk Officer and Executive Assistant to the Counsellor, US Information Agency.
118. Ibid.
119. Quoting Assistant Secretary of States John Kelly in a Press Conference, Washington DC, 24 January 1990.
120. As mentioned by a Yemeni official to this author who talked on condition of anonymity. He also mentioned that an official letter was sent to the Yemeni Government expressing the same views.

121. Yemeni sources who insisted upon anonymity, Sana'a, 1988.
122. Mark Katz, "The Saudis, again, are the Bullies on the Block", **The Wall Street Journal**, October 9, 1989.
123. Katz referred to reports from the area that talked about a Saudi invasion of South Yemeni villages following 1986 events in Aden, and Saudi support to Dhofaris against the Sultan of Oman, *ibid*. In early 1984 the Saudi Government launched one of its toughest economic wars against the YAR. Riyadh deliberately tried to halt any formal trade activity in a serious quest to empty the treasury of Sana'a. See A. Gilboviskaya, "Impact of oil on socio-political development in the YAR" in **Oil and Class Discrimination**, Moscow, 1984 as translated by Muhammad al-Bahr, **al-Hikmah**, Volume 123, July 1985, pp. 21-30.
124. **Financial Times**, London, 18 December 1985 and 1 May 1986.
125. *Ibid*.
126. **International Herald Tribune**, 25 December 1985.
127. **MES**, Cyprus, August 1989.
128. According to the American Embassy in Sana'a by this time there were 171 American employees of US Government agencies working in the YAR: the embassy staff, the AID mission, the Office of military cooperation, the Defence Attache Office, the Marine Security Detachment, the US Information Service and others, See Embassy telegram to the Secretary of State, No. R 290452Z, March 1986.
129. Oil was the most important factor in developing bilateral relations. Following the oil find the US government sought to improve its relations with the YAR government in an unprecedented way. For example, one of the three Yemeni Deputy Prime Ministers, Hassan Makki, suffered a heart attack, and at the request of the Yemeni President the US Government sent a special medical-aeroplane to carry Makki via West Germany to one of the best US hospitals where he was treated. The US Embassy in Sana'a asked the White House for a positive response to the YAR President's request "in view of Vice-President Bush's imminent visit to the YAR...." See Telegram from the Embassy, Sana'a, to the White House, No. O051231Z, April 86 ZFFA.
130. **USIS, Arrival Statement of Vice President George Bush**, Sana'a, 10 April 1986.
131. **USIS: Excerpts from Remarks by Vice President George Bush at Dinner Hosted by Vice President al-'Arashi**, Sana'a, 10 April 1986.
132. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 11 April 1986.
133. **USIA: Press Conference Statement by Vice President George Bush**, Sana'a, 11 April 1986.

134. See US Embassy telegram to the State Department, No. O 160746Z, April 1986.
135. US Embassy telegram to the State Department, "transcript of Bush Remarks at Embassy groundbreaking ceremony", No. O 111024Z, April 1986.
136. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 10-13 April 1986.
137. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 10 April 1986.
138. **International Herald Tribune**, 20 May 1986; **al-Nahar**, Beirut, 19 May 1986.
139. See various reports in **al-Rai al-'Aam**, Kuwait, April 1986.
140. **ME/8228/A/10**, 9 April 1986.
141. **ME/8232/A/5**, 14 April 1986.
142. Quotation from Tripoli Radio, **FBIS**, 5 May 1986.
143. **ME/8233/A/5**, 15 April 1986.
144. Preferred not to be mentioned by name.
145. Author's Interview with the YAR Foreign Minister, Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani, Sana'a, 19 September 1988.
146. Author's interview with David Ransom.
147. Author's Interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
148. Author's interview with Tom Meurer.
149. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 25 January 1990; **Statement by the White House Press Secretary**, 24 January 1990; Details of the arrival ceremony as covered by the **US Federal News Service**, 24 January 1990.
150. **USIS Bulletin**, 25 January 1990.
151. Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX:
THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

YAR-US economic relations involved aid, trade and oil during the period 1962-1990, and will be discussed under these, as well as other, relevant headings. This chapter examines the outcome of the US assistance programme to the YAR, analyses the nature of their impact on the country's social and economic development, and examines whether trade between the US and the YAR played any role in bringing the two nations closer. It also investigates whether the discovery of oil in the YAR by a US company, and other relevant interactions, brought about any wider American economic interest in the YAR and with it the promise of better understanding and cooperation between the two states.

AID

US Assistance: First Phase

Politically, US economic assistance to the YAR, which was resumed in 1963 as a continuation of the programme which had started in 1959, was conceived within the context of Washington's effort to counter the Soviet and Communist presence in the Middle East, to protect its interests in Saudi Arabia and to confront the rising nationalist and what the US saw as "radical" forces in the region.¹

From 1959 to 1967, US economic assistance to Yemen dealt principally with infrastructure,

training and humanitarian assistance via Public Law 480, Title II (Food for Peace). During this period the American AID programme accomplished or assisted in the following projects: (1) 400 km of the major "stabilized earth, gravel topped highway"² from Mocha on the Red Sea through Ta'iz and to Sana'a was completed in 1965. (2) Wheat was provided under the Food for Peace Program. (3) Yemen's first modern water system, the Kennedy Memorial Water System was completed in Ta'iz in 1965. (4) The establishment of the National Department of Public Water Supply and Sanitation; nearly 250 personnel were trained to manage, operate and maintain the System in all phases of water systems management, from basic chemistry and sanitation to warehousing and administration. (5) Scholarship funds were provided for approximately 100 Yemenis to be trained and educated at the American University in Beirut in engineering, agriculture, business administration, education and communications. (6) 85 self-help projects relating to potable water and feeder road development were completed.³

Thus, pre-1967 US aid to Yemen, costing nearly \$42.7 million, focused primarily on the development of basic infrastructure, training and education. A Ta'iz US Embassy memorandum dated 1965 (when al-Sallal was President) stressed political concern about the Yemeni students pointing out that some of the nine who had been sent to the USA for college education in the mid 1950s became members of the radical Republican "famous forty."⁴ The memorandum also expressed concern about the possible future effect of many Yemen students then in the Soviet Union. It gave detailed information about 13 of 47 graduates in the YAR at the time who were from the "famous forty."⁵ US and Western Europe graduates

at that time were about 40 percent of the total. Of the 47 graduates, 12 were diplomats posted abroad but expected to return. It maintained that the current group was "not as cohesive as the famous forty" but was generally nationalistic, interested more in Yemen than in other Arab causes ("they are not as emotional as other Arabs on, say, the Arab-Israeli question"), and that a number of them were anti-Egyptian, a feeling generated mainly by the UAR "occupation" of Yemen. It further commented that like the famous forty, "they provide a desperately-needed reservoir of skills but their number is small...the small size of this group is also disturbing when considering the number of students" who were "in training in the Communist bloc. It would appear that they will eventually be submerged as most of these students come back to Yemen."⁶

Perhaps because it was politically motivated, and intended to win influence, US assistance to the YAR and the provision of educational opportunities during this first phase, was what the Yemenis wanted. According to US documents the US Administration represented by its Embassy in Ta'iz, was keen during this period to play a constructive role in Yemen by providing the country with projects that would help to stabilise the country in favour of the Republic, especially in the northern areas. The US Embassy in Ta'iz suggested to the Department in Washington that the improvement of agricultural techniques and development water resources, particularly in northern areas, would redirect the Zeidis from fighting towards the pursuit of traditional soil tilling occupations.⁷ It was also mentioned that the US government could play a useful role by stepping up famine relief shipments of surplus agricultural products. The US Embassy in Ta'iz went on to say: "Most feasible and promising

in our view is possibility of marshalling world opinion, including Arab states, for settlement which safeguards legitimate interests and security of parties."⁸

The Yemenis during this phase were impressed by the USAID projects, such as the Mocha-Ta'iz-Sana'a road⁹ and the Kennedy Water System since they were a source of new jobs and an effective training for their people. Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the YAR 1984-1990, described the projects of 1963-1967 as "development projects"¹⁰ and stated that the Yemeni people were introduced to development assistance only through the Americans when they undertook the Kennedy Water Project and the Mocha-Ta'iz-Sana'a road. He added that these projects were simple "but in the eyes of the Yemeni people they were great. Many Yemenis were trained and worked and got salaries from the projects and that was reflected on the standard of living of many families."¹¹ It can be concluded that the substance of USAID to the YAR in this period reflected US concern over the Communist and Nasserite presence in the country. It was, therefore, intended to compete with the other rival powers in the Yemen. Other US officials took a different view and considered assistance to the YAR at that time to be:

...incompatible both with US interests and free world security for the US government to continue to provide political and economic support to a state which is used as: (a) a base for subversion in SAF, in which the Western alliance has important interests; and (b) a base for subversion of, or military attack against, SAG. ¹²

US Assistance: Second Phase

The severing of diplomatic relations in 1967 temporarily ended the aid relationship, but when they were resumed in 1972 US aid was re-started the following year. The purely technical

aid of this period was of a different nature, reflecting a new US assistance "philosophy"¹³ for the Yemen. The YAR Prime Minister in 1972 later revealed to this author that Sana'a was keen to resume diplomatic relations with the US because of its great need for foreign assistance, and that the Italian Ambassador who looked after US affairs during the interregnum had personally told the YAR Chairman of the Presidential Council, Kadi 'Abdul-Rahman al-Iryani, that Sana'a would receive a great deal of US aid if it resumed political ties.¹⁴ US Secretary of State, William Rogers visited Sana'a on 1 July 1972 and relations were restored on that date. When he returned to Washington, Rogers announced that the US and the YAR had agreed to a renewal of cooperation for economic development. He said that the decision was "taken following appropriate consultation with Congress" and that his government "intends to resume economic assistance programs patterned on our previous programs in Yemen."¹⁵ Yet this never happened. In the autumn of 1972 the US sent a team to Yemen to review Yemen's development priorities. This team concluded that there was a need for project analysis and feasibility studies to make the most effective use of offers of assistance from other donors. The report identified an immediate need to exploit water resources and increase water production and the importance of long-term training in management and resource development.¹⁶ Before the end of 1972, the YAR Prime Minister, Muhsin al-'Aini, confirmed to reporters that his country had so far not received one dollar.¹⁷ He recently told this author that he did not expect a superpower to pay for restoring relations with it, because that would be insulting for a small country like Yemen, but he expressed the belief that Secretary Rogers' recommendation of the YAR to the International Monetary Fund, the International Food Program and another international economic institutions for

which the US provided most of the finance, paved the way for the flow of international aid to the country.¹⁸

On 29 January 1973 the Yemeni government approved an agreement proposed by the US Embassy in Sana'a in September 1972 concerning an invitation to US Peace Corps volunteers to work in the country.¹⁹ The first article of this agreement, effected by an exchange of notes, stated that the US government would furnish such Peace Corps volunteers as might be requested by the YAR and approved by the US government to perform mutually agreed tasks.²⁰ The first US volunteers arrived in 1973 to serve in health, education, and rural and urban development programmes. According to the YAR Ministry of Health and many high officials of the YAR Central Planning Organisation, these volunteers have ever since done good work in the areas of nutrition education and disease prevention; Peace Corps architects and town planners still held important positions in planning town development in the Yemen in 1990.²¹ According to this writer's observation, US Peace Corps volunteers were very active and were seen in nearly every group of villages in the rural areas of the country until 1990.

The full US economic assistance programme to the YAR was resumed on 20 April 1974 upon the signing of the **Economic, Technical, and Related Assistance Agreement** by the YAR's first Minister of Development, Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani and the first US Ambassador to the YAR, William R. Crawford. Washington agreed to furnish such economic, technical and related assistance as might be requested by Sana'a and approved by the US government. The

YAR agreed to the following terms: to make the full contribution permitted by its manpower, resources, facilities, and general economic condition in furtherance of the purposes for which assistance was made available, and to take appropriate steps to assure the effective use of such assistance; to cooperate with the US to assure that procurement would be at reasonable prices and on reasonable terms, to permit, without restriction, continuous observation and review by the US of programmes and operations, and records pertaining thereto; to provide the US with full and complete information concerning such programmes and operations and other relevant information which the US might need to determine the nature and scope of operations and to evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance furnished. The two governments agreed that a special mission would be received in Sana'a to carry out and discharge the responsibilities of the US, that this mission would enjoy the same inviolability of premises as was extended to the diplomatic mission of the US, and that the YAR should accord all US employees and their families in Yemen the same immunity as accorded by the government of the YAR to the personnel of comparable rank and category of the US Embassy in Sana'a. It was also agreed that "funds introduced into the YAR by the government of the USA for purposes of furnishing assistance should be convertible into currency of the YAR at the rate providing the largest number of units of such currency per US dollar."²²

In March 1975, the AID office was upgraded to full mission status and located in Sana'a. During the 1970's assistance continued for the repair and expansion of the water and sewerage systems in Ta'iz, an emergency water supply for Sana'a, and a rural water supply. Assistance was also provided for land, mineral and soil surveys, improvement in cereal and

fruit varieties, poultry development, and health and nutrition studies. Provision of food aid continued.²³ Yet by the end of 1976 the total of US assistance to the YAR reached only \$16.8 million, while Saudi Arabia had provided the country with more than \$400 million as development assistance during the same period. An American military scholar observed that Washington gave Sana'a only a very little aid because it wanted "to keep taut the string of relationship with Saudi Arabia."²⁴ It should be noted that US aid worldwide was affected by an economic recession. This and the continued US lack of economic interest in Sana'a meant that the US Department of State was content to leave the YAR to the Saudi programme. No big development project was undertaken by the US government in the seventies and eighties because such projects were no longer United States policy.²⁵ The continued US aid cuts were an outcome of the 1981 recession, especially after the arrival of President Ronald Reagan at the White House, who was no supporter of aid programmes.

The 1973-1990 period was also characterised by an expansion of technical assistance in order, according to the USAID reports, to strengthen the capacity of key government institutions to plan, manage and provide needed services in areas such as agriculture, education and training, health and water supply. Marjorie Ransom, US Cultural Attache and Director of the Yemeni American Language Institute in Sana'a 1975-1978, told this writer; "We worked with a number of different Yemeni institutions, especially to try to be responsive to Sana'a plans for university expansion, especially for higher education and training of future Yemeni faculty. We also worked in conjunction with our AID program. They had a large training program in Yemen where they sent people from all government ministries."²⁶ Projects completed

during this period include the Ta'iz water and sewerage planning and construction; the Sana'a emergency water supply, rural water supply and project support; water resources planning and management; a water/mineral survey; sorghum and millet crop and production improvement; poultry breeding; tropical and subtropical fruit improvement; land classification and soil survey; government personnel training; pre-development studies; hospital training programmes; applied health and nutrition, local resources for development, earthquake disaster relief, and water supply systems' management.²⁷

In both 1983 and 1984 the USAID budget in Yemen reached \$28 million, of which half was allocated to agriculture. Marjorie Ransom stated that the gradual improvement of US assistance to the YAR since 1982 was also aimed at promoting bilateral trade, "because those companies that sell food assistance programs to Yemen might also become interested in selling products through regular channels."²⁸ The food programmes included "activities such as funding technical advisors to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, training Yemenis in the United States and other countries from the secondary level to PhD, and implementing poultry and horticulture demonstration projects, among others."²⁹

Amongst the projects of this period was the Secondary Agricultural Institute in Ibb, the construction and equipping of which was financed by the World Bank; it was the first institute of its kind in Yemen for training middle-level agricultural technicians. The US also supplied technicians' equipment and modest budget support to the al-'Irrah Horticulture Station near Tihamah, the Garoubah Horticulture Station in Tihama, to help farmers produce

fruit trees, and to the Sa'dah Poultry Station. The aim of the USAID educational programme was to improve primary education. Under another programme many Yemeni students were sent to the US and other countries to study for their Bachelor, Master or PhD degrees. The American-Yemeni Language Institute was inaugurated in Sana'a to help Yemeni students pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) requirements before proceeding to US schools and universities.³⁰ A private American primary, intermediate and secondary school, the International School, was operating in Sana'a in 1990. USAID, with help from the Ministry of Public Works, the Peace Corps and local development associations, constructed small rural water systems in villages throughout the country. Under another program the US helped in developing primary health care in Tihama. It also played a role in helping the earthquake-hit province of Dhamar for several years following 1982.³¹ Many US aid projects were undertaken in cooperation with other donors, such as the water and sewage project for Ta'iz, which was financed by the KSA and United Arab Emirates, while USAID funded consultant engineering services, etc.³²

Overall, from 1973 to the end of the 1989 about \$392 million was provided through US grant, loan and food assistance programmes.³³ The following table shows US economic assistance between 1959 and 1986:

Table 1-1: USAID ANNUAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO YAR (\$000)

Year	Grant	Loan	Funds PL 480	Total	
1959-					
1962	032,200			10,500	042,700
1973	001,708				001,708
1974	002,157				002,157
1975	002,449	1,350			003,799
1976	005,991		0,400	02,600	008,991
1977	015,319		0,500	01,000	016,919
1978	006,245		0,700	00,200	007,145
1979	016,553		1,100	00,300	017,953
1980	011,568		1,000	00,700	013,268
1981	014,200	5,000		00,300	019,500
1982	023,216			01,200	024,416
1983	026,755			026,755	
1984	027,324		0,125	03,000	030,499
1985	027,448		0,200	12,000	039,648
1986	023,549		0,737	10,000	036,286
1987	022,000		0,305	15,000	037,305
1988	022,095			10,000	032,095
1989	023,300			10,000	033,300
Total	304,077	6,350	5,067	76,900	392,394

Source: USAID Congressional Presentations 1957-1990³⁴ and writer's research.

The table above shows the doubling of USAID grants to the YAR after 1982. This shift reflects economic US interest from that date as a result of the positive oil indications found in the YAR. In 1985 the US government argued to Congress that the need to pay more attention to the YAR was due to the following factors. (1) Oil-surplus countries on the Gulf which had provided assistance to Yemen and employed its labour were in an economic recession and Yemeni workers' remittances had dropped from \$1.5 billion in 1979 to an estimated \$1.1 billion in 1984. (2) Official Arab and international aid had declined from an estimated \$472 million in 1980 to less than \$300 million in 1984.³⁵ Arab Gulf States' aid

to the YAR had been reduced because of a drop in oil revenue and the diversion of funds to Lebanon and the Iraq-Iran war. As a result YAR foreign exchange reserves equivalent to 20 months of imports in 1975, fell to seven months in 1981, and by late 1983 represented only about 2.5 months' imports. (3) A \$705 million YAR government deficit in 1983 had led to a reduced level of development expenditures. The YAR's Second Five-Year Plan which began in 1983 projected that 46 percent of a \$6 billion investment budget would be provided from foreign grants and loans, and it had become likely that the plan would have to be scaled back significantly. (4) The December 1982 earthquake added a new dimension to YAR's troubled economic situation; the disaster had caused an estimated \$2 billion damages and a World Bank report estimated that \$620 million in public expenditure would be required in a four-year reconstruction program for houses, roads, schools, water systems and other infrastructure. (5) The strategic location of the YAR, its porous border with Saudi Arabia, and the large numbers of Yemenis working in the oil states of the Gulf underscored the importance of the YAR in terms of regional stability and hence to US economic interests. (6) US objectives were to help develop, through economic and other assistance, a strong government in the YAR, friendly to its neighbours, which would enhance US interests in regional stability and security. (7) The YAR had a strong, free enterprise tradition which was a countervailing model to the state-controlled economy of the PDRY. (8) Tangible US participation in the economic development of the YAR advanced American economic interests and objectives in the region as a whole. (9) The long-term US programme of human resources and institutional development laid a foundation for sustained national development and a stronger friendship between Yemen and the United States.³⁶ In addition to the listed

reasons two others can be seen in the oil find in the YAR by US companies and the prospects of trade between the two states.

Despite the doubling of US assistance to the YAR in 1982 and its continuous improvement afterwards, Arab and other international donors were still more effective in development of the YAR.

Table 1-2: ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL AID TO THE YAR 1962-1980 BY MAIN SUPPLIER

Country or Organization	Amount in YR	
Kuwait	1,672,115,001	
KSA	0,284,451,523	
UN	0,244,480,000	
Netherlands	0,196,023,595	
West Germany	0,090,540,164	
USA	0,068,062,243	since 1959
UK	0,038,204,790	
USSR	0,032,931,619	

Source: 'Abd Allah Barakat, *Masadir Tamwil al-Tanmiyya al-Iktisadiyya wa al-Idjtima'iyya fi al-Djumhuriyya al-'Arabiyya al-Yamaniyya*, Damascus, 1985, pp. 798-799; YARCPO Annual Reports, Yemen Central Bank Annual Reports 1973-1990.

Table 1-2 shows that aid flowing from Western Europe, the Soviet bloc, China, Arab countries and the multilateral banks was greater than that of the US. Barakat, a Yemeni economist, observed that all Arab and international continuous aid has always been of a developmental and technical nature.³⁷ West Germany and the Netherlands, for example both provided about as much development aid to the YAR as the US. But, unlike the Americans,

the Dutch and the West Germans directed their assistance to some development projects required by the YAR government.³⁸ Japanese assistance to the YAR was limited because its products were present everywhere in Yemen through ordinary trade. The Japanese government, therefore, had no interest in providing the country with aid and provided only commercial credits.

According to Barakat Arab and international loans to finance the various YAR social and economic development projects were much greater than those provided by the US.

Table 1-3: LOANS TO THE YAR 1962-1983 BY MAIN SUPPLIER

Source	Amount in Million YR
Arab Countries	2867.9
UN	1162.9
Regional Funds	0715.4
Soviet Bloc Countries	0656.5
West Germany	0374.2
Japan	0217.0
Netherlands	0094.8
France	0059.3
UK	0029.7
US	0028.6

Source: **CPO Annual Reports** and Barakat, *ibid*, pp. 681-774.

According to USAID Congressional document even the US training program for the YAR in the eighties was "overshadowed by those of the Eastern bloc and other Arab states" because, for instance, the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia each offered "more than 200 undergraduate scholarships to Yemeni students every year, while US funded scholarships, both graduate and

undergraduate, were between 60 and 80 every year."³⁹

In late January 1990 President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh visited Washington where he held talks with President George Bush and other American officials. During this visit Mark L. Edelman, Acting Administrator of the USAID, and Dr Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar, the YAR Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development, signed a bilateral grant agreement for \$21 million. Philip Christianson, USAID Assistant Administrator for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance, signed food aid agreements for \$20 million. Edelman stated that under the Food for Peace programme the YAR would purchase from the US at a concessional prices, \$10 million in rice and \$10 million in feed grains for poultry; local currency generated from the sale would finance infrastructure projects, build and equip an eye hospital in cooperation with an American foundation, restore historical sites, and construct a vocational school for girls. He also stated that the bilateral grant assistance of \$21 million would fund ongoing USAID projects developing the YAR's agriculture and educational systems as well as a new project that would support private sector initiatives and promote trade and investment.⁴⁰ Despite the expectations of many of the US officials concerned with Yemen that the US would not increase its assistance to the YAR, if not cut it, the YAR received an increase of nearly \$10 million in 1990 over the previous year. This brought US assistance for the fiscal year of 1990 to \$47.5 million - the highest since the restoration of diplomatic relations, showing increased US interest in the Yemen during the first seven months of 1990.⁴¹

Non-Structural or Industrial Assistance

US assistance to the YAR between 1963 and 1967 in the form of the Ta'iz Water Project and the Mocha-Sana'a road made a great impression on the Yemeni people because it was of a developmental nature, despite the fact that the West Germans had improved the road before: "travellers became covered with dust and the road was never fully appreciated."⁴² The large sums of money spent on assistance to the YAR between 1973 and 1986 made much less of an impact because it concentrated on training Yemeni personnel in the US and was of a technical nature, reflecting a new US assistance policy in the YAR. A USIA source told this author that her country was no longer interested in "putting so much money in big projects abroad; we are interested more in training people, a road is good, but to train people to build a road is much better."⁴³ The YAR Foreign Minister commented on this in 1988:

We can consider the US assistance in the context of technical assistance until now. It is not development assistance in the sense that it is not structural or industrial. The USAID agencies see that Yemen only needs technical assistance and not development assistance. That doesn't mean in any way that the US assistance is not of value to us, but the Yemeni people see the material value of the West German and the Netherlands assistance more than they see that of the US, because the Dutch and the German assistance includes development as well as technical assistance.... We called their (the Americans) attention many times to the fact that "we considered the training assistance and training very important, but you must keep in mind...that the Yemeni public will never appreciate this kind of help unless you connect it to some development assistance"... We told them to choose two or three projects. I told them personally: "You are in a very disadvantageous situation coming with technical assistance alone."⁴⁴

When Vice-President George Bush visited the YAR in April 1986 he stressed that the main objective of US assistance was to develop the agriculture sector and water projects as well as to assist planning urban growth and to improve Yemeni education on all levels.⁴⁵ The YAR Ambassador to the US, Muhsin al-'Aini, even tried to persuade Bush that Washington

should assist with a big development project. Al-'Aini told this author that when returned to the YAR Embassy in Washington following the Bush visit, he repeated the suggestion but was again ignored.⁴⁶

The Limited Impact of US Assistance

Since US assistance to the YAR during 1962-1990 was often subordinated to Washington's global political and economic concerns and interests in the Middle Eastern area as a whole in which Yemen occupied a minor position. Thus US aid remained at a limited level and had a relatively small impact on the YAR's economic and social development during this period. The USAID programme to the YAR of the first phase reflected greater US political concern than in the 1970s and 1980s when the YAR became a friend of the US.

The trade indicators all suggest that because US aid to the YAR was implemented within the context of the Cold War and American objectives in the Arabian peninsula, it was used to improve the US political presence in the YAR by increasing Sana'a's dependence on Washington.

TRADE

YAR-US trade (including arms transfers) which began in 1972, was as follows:

Table 2-1: YAR WITH THE US 1972-1986 (\$million)

Year	I m p o r t s	E x p o r t s
1972	002.2	00.2
1973	009.6	00.2
1974	010.5	00.6
1975	008.3	00.2
1976	025.4	00.3

1977	046.4	00.6
1978	030.6	00.4
1979	214.1	01.5
1980	077.4	00.8
1981	043.9	00.4
1982	038.2	00.5
1983	107.5	00.4
1984	068.8	08.5
1985	042.2	01.4
1986	083.8	01.5
Total	808.9	17.5

Source: US Department of Commerce Highlights of Exports and Imports 1973-1986 and author's research.

US exports to the YAR increased in the eighties as a result of the increasing revenues from its workforce abroad. The large trade deficit was due in part to the KSA oil boom which attracted many Yemeni farmers to work there and to neglect their own farms. Consequently, the Yemeni government was obliged to import wheat and agricultural products from abroad. The American commercial credits encouraged Yemen to import these products from the US and the YAR worker's remittances repaid these credits in hard currency. A report prepared by the US Embassy in 1979 stated that Sana'a was an excellent market for American products and investment due to the "continued but uneven expansion [which] marked the economy of the YAR in 1977-78." ⁴⁷ International statistics show that the US was the fourth largest supplier of YAR imports.

Table 2-4: YAR IMPORTS 1983-1986 BY MAIN SUPPLIER %

Country	1983	1984	1985	1986
Saudi Arabia	16.2	14.2	10.9	12.9
Netherlands	05.0	05.6	05.1	06.1
West Germany	04.6	04.9	05.4	05.0
US	04.2	04.3	02.7	05.9
UK	07.5	04.8	07.6	06.3
Japan	11.0	08.0	18.6	09.2
Italy	05.4	04.4	08.9	05.6
India	02.5	02.4	02.6	03.2
France	04.9	06.9	04.8	04.7
South Korea	03.6	02.9	02.5	03.5

Source: IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1987.

Following the announcement of the oil discovery in 1984 the US facilitated trade with YAR by opening credits in US banks for Yemeni businessmen - to attract Yemeni oil revenues. As a result of a US trade promotion several agricultural commodities agreements and amendments were signed in Sana'a between 19 June 1984 and 26 July 1986. YARCPO documents showed that from 1984-1986 the US provided the YAR government with commodity loans worth nearly \$40 million.⁴⁸ In 1985 and 1986 the Australians protested that the US was undercutting them by \$2 per tonne of wheat but the US was undeterred, indicating a decision to use this economic weapon to exert influence on Sana'a at a time when YAR oil production had started.⁴⁹ US subsidised wheat sales in the 1980's were closely connected to Washington's foreign policy towards the YAR.

On the occasion of his visit to Sana'a in 1986 Vice-President George Bush announced that the US government would increase its Food for Peace commitment to Sana'a, and said "our

total assistance to Yemen under this program will be \$10 million for 1986" in order to encourage "the use of local proceeds for lending to stimulate private enterprise." Bush stressed his country believed "strongly in private enterprise because that's what built" the US, and expressed his hope "that as Yemen trusts the enormous energy of its people, and as it continues to encourage the private initiative of its people...Yemen will have prosperity in the years to come."⁵⁰ He did not announce any commitment to undertake a big development project that some Yemeni officials had hoped for, but merely expressed willingness to promote trade with the YAR through facilitation. The US Commercial Office in Sana'a also revealed that Washington had prepared various programmes to facilitate trade with Sana'a.⁵¹

The Chairman of the YARCPO, Dr Muhammad al-'Attar, told this author in 1988 of his hopes that trade between Sana'a and Washington would improve in the coming years. He said that since Washington imported 70% of its textiles from Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea or from Morocco and Lebanon as well as much of its needed transformer industries goods from abroad, the YAR would have the capability to start its investments in this field in the very near future. He believed that Washington was also committed to increase imports from Third World countries. He added:

We are aware that distance is a barrier that constrains trade between our two states, but the existence of American petroleum companies in our country such as Exxon and Hunt, makes the US pay more attention to the YAR which means more cooperation in many fields. Partnership in oil production encourages American trade with our country. We used to import very little flour, wheat or poultry feed, but with the increase of our national income the US intends to increase this trade with our country, and intends to establish a kind of co-operation with the private, public and mixed sectors to the extent of forming Yemeni-American companies.⁵²

A summary of the trade relationship between Sana'a and Washington is as follows. Remittances from Yemenis working abroad began to improve YAR-US trade in early 1980s. Until 1986 trade between Sana'a and Washington showed a balance in favour of the latter showing that the YAR needed the US more than the US needed the YAR. Al-'Attar confirmed that "trade between the YAR and the USA had started to improve after the oil find in the country by American companies", and added that his country "used to get \$5 million under the Food for Peace loans, but in 1988 this reached \$20 million. In addition the US banks offer more facilities for trade with the YAR through setting up credits."⁵³

OIL

US oil companies showed interest in the YAR from the beginning of 1980. During this year the Soviet presence was growing as it provided cheap arms, which the US had failed to do due to Saudi objections. Clearly, the oil prospects and the consequent US oil companies' interest there offered the US Administration an opportunity to counter the growing Soviet presence.⁵⁴ Washington, therefore, decided to use its unrivalled economic power to implement its foreign policy in the YAR. This interpretation is supported by the facts of the long-standing rivalry between Washington and Moscow in southwest Arabia, and because the Hunt Consolidated Incorporation perhaps did more for US prestige and influence in the country than the Soviet arms supply did for that of the Soviet Union. In this context, one should also take into consideration the political changes in the area, especially the developments in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, the overthrow of the local US "policeman", the Shah of Iran, and the announcements of the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran,

Ayatollah al-Khomeini, who declared in early February 1979 his country's willingness to sever all oil dealings with the US. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980, also pushed the US to encourage oil exploration in the YAR in case the war lead to the loss of the oil from Iran and other countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

1980 witnessed the emergence of a new era in Yemeni history when an aero-magnetic survey of the whole country by the YAR government was completed. This survey showed sedimentary basins in areas north of Marib and in other parts of the YAR.⁵⁵ According to the published official documentation, in the same year an independent oil exploration consultant, Moujib al-Malazi, who "happened to be in contract with the London Hunt office"⁵⁶, arrived in Sana'a to enquire about oil prospects in the country and was welcomed to compare "geological information with the new aero-magnetic data."⁵⁷ When asked about his visit al-Malazi stated: "I visited Sana'a in 1980 on my own and thought of seeing anybody in the Yemen Oil and Minerals Corporation (YOMINCO). I went there and was directed by the reception to see 'Ali Djabr 'Alawi, the Director of the Geological Survey Department. During our meeting I exclaimed 'Oil is everywhere in the Arabian Peninsula and why is it not found in Yemen?'" He added, "It seemed that my question encouraged him to show me an aero-magnetic survey which the company had already undertaken and other studies which were done before. After studying this latest aero-magnetic survey I pointed out to Djabr that the survey showed many sedimentary basins and that these were different from the basement rocks that characterise most parts of the country."⁵⁸

Following several meetings with Yemeni officials, al-Malazi left Sana'a with the Yemen Oil and Minerals Corporation's aero-magnetic survey. In London he reported to the Hunt Company office the possibility of the existence of oil in the YAR. This encouraged Hunt to start its search for oil in the country. Al-Malazi told this author that he shared his findings with Dr Ian Maycock, manager of the Hunt London office. Dr Maycock quickly became intrigued by the possibilities of oil in Yemen, and towards the end of the year, he briefed the Company's head office in Dallas, Texas, on his findings and recommendations.⁵⁹ Maycock stated that the company's decision to pursue a concession in the west of the YAR was based on several considerations, amongst them the apparently favourable potential geological conditions, the presence of organic shales and salt at nearby Safer, and the chance to explore a virgin area of the Middle East with the cooperation of a friendly Yemen.⁶⁰ Other considerations were based on existing information about the potential for oil in the neighbouring Shabwah area in the PDRY.⁶¹

In January 1981, The Hunt Consolidated Incorporation despatched a high-level team to Sana'a to visit officials and scout the terrain. The team consisted of Hunt Senior Vice-President Tom Meurer, Maycock and al-Malazi. Their trip ended badly:

After three days of waiting for official permission to visit Marib al-Djawf, Mr Maycock, the London director of our office, al-Malazi and I decided to visit the Marib-al-Djawf area to see what kind of rocks were available there. To see what the age of the rocks looked like. In the area we were caught by the army and were sent to jail in Sana'a, because we were not carrying our passports. We spent most of the day under arrest.⁶²

YOMINCO intervened to release the prisoners and facilitated a tour to the western area: "Mr.

Isma'il Musa from YOMINCO accompanied us to the area where we were able to check the age of the rocks, and so we got an idea what the area looked like."⁶³ The team's subsequent report was positive, and the company recognised it was involved in an area of great potential, that was "strategically secure, economically sound and politically reliable."⁶⁴

Before an agreement was officially signed, a newly founded Yemen Hunt Oil Company (YHOC) conducted initial geological sampling and mapping.⁶⁵ Discussions between YOMINCO and Hunt Consolidated Incorporation began in January 1981 in Sana'a, were continued in Dallas by the Yemeni officials, Ali Djabr from YOMINCO and al-Harazi from the YARCPO⁶⁶, and resulted in a draft work programme. Between July 22 and July 28 the two parties successfully negotiated a Production Sharing Agreement signed by the Minister of State and Chairman of YOMINCO, 'Ali 'Abdul-Rahman al-Bahr, and Raymond E. Fairchild, the Hunt Consolidated Incorporation's Vice-President of International Exploration. It covered "3.1 million acres stretching as long as from Dallas to Longvie."⁶⁷ The concession became effective on 16 January 1982 when the YAR President, Colonel 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh, ratified it by issuing the Republican Law No. 4, 1982.⁶⁸

This agreement specified that the Hunt Oil Company's wholly owned subsidiary, YHOC, should commence geological and geophysical work in an area approximately 200 kilometres (124 miles) northeast of Sana'a at an elevation of about 3,000 feet. The agreement provided a six-year exploration period during which at least four wells should be drilled. Initially about half the oil revenue was to go to the Yemeni government with its share rising as production

increased.⁶⁹ Based on a projection that the discovery of commercial viability would lead to a 20-year development period, stressed that the agreement was to be dissolved if no exploration well had been established by the end of the sixth year.⁷⁰ It was stipulated that more details about the contents of this agreement and other agreements relating to oil were not to be released.⁷¹

Following the ratification of the sharing agreement a seismic survey covering 1,845 km (1,146 miles) was finished by early December 1982. Additional survey later covered over 12,000 km (7,457 miles). Maycock revealed that the computer processing of the data which continued in 1983 indicated at least 18,000 ft of sediment, and that further mapping and evaluation suggested that petroleum and reservoir rocks might be present.⁷² When drillable structures were located in April 1983, YHOC decided to drill a wildcut to obtain more precise information.

The first three drills were named Alef, Lam and Meem,⁷³ and drilling in Alef began on 31 January 1984. During the drilling a South Korean consortium (Yukong Limited, Samwhan, Hyundai and Korean Petroleum Development corporations), obtained a 24.5 % interest in YHOC's concession on 29 February. Before reaching half its planned depth, Alef showed hydrocarbon. In March, drilling progressed through shale, limestone and several large beds overlying oil- and gas-bearing sandstone, and at about 13,700 ft, granite basement rock was reached.⁷⁴ Well testing which ensued at the time showed that the first well was "where it should be."⁷⁵ In October 1983 Hunt Oil Chairman, Ray L. Hunt, wrote to YOMINCO's

Chairman: "We are pleased by the progress and co-operation that have marked our relationship to date and hope that our forthcoming drilling operations will be the first step in establishing commercial oil production in the Yemen Arab Republic".⁷⁶ A few months after YHOC had commenced its geological and geophysical field investigations, President Saleh pledged to the Yemeni people on 23 May "to continue by all efforts to extract the oil wealth from the depth of the Yemeni land so that Yemeni people could enjoy it through comprehensive development of our country".⁷⁷

When the initial drill stem test in the Alef field was done on 4 July⁷⁸ 1984, the YAR's oil flowed for the first time at a combined rate of over 7,800 bpd from two separate zones; several other perforations yielded natural gas at a combined rate of 55 MMcfd.⁷⁹ The American press commented: "US interests in that country and...the development of oil was likely to reduce Sana'a's financial dependence on Saudi Arabia."⁸⁰ As the US imports of oil continued to grow every year, the importance of the YAR to the US also grew especially since, as Meurer confirmed to this writer, the Hunt Consolidated Incorporation believed there was more oil to be discovered in Yemen and that was why "we are spending more money"⁸¹ in the country.

A nine-well Alef field programme was completed in 1985. The Alef reservoir was assessed to be approximately 300 million barrels. A feasibility study for a refinery, an export pipeline and other associated projects began.⁸² On 25 September 1985 Prime Minister 'Abdul-'Aziz 'Abdul-Ghani laid the foundation stone in Marib for the first Yemeni refinery. At the

ceremony Ray L. Hunt stated: "I am confident that this will be just the first of many similar ceremonies which will take place in the years to come as Yemen assumes its rightful place as an important supplier of crude to the world markets".⁸³ When the Alef field capacity reached a level in excess of 100,000 bpd, the YAR government created the Supreme Council for Oil and Mineral Resources, to be chaired by Foreign Minister Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani. In September 1985 YOMINCO was transformed into the YAR Ministry of Oil.

In late 1985, the Yemeni government approved an agreement between YHOC and a subsidiary of Exxon Corporation, Exxon Yemen Inc. Exxon was given a 49% interest in YHOC's 75.5% share of the concession, but YHOC remained the main operator in the Marib-al-Djawf area. The joint venture was named Yemen Exploration and Production Company (YEPCO).⁸⁴ As of the advent of Exxon it was announced in December that the Yemeni Ministry of Oil agreed with the Yemen Exploration and Production Company to construct a 263-mile crude oil export pipeline from the Marib fields to the Red Sea. Engineering and construction management contracts were awarded on 14 January 1986.⁸⁵ Refinery construction progressed rapidly. The YAR government built a 38-mile paved road from Marib to the refinery. On 12 April 1986, the YAR celebrated the inauguration of its first refinery attended by President Saleh, US Vice-President George Bush and President of the Hunt Consolidated Incorporation Ray Hunt.⁸⁶ By this stage, 29 wells had been completed in the area. Oil production started at the 10,000 bpd level required for refinery operation. As Bush confirmed, the promise of large quantities of oil in the YAR, meant greater US eagerness to "be in partnership with the Yemeni people."⁸⁷ In September 1986 work was

begun on the YAR's first oil pipeline to the Red Sea. YEPCO also bought a tanker, Esso Japan, renamed Safer which was converted for floating storage.⁸⁸

In early 1987 it was confirmed by Hunt sources that 29 wells had been completed in the al-Djawf-Marib area and production was at the 10,000 bpd level required for refinery processing. President Saleh opened the tap of Yemeni oil to the world in November that year. Export flow started at 100,000 bpd, rising to 125,000 on January 1988, and to 175,000 by the end of the year. YHOC officials announced that the YAR would produce 150,00 barrels of crude a day and US \$600 to \$700 million was annually expected from the oil sale.⁸⁹ The YAR Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister stated that "the new oil revenues will do little more than replace earnings the government has lost from the return of expatriate workers sent to the Gulf Arab states during the oil boom of the last decade."⁹⁰ He added "YAR's oil has entered the market at a time when oil prices are teetering at the \$18 level set in 1986 by OPEC, some of whose members have disregarded production quotas designed to hold prices firm".⁹¹ According to some observers, the volume of the Yemeni oil find until 1990 would not be big enough to affect global oil prices or the strength of OPEC, but they would be important for the economy of Yemen.⁹²

The Texas Hunt Senior Vice President recently estimated the current reservoir of Yemeni oil as follows: 300 million to 480 million in Alef, 135 in Asad al-Kamel, 20 to 40 million in Azal, and 5 to 6 million in the smaller fields like bin Dhi Yazan and Thee Raydan.⁹³ Yemen Ministry of Oil publications stated that the Alef and Azal fields in the Marib-al-Gawf basin

comprised 500 million barrels in proven reserves and 4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.⁹⁴ The Azal field, ten miles north of Alef, was declared commercially viable on 15 April 1987⁹⁵ and Ray L. Hunt, stated "the reserve figure could go much higher as Hunt, joined by Exxon Corporation and a Korean oil firm, continues its exploration in the northern and western offshore areas of the country".⁹⁶ On 1 August 1989 the Asad al-Kamel field became the fifth commercially viable field. The reserve was estimated at 133 million barrels of oil and 2.7 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Out of the 16 wells of the field, nine were oil wells tested at rates of up to 3,935 barrels of oil a day. Five gas wells were tested at rates up to 57.5 million cubic feet a day, with a condensate yield of about 30 barrels per million cubic feet.⁹⁷ By January 1990 six commercially viable fields were operating: Alef, Azal, Saif bin dhi Yazan, Asad al-Kamel, Djabal Nukum and al-Shura.⁹⁸

Concerning other US oil explorations in the country, US Hunt officials stated that their drilling in the sea had resulted in two dry holes.⁹⁹ When Exxon drilled its first well in Dhamar, the central plateau, the result was also negative, but in September of 1988, it started drilling a well at Houth in the north of the country which was successful.

The Hunt Vice-President told this author that the Yemen "has a lot of gas" and "there are some ways which we can make gasoline out of it." As for the oil prospects, he said: "As the prices go higher we can produce more oil from the existing fields. Because we produce now around 35 percent of the oil underground. The new technology will help us to do that. Also many parts of Yemen have not been explored yet, especially the area between Shabwah and

Marib."¹⁰⁰

To sum up the effect of oil on the YAR-US relationship in the 1980s: Oil exploration and discovery helped the US to preserve its presence and influence in the YAR and this enabled it to counter Soviet influence, as well as to secure a new oil source should the supplies from the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula be interrupted for political reasons; US interest in the Yemeni arena developed through the special relations that developed between US oil companies and the YAR government; Oil revenues helped the YAR to compensate part of the decline in its workers' remittances and in Saudi aid which were affected by the Saudi objection to oil exploration in the YAR and the Iraq-Iran war. In addition to the economic benefits oil discovered in an area stretching southwards to the PDRY brought the question of Yemen unity to a serious turning point for the first time in modern history.

Yemenis in the US

Over several decades a Yemeni immigrant community emerged in the US centred in Detroit, California and New York. A US official report in 1980 pointed out that there were 3,094 Yemenis working in Michigan, New York, California, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois and other US states¹⁰¹ excluding those who had acquired US citizenship.¹⁰² Today, in Detroit alone there are an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 Yemenis working in the automobile industry, while in California Yemeni farmworkers compromise a considerable element of the agricultural labour force. The Yemeni-Americans and those Yemenis working in the US regularly send home

part of their wages. This supports the Yemen's domestic economy.

Private US Assistance to the YAR

Since the resumption of relations between the YAR and the US in 1972, a number of private US organisations provided the YAR with assistance during this period. These were: Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa; Catholic Relief Services - United States Catholic Conference; Darian Book Aid Plan; Family Planning International Assistance; the Pathfinder Fund; Save the Children Federation; Southern Baptist Convention; and the Stelios M. Stelson Foundation. In 1979, six of these organisations provided financial data indicating programme expenditure in 1979 totalling \$2,590,815.¹⁰³

In the field of US private investment, in addition to the investment in oil exploration, a private intermediate and secondary school called "The International School", was built and started to operate in early 1980s.

Assistance from International Organisations

In 1972 the YAR Prime Minister in 1972 stated that his country had benefited indirectly from the restoration of relations with the US that year, through US recommendation of the YAR to various international organisations.¹⁰⁴ International organisations' assistance to the YAR between 1973 and 1986 was as follows:

Table 1-4: ASSISTANCE FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO THE YAR
1972-1986 (Millions of Dollars)

Fund	1962-69	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
IFC	003.2				04.0		04.9	11.9	
IDA	253.8	34.5	41.0	42.0	47.5	56.0	22.7	46.4	32.7
UNDP	028.6	06.1	00.1	03.6	02.1	02.3	00.4	02.0	
Others	003.1		05.0				01.6		05.9
Total	288.7	40.6	46.1	45.6	53.6	58.3	29.6	60.3	38.6

Grand Total= \$661.4 million dollars (excluding \$.3 million of the UNDP for the period 1953-1961) .

Source: US Department of Commerce, **Highlights of Exports and Imports**, Washington DC, 1987.

The YAR benefited more from international organisations' assistance than from the US itself, and it cannot be proved that this international aid was a result of US recommendation alone. The evidence for such an argument is the much smaller international assistance given to the PDRY, which had no relations with the US, during the same period; the same US source shows that the PDRY received \$211.5 million assistance between 1962 and 1986 compared to the YAR total of \$661.4 million.¹⁰⁵ However, the difference in the amounts of international aid could be simply attributed to the difference in population (of five to one) of the two Yemeni states.

Investment Guarantees Agreement

After deciding to resume aid to the YAR after the restoration of relations in 1972, the US expressed interest in improving the YAR economy: an **Investment Guarantees Agreement** was concluded between the two states on 4 December 1972 which stressed that US

investment would promote the development of the economic resources and productive capacities of the YAR and at the same time insure and guarantee such investments.¹⁰⁶

Despite this agreement the US did not invest any substantial capital in the YAR before 1980 because of the political instability of the country during that period. In 1980, however, the oil indicators and subsequent discovery in a stable YAR promoted and guaranteed US investment in this sector of YAR economy.

Conclusion

Through the different types of YAR-US economic interaction, mainly aid, trade and oil partnerships, Washington aimed at countering the Soviet Union and the anti-US element in the oil rich Gulf and Arabian Peninsula states as well as protecting its large interests in Saudi Arabia.

The YAR received development assistance from the US before 1967 at a time when the USSR was enjoying a special position in the country. During the period 1972-1979 and because the YAR-USSR relations were constrained by the KSA, US and the PDRY, Sana'a received little economic assistance from Washington. At the beginning of the 1980s when Sana'a-Moscow relations improved, the US again showed interest in improving the YAR economy, and provided technical assistance. Subject to its global and Middle Eastern political concerns and interests, the low level of US aid to the YAR from 1962-1990 meant it had little impact on the YAR's social and economic development. As foreign assistance is an

economic tool used for strategic and diplomatic objectives it is not an effective instrument of development in many underdeveloped countries such as the YAR. It is unlikely that US aid to the YAR will increase in the 1990s, because, leaving aside political issues, the YAR became an oil producer and because the US foreign assistance budget is shrinking largely due to inflation.¹⁰⁷ It is in the interest of the YAR not to follow in the steps of Burma, which rejected foreign aid and turned to the self-help policies¹⁰⁸, but to continue its on-going efforts to convince the USAID of the need to finance some development project or projects.

YAR-US trade improved in the 1980s not because of the efforts made by the YAR government but because of the YAR workers' remittances in the KSA and the oil discovery which was facilitated by the private US commercial sector. Constraints on YAR-US trade included the enormous distance between the two countries and the influx of goods at cheaper prices from East Asia. The YAR's trade deficit with the US was large until 1990.

US oil companies found oil in the YAR in 1984 and this improved general American interest in the YAR. It is expected, unless political differences persist, that American industry, as George Bush stated in 1986, "is promising to play a large role in helping to build Yemen's future."¹⁰⁹ The discovery of oil meant that the US could look "forward to a close and enduring relationship"¹¹⁰ with the Yemen and its people.

Notes

1. "FY 1982 Assistance Requests", **Department of State Bulletin**, May 1981, p. 50. See also **Author's interview with Ambassador William Stoltzfus**, London, 1 June 1990; Margarita Dobert, "Development of Aid Programs to Yemen", **American Arab Affairs**, Number 8, Spring 1984, pp. 108-116; **USAID Congressional Presentation 1957-1959 and 1964**.
2. Dobert, *ibid.*, p. 109.
3. **USAID Annual Report**, Sana'a, 1988.
4. So-called because they were the first Yemeni students the Imam allowed to study abroad and most of them were destined to organize the 1962 revolution. The names the memorandum listed were: (1) Muhammad 'Abdul-'Aziz Sallam. (2) Ahmad 'Ali al-Muhanni. (3) Muhammad Khushafah. (4) Muhammad Fay'. (5) Muhammad 'Ali Zabarah. (6) Hussein Salah al-Din.
5. **US Embassy/Taiz Study** dated 17 April 1965 as paraphrased by Dr Robert Burrowes in 1978.
6. *Ibid.*
7. See several cables from the US Taiz Embassy to the US Department of State dated 14 September 1964, **National Security File, Volume II**.
8. *Ibid.*
9. In 1971, the YAR invited foreign contractors to tender for the rehabilitation and improvement of the Sana'a-Taiz road, which the Americans did not use any asphalt in it as the Chinese did in other similar roads.
10. Author's interview with Dr al-Iryani.
11. *Ibid.*
12. In Telegrams from the US Taiz embassy to the US Department of State dated 14 September 1964, **National Security File, Volume II**.
13. Quoting Dr al-Iryani, *ibid.*
14. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
15. Press release issued on 14 July 1972, **Department of State Bulletin**, 7 August 1972.

16. **USAID Congressional Presentation**, "Yemen", 1974, p. J-14.
17. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 12 October 1972.
18. Author's Interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
19. A letter from Robert A. Stein, US Charge d'affairs to the YAR Prime Minister, Sana'a, 30 September 1972; a letter from YAR Foreign Ministry to the American Embassy, Sana'a, 29 January 1973 in **US Treaties and Other International Agreements**, 1973, pp. 853-857.
20. Ibid.
21. **US Peace Corps Annual Report**, Sana'a, 1987.
22. **US Treaties and Other International Agreements**, 1974, pp. 715-718.
23. **USAID Congressional Presentation**, "Yemen Arab Republic", 1974-5.
24. Major John B. Lynch, "The Superpowers' Tug of War Over Yemen", **Military Review**, Volume 61, No. 3, March 1981.
25. David Ransom, Arabian Peninsula Desk officer in the US Department of State, confirmed in early 1990 that the Yemenis constantly asked the US to undertake a big capital project, but this was no longer US policy. Author's interview, *ibid.*
26. Ransom also mentioned that she and Ambassador Thomas Scotts founded the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (YALI) which supported American scholars to research in Yemen.
27. **US AID Annual Report**, Sana'a, 1988.
28. Author's interview with Marjorie Ransom.
29. Dobert, *ibid.*, p. 112.
30. Author's interview with Marjorie Ransom.
31. **USAID Annual Report**, Sana'a, 1988.
32. Ibid.
33. Author's interview with Curt C. F. Wolters, Deputy Program Officer, USAID Mission to the YAR, Sana'a, 20 June 1988.
34. US assistance to the YAR in 1990 was an estimated \$46 million: \$21 million in development assistance (Loan and Grant) and \$25 million in PL 480 (Title I). The reason for not adding the 1990 figures to the table above are: 1) The YAR disappeared on 22 May 1990 when it merged

with the PDRY in a united Yemen; 2) This study stops on this date and there is no data yet released on how much was spent on the YAR during the first 141 days of 1990; 3) In view of ROY's opposition to US policy in the Gulf during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991) and the consequent departure of many American aid employees in the Yemen, it is unlikely that the US government has spent the amounts located for the YAR in 1990, **USAID Congressional Presentation 1990-1991**.

35. **USAID Presentation to Congress, "YAR", 1985.**

36. Ibid.

37. **Masader Tamwil al-Tanmiyah**, pp. 798-799.

38. Author's interview with Dr al-Iryani.

39. **USAID Congressional Presentation 1991.**

40. **USIS Bulletin**, 25 January 1990.

41. Ibid.

42. Dobert, *ibid.*, p. 109.

43. Author's Interview with Marjorie Ransom.

44. Author's Interview with Dr al-Iryani.

45. **USIS Bulletin, Excerpts from Remarks by Vice President George Bush at Dinner Hosted by Vice President 'Arashi**, Sana'a, 10 April 1986; **Press Conference Statement by Vice President George Bush**, Sana'a, 11 April 1986; **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 10-12 April 1986.

46. Author's Interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.

47. "Private Sector of Economy is Exceeding Expectations; Excellent Market Exists for American Products, Investment", **Business America**, 16 July 1979, p. 16.

48. **CPO, Loans and Assistance Annual Report**, Sana'a, 1988.

49. **Financial Times**, London, 18 December 1985 and 1 May 1986.

50. **USIS Bulletin, Press Conference Statement by Vice President George Bush**, Sana'a, 11 April 1986; **al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 12 April 1986.

51. Ibid.

52. Author's interview with YAR Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the CPO, Sana'a, 6 September 1988.

53. Ibid.
54. It should be noted that Sana'a-Moscow relations were limited from 1970-1979 as a result of the Saudi-US influence in the YAR. When both its 1970s allies ignored YAR military needs, Sana'a responded to Soviet initiatives to resume cooperative relations. In 1979 Moscow provided the YAR with arms needed to maintain stability in the country, though the former's relations with the PDRY continued to be the same.
55. Author's interview with engineer Mou'djib al-Malazi, London, 8 November 1989.
56. Quoting Ambassador William Rugh 1983-1987, Author's interview, *ibid*.
57. Yemen Hunt Oil Company, **In an Era of Great Accomplishments**, Sana'a, 1987, p. 7.
58. Author's interview with al-Malazi.
59. Author's interview with Tom Meurer.
60. **World Oil**, April 1988.
61. Author's Interview with Tom Meurer.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. **Oil and Gas Investor**, Volume 7, Number 8, March 1988.
65. **World Oil**, April 1988, p.33.
66. Author's interview with Tom Meurer.
67. Ibid.
68. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 17 January 1982.
69. **FORBES**, 22 February 1988.
70. **In an Era of Great Accomplishments**, p. 7.
71. Author's interview with Meurer.
72. **World Oil**, April 1988, p. 33.
73. These names were taken from Arabic letters that head several chapters of the Holy Koran.
74. **World Oil**, April 1988, p. 33.

75. Author's interview with Ambassador Rugh.
76. **In an Era of Great Accomplishments**, p. 11.
77. In his speech to a meeting of the People's Constituent Congress, attended by this author, on the occasion of his being re-elected President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces for a second period, 23 May 1983.
78. The fourth of July is the American National Day of Independence.
79. **World Oil**, April 1988, p. 33
80. See for example **The Washington Post**, 1 January 1985.
81. Author's interview with Tom Meurer.
82. **World Oil**, April 1988, p.33.
83. **Al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 26 September 1985.
84. **Oil and Gas Investor**, March 1988.
85. **World Oil**, April 1988, p. 34.
86. **In an Era of Great Accomplishments**, p. 12.
87. Ibid.
88. **World Oil**, April 1988, p. 36.
89. **The Washington Post**, 11 December 1987.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. **Financial Times**, London, 27 November 1987.
93. Author's interview with Tom Meurer.
94. **In an Era of Great Accomplishments**, pp. 17-19.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.

97. **Oil & Gas Journal**, 14 August 1989; **Middle East Report**, 5 August 1989.
98. Author's interview with Tom Meurer.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. **US Census of Population 1980**.
102. See also Georges Sabagh and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, "The Settlement of Yemeni Immigrants in the United States", Jonathan Fried Lander (ed), **Sojourners and Settlers**, California, 1988.
103. See American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, **Development Assistance Programs of U.S. Non-Profit Organizations**, Yemen, February 1980.
104. Author's interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
105. **US Department of Commerce Highlights of Exports and Imports**, Washington DC, 1987.
106. **US Treaties and Other International Agreements**, 1973.
107. As stated by US officials Ransom, Rugh, Lane, Stookey and other US specialists on Yemen.
108. According to "The Policy of Self-Reliance: Excerpts from part III of the Arusha Declaration of 5 February 1967, **Africa Report**, 12 March 1967, pp. 11-13.
109. **USIS Bulletin, Remarks by Vice President George Bush at Dinner Hosted by Vice President 'Arashi**, 11 April 1986.
110. **Arrival Statement of Vice President George Bush, Sana'a, Yemen Arab Republic in USIS Bulletin**, 10 April 1986; **al-Thawrah**, Sana'a, 11 April 1986.

C O N C L U S I O N

FOUR MAJOR ISSUES

Before drawing conclusions about the major interrelated themes which recur in this thesis it is first necessary to refer to four major issues which dominated YAR-US relations between 26 September 1962 and 22 May 1990. These were: the cold war; the role played by the KSA; US policy in the Middle East in general; and, to a lesser extent, the nature of the bilateral interaction itself.

Cold War

The revolution in North Yemen resulting in the declaration of the YAR developed into a regional crisis of serious dimensions which the limited presence of both the US and the USSR was unable to prevent. The subsequent civil war in the Yemeni arena allegedly threatened the stability of the conservative pro-Western countries in the Arabian peninsula as well as the flow of cheap oil to the Western world. The impact of this revolution, therefore, was not confined to Yemen but implicated Saudi Arabia, the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan (HKJ), Egypt and Britain. The existence of the YAR offered the UAR the opportunity to promote revolution in the region under the flag of Arab nationalism and provided the USSR with the chance to challenge both US and UK influence there. Thus the Yemeni civil war in the 1960s led to an internationalised crisis, and the involvement of the superpowers themselves.

When the KSA decided to supervise and support a counter-revolution in a YAR which depended on UAR support and protection, the YAR sought USSR backing as well as US recognition to prevent the KSA and the UK from restoring the deposed ruling family. Moscow recognised the Republic and offered it political support, something that antagonised Washington. The US government also feared that Sana'a would join the Arab nationalist movement, which was connected with the Soviet bloc, in its drive to counter Western dominance. When the civil war in the YAR started, as a consequence of the revolution and the counter-revolution backed by Saudi Arabia, US policy was greatly influenced by the Soviet, Egyptian, British and Saudi policies. Since the Americans saw the Yemeni Revolution as a Communist threat in the peninsula, they chose to support the Saudis and other conservative states in the Arab world. Though it recognised the Republic, Washington decided to contain the Revolution. In doing so it indirectly supported the counter-revolutionary forces. US support for the conservative element in the Yemen was achieved through bolstering the defences of the KSA and providing protection to this rich ally. To achieve its policy objectives, the US intervened to reduce UAR influence in the Peninsula by curtailing Nasser's policy of nationalist expansion, prevent the USSR from having any real influence, and contain the Yemeni revolution so that it would not affect American friends in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

When Israel defeated the UAR in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Egypt was forced to withdraw its troops from the Yemeni arena and reconcile itself with the KSA. Consequently, the US alliance with the KSA and its indirect support for the Northern Yemen Royalists led in mid-

1967 to the weakening of the pan-Arab and the pro-Soviet elements in the YAR. This brought Sana'a under KSA and US influence. As a result the YAR lost the ability to playing off Moscow against Washington for several years. During the late sixties, despite Sana'a's eagerness to restore relations with Washington, the US saw no need to do so. In 1971 the British completed their withdrawal from the Persian Gulf creating, thereby a serious security issue for the US because of the increasing importance of oil to the world economy. This coincided with the emergence of the pro-Soviet PDRY which pledged its support for what it termed the "people's revolution" in the Gulf.

When Washington eventually restored relations with Sana'a in 1972, it did so largely because of these factors. Because of deteriorating relations between Sana'a and Moscow which resulted from internal social struggle, strong Saudi influence, and Moscow's alliance with Aden, the YAR tried to play off the US against the USSR in order to get military and development aid from the US as well as to reduce the role of the PDRY and KSA in its internal affairs. Washington grasped the opportunity to confront directly Soviet penetration in the Yemeni arena, aiming to turn the YAR into a buffer zone between the Marxist South Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Because the US had no direct economic or military interests in the YAR itself, it left Sana'a's security needs for the KSA to deal with. However, since Sana'a, under KSA influence, was unable to improve relations with Moscow between 1972 and 1978, relations with Washington were minimal; the US was not concerned about events within the YAR as long as its interests in the KSA were not threatened.

The tension between the Yemens which increased greatly from 1978-79 once more encouraged Sana'a to attempt to use the threat of Aden to exploit Cold War rivalry; this time it succeeded. The YAR obtained US arms, financed by Saudi Arabia, as well as US protection, which helped Sana'a to defeat the leftist element in the Yemeni arena. Moreover, the US position and the YAR's military and political alliance with it in this period resulted in the USSR re-evaluating its policies towards the two Yemeni states. Direct US arms deliveries to Sana'a ceased following the termination of the 1979 border war between the Yemens, and the KSA withheld important spare parts. This made Sana'a contact Moscow to obtain the military equipment it needed. The Soviets took the opportunity to restore their position in the country: they did not want the YAR to be completely dependent on the USA.

While YAR relations with Moscow improved, Sana'a-Washington relations sank to a low level between 1979 and 1984. Contacts were confined to USAID technical projects, largely because there was no longer any imminent threat of attack from the PDRY. One of the factors that eased US concern was that the Soviet Union did not encourage further tension between the Yemeni states that would comprise any threat to the KSA; although the period was characterised by economic cooperation alone, after 1979 and until 1990 the YAR-USSR military relationship persuaded the US to deal directly with Sana'a, rather than through the KSA, as it had from 1972-1979.

Throughout its lifetime the YAR was obliged to exploit the superpowers in order to survive. In this it achieved a fair degree of success, managing to survive and develop, although it was

often used at times by these powers for their own objectives.

The Role of the KSA

North Yemen-KSA relations up to 26 September 1962 were characterised by barely veiled mutual suspicion and distrust, the product of the longstanding rivalry between the two monarchical families and of territorial disputes. The YAR revolution was achieved with the assistance of revolutionary Egypt. The UAR with its Soviet backing was seen as the enemy of the conservative governments in the Arab world, especially of the Saudi royal family, and was perceived to be a serious threat to the security of the ruling Kings and Sheikhs in the area. Realising that it could not survive without forming alliances with all the foes of the UAR, of the Arab nationalist movement, and of Communism, the KSA reacted promptly to the 1962 YAR revolution: it organised and supervised a counter-revolution and pledged to restore the deposed Yemeni monarchy. The KSA sought British and Jordanian advice and assistance as well as US advice and protection. Riyadh also prepared itself for a long encounter with the Nasserite and revolutionary element in the YAR. This situation inevitably involved the US, which had economic and political interests in both the KSA and the UAR.

To safeguard the Republican regime against any British or Saudi-Jordanian aggression, the UAR supported Sana'a's request for American recognition. Washington insisted upon a declaration that the Republic would honour existing international obligations. It also demanded that Cairo publicly declare its support for the full content of the communique which was released by the YAR government in December 1962. Three months later the US

formally recognised the new Republic and proposed a disengagement plan to end the civil war. The Kennedy administration had calculated that the civil war in the Yemen would stir a wider military conflict between the UAR and the KSA - a confrontation which would involve the US not least because of American interests in Saudi oil; it therefore decided to recognise the revolutionary regime in the hope of stabilising the situation in Yemen. American recognition thus aimed at keeping the US as part of both the solution and the problem and at trying to solve the growing problem through diplomatic channels. It also aimed to persuade the UAR to withdraw from the YAR.

When initial US efforts failed to contain the Nasserite threat against Western interests in the Arabian Peninsula and the YAR became committed to the nationalist movement in the region, Washington reassured the Saudi monarchy of its commitment to the preservation of the Kingdom's integrity by despatching a number of jet fighters, a destroyer, and paratroopers to the KSA, backed up by an aerial demonstration over Saudi Arabia in mid-January 1963. The State Department declared at the time:

The United States, as an impartial friend of all governments involved, remains convinced that the best interests of the Yemeni people will be served by the disengagement of foreign military forces and termination of the external intervention.¹

Because US mediating efforts failed to persuade either the UAR or the KSA to leave the Yemeni arena to the Yemenis, the Yemeni civil war expanded and the US gave indirect support to Royalists by bolstering the Saudi regime and by supporting Israel. After its defeat by Israel in 1967, Egypt was no longer able to provide military and economic support to

Sana'a. As a result the YAR became virtually defenceless, unable to resist the strong pressures and influence exerted by the KSA. During the period 1967-1972 when relations between Sana'a and Washington were broken off completely the US was content to accept the KSA's policy towards the YAR and ignore Sana'a's initiatives to restore relations. By 1972, however, mostly due to US needs to contain any influence from the pro-Soviet PDRY, Washington decided to restore relations with Sana'a.

Although Riyadh eventually announced its support for restoration of Sana'a-Washington relations, Saudi Arabia's oil wealth and its special relations with the United States prevented the development in YAR-US relations to the extent that was demanded by the YAR, out of fear that a stable and strong YAR would constitute a threat to Saudi hegemony. This led to very limited US-YAR dealings through US economic assistance. Sana'a wanted direct dealings with Washington and suggested bilateral development projects in the hope that a closer YAR-US relationship would lessen Riyadh's heavy hand in internal YAR affairs. This KSA policy towards the YAR meant that any significant YAR-US military cooperation was blocked until 1979. In that year the pro-Western YAR government faced a military and political threat from the Marxist South. The KSA reacted by financing the promised US arms package. Both the US and the KSA provided military protection to the government in Sana'a, and PDRY attempts to unite Yemen by force had failed before the end of the year.

As the PDRY threat to the YAR ceased and the USSR took a neutral stand between the two Yemeni states, it became clear to the Saudis that they no longer needed to deliver the rest of

the arms package. They believed that organising and arming the YAR would result in a threat to themselves. The US adopted KSA policy, and YAR approaches to Washington for further military equipment failed. This meant that YAR-US interaction in the early eighties was minimal.

The improvement in YAR-US relations in the mid-1980s created difficulties for the KSA. American oil companies found oil in 1984. For the first time in history this attracted some US economic interest in the YAR amidst reports that there was a large oil reserve in the YAR and that Sana'a was moving towards unification with the South to form a moderate state, President Saleh visited Washington in January 1990. It was subsequently reported in Sana'a that the KSA objected to Yemeni unity and to oil exploration in the country, on the grounds that oil wealth and unity would constitute a threat to Saudi hegemony in the peninsula.

At the time of unification in 1990 among clear indications of much more oil, the relationship between the two neighbouring Arab states had deteriorated to an all-time low. Yet again this adversely affected the Sana'a-Washington relationship. As has consistently happened since 1960, the ability of Sana'a to achieve freedom of manoeuvre was constrained to certain extent by the historically stronger Riyadh-Washington relationship.

US Middle Eastern Policy

US interest in the YAR was always a reflection of its greater interests elsewhere in the

Middle East. By recognising the Republic and maintaining a presence in both the YAR and the UAR the US hoped to preserve its interests in the area - mainly in the KSA and the UAR. The need for cheap oil, concerns for Israeli security and a commitment to contain Soviet influence were the dominant factors underlying US policy towards all states in the Arabian Peninsula in the period of this study. When the Arab nationalist movement faced a setback as a result of the 1967 Israeli victory in the Six Day War, the YAR was gradually forced to endure increasing KSA influence; yet the US showed no interest in the YAR, because it did not constitute any threat to existing US interests in the region. When, in 1972, Washington eventually restored relations with the YAR. It did so in an attempt to weaken Arab hostility to both itself and Israel. US policy towards the YAR at this time received only limited KSA support but was thought necessary in Washington because of the vacuum left by the British withdrawal from the Gulf and because of the emergence of the pro-Soviet PDRY as well as anti-imperialist popular fronts in other Arab Gulf states.

A sense of US concern in the area can also be observed during the 1979 inter-Yemeni war, partly because Saudi Arabia felt directly threatened. But a greater cause of US anxiety was the fact that this war came in the wake of the April 1978 revolution in Afghanistan, the signing of an Ethiopian-Soviet treaty in November of that year, the assassination of US ambassador Adolph Dubs in Kabul in February 1979, and the fall of the Shah. These events had created the impression in the area that America had lost all capacity to control regional events and that the oil states would have to seek accommodation with the Soviet Union in order to protect themselves.

In a prompt response to a YAR appeal, Washington provided Sana'a with Saudi-financed arms, as well as moral and political support. It also moved a naval force close to Aden and made a show of air-power over and around it, to demonstrate its determination to protect Sana'a from a PDRY invasion. The 1979 inter-Yemeni war provided the US with an opportunity to reassure Saudi Arabia and other US friends in the region of its resolve. In addition to the military measures undertaken to warn Aden, by arming Sana'a and bolstering Saudi air defences, Washington issued a warning to Moscow which was taken seriously. Throughout the seventies YAR-US relations served the interests of both the US and the KSA by helping prevent the fall of the YAR government to the leftists supported by the PDRY.

1980 witnessed a novel form of cooperation between the superpowers. Moscow restored its position in the YAR by providing Sana'a with arms. At the same time it tried to normalise relations between the two Yemeni states. In 1984 US companies discovered oil in the YAR, and in 1986 an internal power struggle in the PDRY took place which destroyed the PDRY's ability to threaten its neighbours. These events convinced Washington that the security of its Gulf allies and its own interests were no longer under threat. The discovery of oil indicated that US interest in the Yemen might become tangible, and lead to a direct bilateral relationship.

In general, US concern in the YAR between 1962 and 1990 was based not on specific YAR considerations, but rather on its Middle Eastern objectives in the context of the general state of Washington-Moscow relations. As the US continued to have huge strategic and economic

interests in Saudi Arabia, it could only "view the YAR from the Saudi corner"² because "every country when it decides its policy with a foreign country puts into consideration its relations with other partners."³

The Discovery of Oil

The nature of the bilateral interaction shows that US interest in the YAR during the period of study was little more than a reflection of US interest in other states in the Middle East. It was only in 1984, after the American company Hunt found oil in the west of the country, that the US Government showed tangible bilateral interest in the YAR for the first time. Consequently the relationship improved a little because a "private relationship promotes the official relationship."⁴ The oil discovery and reports that there was more oil in the country, promoted the YAR into a different category in the eyes of the US Department of State and led to a new foreign policy involving the doubling of US aid. Vice-President George Bush's 1986 visit to the YAR, reinforced by President Saleh's early 1990 visit to Washington, was considered in the YAR as marking the beginning of direct bilateral relations between Sana'a and Washington, as the old Saudi role between the YAR and the US was reduced.⁵ Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani, the YAR Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in 1988, assured this author that the US attitude changed after the oil find and added, "the YAR has become more careful to preserve and sponsor these relations at present than at any time before."⁶

The oil explorations in the YAR and the oil find on its borders with the PDRY led to the US

cautiously welcoming the formation of a United Yemen in 1990. In addition to the oil find in the country, it is evident that "the growing importance of the Red Sea as it appeared during the eight years of the Iraq-Iran war"⁷ provided chances for cooperation between Washington and Sana'a. Sana'a continued to be in greater need of Washington than vice versa, but the US wanted in the YAR a pro-Western and pro-US government. Aware of Washington's objective the YAR benefited from the bilateral relations with the US.

RECURRENT THEMES

YAR influences on regional and US policies

An important theme of this study is how the policies of the YAR affected the region, and how in turn regional problems and relationships in the Middle East region affected the US and its policies. In 1962 the revolution forced the YAR to depend on the UAR and the USSR. This dependency led the YAR to adopt UAR foreign policy and, to an extent, the anti-US policy of the USSR. From the moment the YAR became a government committed to republican, revolutionary, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist policies it sided with the so-called progressive Arabs against the monarchical and conservative Arabs as well as against the West. This created concern in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Middle East as a whole, and opened up the area for an encounter between the so-called "conservative" and "progressive" fronts in the region. The revolution in the YAR led to a subsequent change in the government of KSA and its internal policies: Crown Prince Faisal became the Prime Minister and initiated reform in both the internal and external policies.

Reconciliation between North Yemeni Republicans and Royalists and the establishment of closer relations with the KSA in 1970 alarmed the PDRY, which turned to the USSR for arms and protection. Sana'a's ability to defeat the radical element in the YAR in 1968 led to the advent of a more radical government in the PDRY. Restoration of YAR-US relations in 1972 had a similar effect. The negotiations following the inter-Yemeni war in 1972 on the issue of uniting the two Yemens led to Saudi alarm which in turn led the KSA to seek US and Western military equipment and advice. The reunification discussions of late 1979 again created alarm in the KSA. Military cooperation and closer relations with the PDRY throughout the 1980s led to greater KSA dependency on the US and Western protection.

The 1962 YAR revolution tempted the UAR to involve itself in Arabian Peninsula politics and to challenge Western influence. This involvement drained Egyptian capabilities and adversely affected its military capacity against Israel. In this respect the YAR indirectly contributed to the defeat of the Arab nationalist and radical elements in Egypt and the Arab world.

YAR policies clearly affected the region, and, in turn, the regional problems derived from or caused by the Yemeni revolution themselves affected US policy towards the YAR and the region as a whole. YAR alliances with the UAR and the USSR in the 1960s, which Sana'a deemed necessary for its survival, were perceived in Washington to be aggressively anti-American. Washington therefore supported its existing allies in the region and counteracted potential YAR influence by bolstering the defences of US-friendly states. UAR success in

constraining and severing YAR-US relations in 1966 and 1967 lay behind US neglect of the YAR for the five years following the UAR withdrawal from the country. The defeat of the anti-US element in the YAR in 1968 made Sana'a of less concern to Washington. Regional developments, of which the most important were the withdrawal of the British from the Gulf in 1971, the rise of a pro-Soviet South Yemen in 1969, severance of the two-year old PRSY-US relations in 1969, and the pro-Nasser revolution in Libya on 1 September 1969 which was followed by the Libyan nationalisation of US oil companies, all paved the way for US political interest in the YAR. YAR-US diplomatic relations were therefore restored on 1 July 1972 and USAID projects were resumed.

Saudi Arabian ability to influence the YAR throughout most of the 1970s made the US deal with the YAR through the KSA. It continued as a trilateral relationship until 1984 when the YAR was able to reconcile with the PDRY, cooperate with the USSR, and when US oil companies discovered oil. YAR-PDRY rapprochements in the 1980s and deterioration of YAR-KSA relations during this period persuaded the US to give more attention to bilateral relations with the YAR. When YAR-PDRY unity took place on 22 May 1990, the US showed some caution, though it congratulated the Yemenis on their achievement. This caution was mainly due to KSA reservations because it saw Yemen unity as a threat to its own security.⁸

In conclusion, it was clear that the YAR did upset the regional balance of power, but that the US as a great power was able to contain it within its own overall Middle Eastern policy.

US in YAR overall foreign policy

A further theme is that of how the YAR's relations with the US fitted into the former's overall foreign policy especially as regards Saudi Arabia and South Yemen first under the British and then under the NLF and YSP. US recognition of the Republic did not fulfil these Yemeni hopes of ending KSA and British support for the counter-revolution because of the YAR government's commitment to the Arab nationalist movement which was a threat to the security of the KSA, and perceived as a potential threat to the British position in Aden and the Protectorates.

As the American record of relations with the moderate Republicans during the first phase of diplomatic relations show, the YAR, though under UAR influence, attempted to use the US diplomatic presence to counter UAR domination. In 1972 the YAR sought an alliance with the US to resist the KSA and PDRY influence. This alliance proved fruitful because it prevented the defeat of the YAR by PDRY-supported Leftists. In a prompt response to a YAR appeal that coincided with events in Iran and Afghanistan, Washington provided Sana'a with the military, moral and political support to protect it from a potential PDRY invasion.

The YAR-US relationship deflected PDRY pressure until 1979 and convinced the USSR in the 1980s to adopt a friendly attitude towards the YAR contrary to the wishes of its PDRY ally. While it obtained military equipment from the Soviets to strengthen its army, the YAR tried to acquire more economic aid from the US. Economic cooperation between Washington and Sana'a resulted in the 1984 discovery of oil in commercial quantities by an American

company, an event which created the start of serious US economic investment in the YAR. Although at times the YAR's policy towards the US was forced upon it by both regional and international events, it did achieve a degree of freedom of manoeuvre in determining its own foreign policy towards the KSA and the PDRY. The YAR also eventually achieved economic benefit from its relationship with the US.

YAR in US Middle East policy

The place of US policy towards the YAR within overall US policy in the Middle East is an important theme running through the thesis. As has been seen US concerns in the Middle East were to prevent the oil resources of the Persian Gulf falling under the domination of forces hostile to the US and the West, and thus to protect the KSA and other Arabian Peninsula states as well as to counter the Communist penetration in the region, and to protect Israel. In the 1960s, US policy towards the YAR was a step-child of its policy towards the UAR and the KSA. In the 1970s, the US restored relations with Sana'a in the light of the British withdrawal from the Gulf and the appearance of the pro-Soviet PDRY as well as the flourishing of pro-Moscow fronts which were willing to overthrow the pro-Western governments of the Arabian Peninsula. In this period, Washington became interested in Sana'a in order to use it as a buffer zone between its economic interests in the KSA and the political hostility of PDRY. This became more clear in 1979 when Washington provided the YAR with arms as well as moral, political and military support to help it counteract a PDRY invasion. Apart from the oil discovery in mid-1980s US interest in the YAR throughout the 1980s continued to be a reflection of US interest in the KSA. From this perspective, the YAR

played only a small part in US foreign policy towards the Middle East.

YAR exploitation of superpower rivalry

Another dimension of this study is how global strategic rivalries and intersections affected the YAR, and how it tried in varying ways and at different times to gain benefit from these rivalries. In 1962 the YAR sought both US and USSR recognition and support to bolster its position against British and Saudi opposition. The USSR and the Communist bloc provided assistance, military equipment and training. Its efforts with the US failed at first because of the Republic's commitment to the Arab nationalist movement which, the US believed, opened the area to Soviet influence, and was thus a threat to US-Western interests in the region.

The Soviet Union, influenced by the Yemeni Left, hesitated in providing the YAR with arms after the 5th of November coup d'état of 1967. A Yemeni delegation to Moscow returned empty handed, but when Republican Sana'a warned Moscow that the country was due to fall under the US influence if the Royalist seige captured the capital, a YAR delegation was headed by Yemeni Vice Premier, Hassan Makki, was invited to Moscow in early December and achieved full success. The USSR provided the YAR that month with arms including 24 MiG 19s and many Russian pilots and military experts who with Syrian pilots operated the new arms and bombers.⁹ In 1968 when the YAR government launched a war against the leftist opposition and relations with the USSR deteriorated the YAR tried to replace Moscow with Beijing: it was reported that Premier Al-'Amri cancelled a scheduled visit to China in early March 1968 after a meeting with the Russian Ambassador in Cairo.

Following the defeat of this seige which was supported by the KSA and the US, Sana'a tried to benefit from its relations with the USSR. Increasing KSA influence, however, weakened Sana'a-Moscow relations. In 1972, amidst deteriorating relations between Sana'a and Moscow and the latter's alliance with Aden, the YAR tried to exploit the Cold War superpower rivalry in order to get military and development aid from the US. It failed because Washington's response was to turn the YAR into a buffer zone between the Marxist South Yemen and pro-Western Saudi Arabia, therefore dealing with Sana'a trilaterally through Riyadh.

The tension which hardened from 1978-79 between the two Yemens pushed Sana'a to play off Washington once again against Moscow and Aden. This time it succeeded, obtaining American arms financed by Saudi Arabia as well as US protection, which played a decisive role in helping Sana'a survive an attack from the Marxist and Arab nationalist opposition movement. Though US military sales to Sana'a ceased once the inter-Yemeni war was over, by the end of 1979 the YAR persuaded the USSR to provide it with an arms package to strengthen its army and achieve security. The Soviets were responsive because they did not want the YAR to fall completely under US influence.

The YAR used its position between its southern neighbour controlled by the British before 1967 and the PDRY after 1970, and its northern oil-rich Saudi neighbour to acquire political support, military assistance and economic aid from both the USA and the USSR and successfully maintained this policy throughout the 1980s.

The Yemeni people's impact on world politics

The role played by the Yemeni people in affecting domestic, regional and international policies also merits examination. To a considerable extent the 1962 revolution was the result of the widespread determination of the Yemeni people to improve their living conditions by supporting the overthrow of the socially and politically backward monarchy. Throughout the lifetime of the YAR the majority of Yemenis in the Republic were influenced by pan-Arab, anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist ideas. This clearly influenced the YAR government in the early-mid 1960s, when it embraced the Arab nationalist and pro-Soviet ideology of Nasserite Egypt. In turn the YAR gave large amounts of military and economic assistance to the YAR in order to weaken the hitherto united front of conservative pro-Western monarchies and sheikhdoms in the Arabian peninsula. This drained UAR resources and, after the defeat by Israel in 1967, it lost its position as leader of the Arab nationalist movement. The UAR's defeat meant in effect, the defeat of Arab nationalism in the Middle East; thus served US interests at the expense of USSR interests. Having lost its Egyptian foothold in the region, the USSR was forced to turn to the PDRY. Strengthened by Soviet military assistance the PDRY became the source of ten years of instability within the YAR. From 1967 the YAR begun to make overtures towards the USA. But it had to work hard to quell internal criticism of its pro-Western initiatives from the strong nationalist and socialist elements in the country and the government itself.

After the restoration of relations with the US in 1972 all YAR governments tried to distance

themselves from a public alliance with the US because of popular support for the Palestinian and other Arab nationalist issues. The geo-political position of the YAR between the anti-US PDRY, and the anti-USSR KSA, directly influenced YAR foreign policy. In 1979 US military and political assistance helped Sana'a to deter a PDRY invasion, but this did not prevent the YAR from obtaining Soviet arms partly because of the nationalist and anti-KSA element in the country which sought to resist the Saudi influence. This continued until the very end of the Republic's life. Unification in 1990 which was achieved despite initial opposition from the KSA and only cautious support from the USA, brought with it not only an end to internecine war but also the opportunity for the Yemeni people to benefit from foreign economic aid and investment and the possibility of greater freedom to determine Yemeni foreign policy. It also brought a greater degree of democratic freedoms than had ever been experienced before.

Thus the economic and political aspirations of the Yemeni people may have played only a relatively small part in affecting the foreign policies of the various countries involved in the Yemeni arena during this period but their voice could never be completely ignored by the YAR governments.

Religious differences and YAR-US interaction

Religious differences within the Yemeni arena and within the Arabian Peninsula also merit attention. Religious sectarianism played a hidden yet important role in determining the nature of the YAR-US interaction. In the 1960s the Shafi'is (a Sunni sect of Islam) through their

contacts with the Sunni Egyptian leadership, played a major role in organising the revolution. They had paid a high price hitherto, since they were deprived of all their rights as citizens under the pre-Republic Zeidi Imams and during their exile to the colony of Aden. Zeidi attempts in the mid-1960s to reconcile the YAR with the KSA and the Royalist camp were undermined by the majority Shafi'is, who considered such a reconciliation as anti-Shafi'i; most of the Shafi'is joined Arab nationalist and Socialist parties because they saw that allying with these forces would best serve their interests. This religious conflict added further constraints on YAR-US relations throughout the 1960s. Though the Shafi'i element was defeated in the YAR in August 1968 when the Zeidi government crushed the Nasserite and the Arab Nationalist Movement, the religious factor continued to act as a constraint on YAR-US relations. In June 1969 the Arab Nationalist Movement's radicals seized power in the PDRY. Some of the key leaders of the new government in Aden were originally Shafi'is from Northern Yemen. This cannot be separated from what happened eight months earlier in Sana'a, on 23-24 August 1968. That year the Marxist Shafi'is in Aden severed relations with the US. They also supported a guerrilla warfare in the central areas of the YAR. Their influence inside the politically unstable YAR made the US cautious in its dealings with the YAR throughout the seventies and the eighties. In the 1970s and 1980s Zeidi-Wahhabi¹⁰ differences between the YAR and the KSA, which restored diplomatic relations in 1970, formed a barrier to YAR-KSA cooperation and trust. The Saudis used their stronger alliance with the US to constrain YAR-US interaction. It is in this context that religious factionalism differences within the YAR and within the Yemeni arena influenced the YAR's as well as the PDRY's foreign policies towards the US throughout the period of this study.

Superpower-small state relations

The main comparative dimension of this study is that of Superpower-Small State relations: the role small powers play in the diplomatic, economic and foreign policy of larger ones, and the degree of freedom of manoeuvre which small states have in determining their own foreign policy. By examining the YAR's foreign policy throughout the period 1962-1990 it is evident that it was shaped by domestic, regional and superpower influences. The backwardness of the country, its weak economy and large population, religious differences and political and economic aspirations of the people, and its geographic position in a highly volatile and unstable Middle East, one of the main battle-grounds of the Cold War, all influenced the foreign policy of the YAR. This was also shaped by the nature of the Yemeni decision-making process. But the external policies of the post-1962 Republic, were, to an extent, similar to those of the pre-1962 monarchical, conservative Yemen.

In 1962, the new Republic tried to develop contacts with modern industrialised Western society, especially the US. This was only partly successful. Egyptian intervention, civil war, a close military relationship with the USSR, an alliance with the Arab nationalist movement, a commitment to fight colonialism, imperialism and Zionism, and border and ideological disputes with the KSA, all affected the YAR's interaction with the USA. In 1962 the YAR had no other choice but to ally itself with the UAR and the USSR. Without Egyptian assistance and protection and subsequent Arab and Soviet military support it was unlikely that the Republic would have survived. In the seventies it was seriously threatened by both the

monarchical pro-US KSA and the radical pro-Soviet PDRY. Though the YAR was destined to fall under Saudi influence, the pressure from the PDRY on its southern borders forced it to adopt a more consistently balanced policy towards the US and the USSR. In 1979, Sana'a was expected to fall to the PDRY and NDF invading forces, but this was prevented by the assistance and protection of both the KSA and the US. The new USSR policy towards the YAR from late 1979 gave the YAR a limited ability to manoeuvre and maintain relations with both the US and the USSR: it received economic cooperation with Washington and military assistance from Moscow. This enabled the YAR to achieve political stability and economic development throughout most of the 1980s.

The YAR emerged in a period of high-level international and regional instability, and during a period of Cold War when the Arabian Peninsula was penetrated by the two superpowers. Internal YAR political instability was mostly the result of superpower penetration in the form of massive military aid to their client states in the area. The superpower presence and their influence on the regional powers' policies, therefore, placed constraints on the foreign policy of the YAR and other small states of the region.

The domestic environment played a major role in determining the nature of YAR-US interaction between 1962 and 1990. For example, the large YAR population in comparison to that of the PDRY and other pro-Western states of the Arabian Peninsula was one of the considerations in the minds of Washington's policy-makers in their dealings with Sana'a. The YAR, as the most highly populated country in the Arabian Peninsula, with a Republican, anti-

monarchical, pan-Arab, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist orientation in the 1960s, created fear in the surrounding less populated and more conservative Arabian Peninsula states. It also caused UK and US concern for the security of their interests in the Gulf region. These two major powers and their allies in the Arab world, all collaborated to defeat the Republic whether by restoring the Royalist government or, at the very least, to moderate the YAR government to prevent it from supporting UAR threats towards Western interests in the region. Once this objective was achieved (after the UAR defeat by Israel in 1967) Sana'a fell under the influence of the KSA, and as the USSR developed its support to the PDRY, military cooperation with both the US and USSR became more difficult because of PDRY and KSA fears of a more populated and better equipped YAR.

The YAR's geographical position also affected its foreign policy. In the sixties the YAR, which controlled the southern entrance of the Red Sea, lay between the KSA, a US ally, and the South Arabian Federation (SAF), a colony of the UK. Once the YAR formed an alliance with the UAR it faced war from both northern and southern fronts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the YAR had the pro-Soviet PDRY and pro-American KSA on its southern borders. This placed constraints on the YAR's ability to interact freely with both the US and the USSR. US policy-makers saw the YAR in this period as only a suitable buffer zone between the PDRY and their interests in the KSA.

More than anything else the weak YAR economy affected its foreign decision-making. The Yemeni civil war in the 1960s had a negative effect on agricultural activity in the YAR. The

country became dependent on aid from the UAR. The budget of the YAR was provided by the UAR throughout most of the sixties. UAR economic capabilities were drained by the Yemen civil war and were strained yet more by its defeat in the Six Day War. It was forced to withdraw its forces from the YAR thus pushing the Republic in the 1970s into becoming highly dependent on the KSA. This dependency inevitably put limits on YAR foreign policy. Throughout the seventies, military and political YAR-US interaction was largely dictated by KSA-US dealings, and a trilateral relationship was forced upon the YAR. Because of its weak economy the YAR had no option but to accept a Saudi-financed US arms package during its second war with the PDRY in 1979, because this served the security purposes of the KSA. When Sana'a applied for additional US supplies to reorganise and re-equip its army this was denied largely because both the KSA and the US both used their aid to influence the foreign policy of the YAR.

In conclusion, despite the beginnings of tangible US participation in the economy of the country after the discovery of oil, as a small state the YAR attempted to maintain independence and stability and develop its economy based upon its own resources. Throughout the period 1962 to 1990 it was forced to accept "limits to its options from larger regional powers as well as the 'great power' allies of its regional neighbours and the limitations of these great powers' interests."¹¹ Dependence and reliance on the developed world for expertise, trade and capital means that the independence and freedom of manoeuvre for a small state although severely circumscribed, was not entirely impossible.

Notes

1. **US Department of State Bulletin**, 28 January 1963, p. 1.
2. Author's Interview with USSR Ambassador in 1988, Viniamin Popov, Sana'a, 21 September 1988.
3. Author's Interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
4. Author's interview with Marjorie Ransom.
5. Author's Interview with Ambassador al-'Aini.
6. Sana'a, 19 September 1988.
7. Author's interview with Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the YARCPO, Dr M. S. al-'Attar, Sana'a, 6 September 1988.
8. Author's interview with Ambassador Lane.
9. For more details see Nadji, **Al-Tarikh al-'Askari li al-Yaman 1939-1967**, Beirut, 1985.
10. Wahhabiis are Sunnis.
11. In the words of Manfred Wenner in a commentary letter to this author on the first draft of this thesis, May 1990.

A P P E N D I C E S

Appendix I

Text of Commerce and Friendship Agreement between the US and Yemen, signed in Sana'a on 4 May 1946:

Article I. The United States of America and the Kingdom of the Yemen will exchange diplomatic representatives and consular officers at a date which shall be fixed by mutual agreement between the two governments.

Article II. The diplomatic representatives of each party accredited to the government of the other party shall enjoy in the territories of such other party the rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities accorded under generally recognized principles of international law. The consular officers of each party who are assigned to the government of the other party, and are duly provided with executors, shall be permitted to reside in the territories of such other party at the places where consular officers are permitted by the applicable laws to reside; they shall enjoy the honorary privileges and the immunities accorded to officers of their rank by general international usage; and they shall not, in any event, be treated in a manner less favorable than similar officers of any third country.

Article III. Subjects of His Majesty the King of the Yemen in the United States of America and nationals of the United States of America in the Kingdom of the Yemen shall be received and treated in accordance with the requirements and practices of generally recognized international law. In respect of their persons, possessions and rights, such subjects or nationals shall enjoy the fullest protection of the laws and authorities of the country, and shall not be treated in any manner less favorable than the nationals of any third country. Subjects of His Majesty in the United States of America and nationals of the United States of America in the Kingdom of the Yemen Shall be subject to the local laws and regulations, and shall enjoy the rights and privileges accorded in this third Article.

Article IV. In all matters relating to customs duties and charges of any kind imposed on or in connection with importation or exportation or otherwise affecting commerce and navigation, to the method of levying such duties and charges, to all rules and formalities in connection with importation or exportation, and to transit, warehousing and other facilities, each Party shall accord unconditional and unrestricted most-favored-nation treatment to articles of growth, produce or manufacture of the other Party, from what ever place arriving, or to articles destined for exportation to the territories of such other Party, by whatever route. Any advantage, favor, privilege or immunity with respect to any duty,charge or regulation affecting commerce or navigation now or hereafter accorded by the United States of America or by the Kingdom of Yemen to any third country will be accorded immediately and unconditionally to the commerce and navigation of the Kingdom of Yemen and the United States of America, respectively. The advantages relating to customs duties now or hereafter

accorded by the United States of America to the Republic of Cuba shall be excepted from the provisions of this agreement.

Article V. There shall be excepted from the provisions of Article IV of this agreement advantages now or hereafter accorded: by virtue of a customs union of which either Party may become a member; to adjacent countries in order to facilitate frontier traffic; and by the United States of America or its territories or possessions to one another or to the Panama Canal Zone.

The last clause shall continue to apply in respect of any advantages now or hereafter accorded by the United States of America or its territories or possessions to one another irrespective of any change in the political status of any such territories or possessions.

Nothing in this agreement shall prevent the adoption or enforcement by either party within the area of its jurisdiction: of measures relating to the importation or exportation of gold or silver or the traffic in arms, ammunition, and implements of war, and, in exceptional circumstances, all other military supplies; of measures necessary in pursuance of obligations for the maintenance of international peace and security or necessary for the protection of the essential interests of such Party in time of national emergency; or of status in relation to immigration and travel. Subject to the requirement that, under like circumstances and conditions, there shall be no arbitrary discrimination by either Party against the subjects, nationals, commerce or navigation of any third country, the provisions of this agreement shall

not extend to prohibitions or restrictions: imposed on moral or humanitarian grounds; designed to protect human, animal, or plant life or health; relating to prison-made goods; or relating to the enforcement of police or revenue law.

Article VI. The provisions of this agreement shall apply to all territory under sovereignty or authority of either of the parties, except the Panama Canal Zone.

Article VII. This agreement shall continue in force until superseded by a more comprehensive commercial agreement, or until thirty days from the date of a written notice of termination given by either Party to the other Party, whichever is the earlier. Moreover either Party may terminate Articles I, II, III or IV on thirty days' written notice.

If the above provisions are acceptable to the government of the Kingdom of the Yemen this note and the reply signifying assent thereto shall, if agreeable to that government, be regarded as constituting an agreement between two governments which shall become effective on the date of such acceptance (**The Middle East Journal**, Volume 1, No. 1, 1947, pp. 86-88).

Appendix II

Author's interview with Ambassador George Lane

US Ambassador to the YAR 1978-1981

Worcester MA, 16 February 1990

Q. You were, Your Excellency, the US Ambassador in the YAR during the period of the second inter-Yemeni war of 1979, when the US supported the YAR government against a threat from the leftist South. I believe you have a lot to say about YAR-USA relations especially in that period of time.

A. I was the first American ambassador to present credentials to President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh after he became the President, so I am very proud of that. I think there are interesting stories through the history of US-Yemen relations: the period after the Yemeni revolution when some aid people had a very bad time and were thrown in prison and other sorts of things during that period when the US-Egyptian-relations were very bad. This is funny again, I guess I am saying the same thing, that the US-Yemen relations have been a sort of a step child of US relations with some other country whether Egypt or Saudi Arabia. First, when I first went to Saudi Arabia in 1962 before the revolution in Yemen, the US Ambassador Hurt was also the US Ambassador to Yemen.

Q. What did you do during this visit?

A. I was commercial officer. That was when we had a Charge d'Affaires, Robert Stookey in Ta'iz. Then there was that period after the Revolution when the US did recognize right away and Yemen was the scene of struggle between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, between Nasser and Faisal at that period. So US-Yemen relations were really again a step child of the relationship of those two bigger countries. Then, after 1967 the civil war began to settle, but the country broke relations with the US, as a result of the 1967 war, so there was no sort of relationship at all. Then when it picked up again in the 1970s, again, it became very much tied up with the growing importance of Saudi oil to the US.

Q. But why do you think the relations did not grow after 1972? Did the Saudi oil boom after 1973 affect these relations negatively?

A. Yes. Faisal played his cards very well. One of the great tragedies to the Saudis was the death of Faisal. No country can afford to lose leaders like that. And remember in 1978 we were just about to open relations with South Yemen. We were talking about it when al-Ghashmi got blown up and Salem Rubayye' 'Ali was overthrown. Actually that happened after Scotts left and before I got there. I think Scotts left in April and al-Ghashmi was blown up in June, and then I got there in September, just after 'Ali 'Abd Allah became the President.

In fact my number 2 at the time, the DCM as we call him, the Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy , his name is Edward Gnehm, he is about to become a US ambassador in the area very soon. He became a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence, was working in the Pentagon and he was on a trip to the Middle East and he went to Yemen about year ago. There, he went to Ambassador Charles Denbar and said "You know I would like to call President Saleh and tell him I am here and just if I could drop by him for 10 minutes to pay my respects", and the ambassador said "I am not sure if you could do that. It's very hard to see President Saleh, he's very busy." Gnehm said "I am going to do it anyway." So he got through to the President, and the President said "Come right over." so he went over to him and the President said just exactly what I thought: "Remember those stories when used to come out of **New York Times** when you and Lane were here which said 'Ali 'Abd Allah won't last six months...." Frankly I never said that. I always said "Some people say that, he may last a lot longer than most other people think." President Saleh was a lot frustrated during that period when I was there. On the occasion of the annual anniversary of the revolution in 1979, they had a fly-over of the F5s which were in Yemen and I think they got twelve F5s and they had pilots of four different nationalities who don't have a common language flying in the air show. They had Saudis, Yemenis, Americans and Nationalist Chinese, Taiwanese, there were nine pilots: three Saudis, two Yemenis, two Americans and two Taiwanese. So the Saudis and the Yemenis would have to speak in English and of course the Nationalist Chinese understood the English, but it was the only language they had in common, and some of the Yemenis were a little weak in English, because they hadn't been trained in English so they had to speak to the Saudis in Arabic and the Saudis would repeat

in English.

Q. Prime Minister 'Abdul-'Aziz 'Abdul-Ghani visited the White House in 1979. What was the outcome of the visit?

A. Yes. I was with him, We called on Brzezinski, as an envoy from President Saleh.

Q. About the arms?

A. Basically the whole relationship, the direct relations and the arms of course. Obviously from the US point of view we hope for good relations between the Saudis and the Yemenis. There is no reason there shouldn't be. I mean there are bigger problems in the area than the ancient views over 'Asir and some thing...

Q. Concerning the Middle East. Do you think that the American interest in the Middle East will change as a result of the change in East Europe?

A. Yes. It already has .America as you know has had for 45 years three basic interests in the Middle East. They have always been the same and continue 'till to-day: block Soviet penetration; make sure we have access to oil at as low prices as we can; and protect Israel. Those have been US interests since 1948 and our policies were affected by these three. The

Yemen is a little bit different. One of the reasons we went to Yemen was because the Soviets were in Yemen. Yemen has nothing to do much with oil and Israel because Yemen hasn't been relevant to those issues too often and up till now. Still the major oil producers are Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia. Yemen is not in that league yet. We will see whether it will happen or not... As far as the Middle East is concerned, the Arab-Israeli problem...Are any of those three US interests threatened? That's the question the President asks. Then he looks after the Soviet penetration. As you said the Soviets have plenty to worry about at home and about their future.

Q. Do you think American aid will continue to North Yemen despite the shift of interest to eastern Europe?

A. It will be very hard to get aid money to Yemen. When I was there Yemen was getting more money per capita in aid from all the countries in the world than any country in the world partially, because Abdul-Karim is so smart. He is a wonderful man... The UN, the Danes, the Germans, the Swiss, the US were all spending lots of money.... Everybody was having an aid program in Yemen....but Yemen finding oil and the great pressures on the aid program for other countries that are worse now than Yemen it is probably going to be hard for Yemen to get aid.

Q. Some Yemenis think that the US is never concerned with political development in the third world.

A. Depends on what you are talking about. Nicaragua, Salvador. There we are trying very hard to influence the politics of those countries, but do you really want us to do that in Yemen...I am not sure that the United States should be going around the world telling other people how to run their country...

Appendix III

John Kelly

US Assistant Secretary of State

Press conference, Washington DC, 24 January 1990

Yemen is a relatively small country at the southern end of the Red Sea, has a population of about 10 million people. They produce a modest amount of oil. US oil companies are active there and in fact Hunts participated in the first discovery of oil in Yemen in commercially interesting supplies about 5 years ago. Yemen is a non-aligned state, a member of the Arab league. The Republic of Yemen is not to be confused with its neighbour the PDRY, a more radical Arab state with its capital of Aden just to the South of the YAR. Saleh has been in office 11 years. President Bush met him in 1986 when then Vice-President (he) visited Yemen. The Vice-President in 1986 helped to inaugurate a refinery in the Yemen and invited Saleh to visit the US. This is the state visit that flows from our invitation, and I'll be happy to answer your questions.

Q. What is the US assessment of the unification prospects between the two countries?

A. President Saleh publicly proposed several months ago the idea of unification between the YAR and the southern neighbour, the PDRY, and the two sides have been talking about a

joint constitution which is now under discussion in both capitals. Obviously what the two countries wanted to do is depend on their wishes. We will, be sure, be talking to President Saleh about the subject and how he thinks it's going while he is here.

Q. Could you explain more about the US position. Would it be more to the direction of South Yemen or would it be more with the US?

A. Because North Yemen has a population of 10 million people and the south has only about 2 million, and because North Yemen is already producing oil and South Yemen is not, I think that the weight of influence in a unified country would be with the North. We have had good relations with the North for quite a while and we have not with the South. I don't think a union would do any damage to US interest, but as I said, ultimately they are going to decide what they want to do.

Q. Is there going to be any appreciable movement, one way or another in North Yemen's East-West orientation of the last years since Bush got there? I remember on his trip that was the big question.

A. There hasn't been anything dramatic. North Yemen still gets the bulk of its military assistance from the Soviet Union. We are very modest supplier on the military side. We got a military training program. I meant international military education, a training program of about \$ 1 m a year and had military sales. So our offer is pretty modest.

Q. What about Development Assistance?

A. We provide assistance to North Yemen. The last fiscal year was about \$20m.

Q. US-South Yemen relations?

A. We've had meetings this fall in New York at the UN between Ambassador Pickering, the US representative, and the South Yemen representative to talk about possible restoration of diplomatic relations between the US and South Yemen. I am not exactly sure whether Pickering had three meetings or four, it's certainly not more than half-a-dozen. We haven't had any in a couple months as I do know and we have exchanged views with the South Yemen representative about the restoration of diplomatic relations. We talked with them about the problems they have with their support for terrorism and some of their international positions over the years.

Q. How much do we get back from the \$20 m every year, what gain?

A. Oh, yes. Well I think over the years, the US there has tended to dilute the Soviet influence.

Q. \$20m every year for how many years?

A. This has been up and down. That was the most recent year's figure.

Q. We don't get anything back?

A. I think we are, I think we are getting access among other things, good access for American oil companies and firms which have an interest there.

Q. Oil companies should pay then. Should they?

A. ...we're helping a country that needs some help and development. It is in the geopolitical interest of the US.

Q. What subjects the President will be talking about here?

A. We are going to talk about the range of the Middle East issues: the peace process. The Yemenis are not involved but they are interested in it. What is going on in the Gulf, the role of Iran, changes in the Soviet Union. And I am sure the issue of Armenia and Azerbaidjan will come up. Again, as a country in that part of the world Yemen has interest in what is going on.

Q. Any particular bilateral problem?

A. No particular bilateral problem between us.

Q. Any progress on discussions about relations with South Yemen?

A. We will be discussing the subject with the President of North Yemen while he is here. We have talked and will be talking with Saudi Arabia, with Omanis and other people in the region and making our own calculations whether or not it is in the US interest at all We have to think forward.

Appendix IV

Dr Robert Stookey

US Charge d'Affaires in North Yemen 1959-Early 1963

Austin-Texas, 30 January 1990

Q. From your numerous writings on Yemen I feel that you had special interest in Yemen, even before arriving in it.

A. I spent two 2 years before leaving to Yemen in 1959 as the Arabian Peninsula officer in the Department. When I was appointed as Charge d'Affaires in Yemen, I told several people that I expected to see a revolution in Yemen during my tour, and it happened.

Q. I came to Texas to hear from you personally something you remember about the earlier contacts between the governments of the YAR and the US which led to US recognition on December 19, 1962.

A. As you know it took a quite long time for formal relations to be established between the US and the new government, because the principal preoccupations in Washington were the positions and status of the British in the Arabian Peninsula at least generally, as well as the security of Saudi Arabia. And one principle issue was the claim of North Yemen to

sovereignty over all South Yemen. And this took a long time, many trips by myself from Ta'iz where the legation was to Sana'a where the government headquarters was, before some formula was worked out that was formally satisfactory to us so that we could go ahead and recognise. Our government was concerned about the attitude of the government of North Yemen towards Saudi Arabia, what course had to be taken because the Egyptians were really in substantial control of the Yemeni government, because the Egyptians were not at all friendly with Saudi Arabia. Eventually this was worked out and the recognition took place. Meanwhile of course Prince Hassan had left New York [to go] back to Yemen by way of Saudi Arabia where he persuaded King Saud to back the Royalists with an ordinary force. And that, of course, was not palatable to us. So there was, mainly, I think, through our initiative, a UN decision to send an international force to maintain the boundary between the Royalist and the Republican forces.

Q. That was in 1963. I want to concentrate on the contacts, that were going on between you and the Yemeni government on the issue of recognition. When did these contacts start and from which side?

A. Well, immediately after they took control of Sana'a, very early, within the first week, particularly because of the shaky situation, since we had about a hundred American engineers and technicians building the road from Makha to Ta'iz and Sana'a. My concern of course was the security of this American community for which I was responsible. Since we were foreigners allied with the British, we were not on good terms with the new Revolutionary

government. There were no violent incidents but sort of incidents where Americans were felt under threat of some force of some sort, so that was a preoccupation of mine throughout this uncertain period before our government decided to set up normal relations. It, as I said, involved my travelling between Ta'iz and Sana'a every time to exchange telegrams between me and Washington on the subject of recognition. It was not a very comfortable situation for me because I had no faith in the ancient Yemeni planes that flew between Ta'iz and Sana'a, so I travelled back and forth by jeep every time and I was always received by the new leaders very cordially and the negotiations were very pleasant on both sides but it was an impediment to full cooperation on both sides.

There was one period, quite early after the revolution, when I was not sure of the new government's ability and willingness to ensure the safety of our American community and I spent hours making out evacuation orders for the Americans all over the country, signing these orders, if I decided that the time had come to order these people to leave. Then, I arranged for an American destroyer, a warship, to be just beyond the horizon of Makha, and the general plan was that we would all pile into jeeps and rush to Hudaidah for evacuation hoping that no organized force would stop us. Of course I didn't tell the details of the plan to the leaders in Sana'a, but made it clear that I was concerned about the safety of Americans who would leave if they proved to be in danger. Nothing came of it. Yemen generally is not a resentful place, they don't hate foreigners, like some people in Saudi Arabia do for example. So there was no need to carry these evacuation plans out.

Q. Do you remember who first contacted you from the government's side concerning recognition?

A. Al-Sallal and then No. 2, al-Baidani. Frequently I talked with al-Baidani. When the recognition was approved, I presented the Act to al-Baidani, but with any other important matter, in fact, I usually saw al-Sallal and my conversations with him took place either in his headquarters which was swarming with Egyptian advisors or at the hotel at night where we could talk with very few other people around. And it was very apparent to me, how resentful al-Sallal was at the close control the Egyptians were attempting to maintain over him. At the end of one of our conversations in Sana'a, he accompanied me from his office to the front door, and one of the Egyptians was designated to interpret... Of course I was talking with him in Arabic and during our walk down to the door the Egyptian soldier attempted to interpret some remarks, so al-Sallal said to him "yetkallam 'Arabi ahsan minnak" (he speaks Arabic better than you do)....

Q. Did you keep any personal notes or records of your meetings with Sallal and al-Baidani?

A. There were telegrams to the Department of State. There was no aeroplane service into Yemen at that time. And the contact was, therefore, through telegrams, which are all available at the Department of State. The Department was worried of course about the safety of my legation and the American community and they kept urging me to report every day by telegram. But at that time, telegrams sent from Yemen were the most expensive in the world.

A two to three page telegram cost \$1500 for just one message, and of course I was not paying by a cheque or paper money. Only the Maria Theresa dollars. A bag of 1000 weighs 65lbs. A three or four page telegram cost 2000 of these dollars.

Q. Al-Baidani claimed that you delivered to him a list of 17 Yemeni names whom you thought were Communists occupying key posts in the government and that you suggested they should be removed as one of the conditions to improve the relations.

A. I don't remember details but it sounds straight forward.

Q. You mean the list of the names?

A. Could well be. That is always a sensitive point with us. We still have not got it. We see Communists behind every bush and so forth. Such information should be in the files of my intelligence officer in my legation.

Q. Concerning your daily telegrams could you recall their themes?

A. In my telegrams I was arguing for recognition, naturally. I was aware there were pockets of resistance to the new Republican regime.

Q. Are these ideas found in your books now echoes of the same ideas during your service

in Yemen?

A. These were very much my ideas of the time.

Q. You said you see a Communist behind every bush. Do you mean the recognition's main purpose was to encircle the Soviet influence in the country and to secure the rich peninsula?

A. That was one of my talking points to the Department of State, to get the decision of recognition out of Washington within the global context - was one factor.

Q. From your works on Yemen, I believe that you used to think that a republican US would prefer a republican Yemen which takes care of the welfare of its people and at the same time does not threaten the US interests in the peninsula.

A. Exactly. Also by recognizing the new regime and conducting normal relations with it we will have a better chance of furthering our own interests of concern...as well as the British position. We could influence the new YAR government to maintain decent relations with the British across the border in South Yemen. Normal relations would make it possible for any official to plead their case in Yemen. Without recognition we would be of no influence at all. The British who had a very rigid government refused to follow our example and therefore the YAR forced them to close their diplomatic office.

Q. Dr al-Baidani mentioned also some argument with you concerning Kennedy's present of wheat in November 1962 , something about the American emblem of foreign aid.

A. The food supply was in a very crucial state at this particular time. He was a little put out that the wheat was being shipped in bags with the emblem of our foreign aid. No practical way that we can do otherwise. Because the Chinese food supply arrived in one of their bulk ships when our bags with the American emblem were empty - our bags arrived 1 month earlier - the Yemeni officials in the port of Hudaidah filled our bags with the Chinese flour and so a lot of the Yemeni people thought this was still American wheat. This was symbolic. It was ironical rather than amusing for me.

Q. Did you feel that al-Baidani was keen to extend relations with the US at that period?

A. In his position at that time he was doing what he was told. I was never convinced of his sincerity, but I am sure that he represented to me the position of al-Sallal's Egyptian mentors.

Q. From your writings on the politics of the YAR, I feel that you were glad to see the Yemeni revolution.

A. I was glad to see the revolution because the Imams did very little for the people. They did not have much to work with, but they could have done more.

Q. Why do you think President Kennedy chose to intervene rather than to confront Egypt from the very beginning as President Johnson did later?

A. Well, I think because of the factors we were discussing: the Communist element, the British factor and the general impulse to be helpful to less fortunate peoples.

Q. What exactly do you mean by the British factor in this context?

A. We didn't want to see the British kicked out of South Yemen at that time, even though the British were having second thoughts about their position in east of Suez generally. We still wanted to encourage them to stay on to defend Western interests in that part of the world. Eventually they had to pull out, nevertheless. But that's what we thought at that time.

Q. It seemed they were having their own calculations?

A. Yes very much. One emotional factor - I tend to be more sympathetic to the Republic rather than the Monarchy. The Saudi monarchy is under no threat, no matter how shaky some people imagine it to be. But generally our relations are close with Saudi Arabia in spite of its formal government. There were no obligations from the part of the rulers to promote the welfare of the people, when the revenues became higher they spent them in selfish ways. I think they have now come to improving the welfare very substantially... this didn't happen in Yemen under the Imams.

Q. As far as I can remember you left in early 1963, but maybe you can tell me why the relations did not improve following the recognition if that was your understanding?

A. After the revolution, the embassy in Djiddah had no more authority over my legation because our ambassador in Djiddah was accredited to Imam Ahmad as Minister to Yemen. For security we burnt all our files in Ta'iz, in case our legation was overrun by government soldiers or a civilian march, but that did not happen. I left in February and James Cortada replaced me. What happened was that when the British were expelled we were in charge of their interests and there were incursions from the territory of the Sherif of Beihan across the border into the Yemen and things of that sort, problems. Generally speaking relations were normal from then on.

Q. Do you think the relations will develop from now onwards?

A. Well. The principal element in the relationship of the Yemeni government is economic aid and because of the condition government finances are in, it's unlikely that aid will increase further than the ongoing projects in Yemen.

Q. Do you think the Soviets had encouraged any adventure from the South against the North?

A. I don't think the Soviets had encouraged any of the adventures against North Yemen or against Oman. I don't think the Russians are thinking of any chance of making a Communist

bloc in any Arab country because of the strength of the Islamic principles and the sense of Arab solidarity. I don't think the North will unite with the South...from my historical perspective South Yemen's very different from the North... The Yemens should avoid reunification and pluralism to improve their relations with Saudi Arabia.

Q. Why was the US very much concerned in 1979?

A. Because there was a real threat and the North Yemenis didn't show well during the fight.

Q. Do you feel that the Soviets, under Gorbachev, came to the conclusion that the PDRY cannot become a socialist nation? Did they encourage PDRY subversion of the YAR?

A. I have the distinct impression that the Soviets have come to the conclusion, on the basis of their historical experience in various apparently radical Arab countries, that no Arab country, including the PDRY, is a realistic candidate for membership in their community of socialist nations, given the persistent strength of Islamic and Arab nationalist traditions. They therefore now seek to cultivate mutually beneficial relations with Arab countries regardless of their political complexion, rather than attempting to turn them into communist societies.

The USSR has provided South Yemen with the military strength to challenge the governments of its neighbours, the YAR and Oman, but I know of no evidence that they have encouraged these activities. The USSR's relations with North Yemen date from the 1920s, and it has been

a major arms supplier to the YAR. The Soviets attach some importance to their position in neutralised North Yemen, and it is unlikely that they have encouraged South Yemeni subversion of the YAR.

Appendix V

David Ransom

Director, Arabian Peninsula affairs

Department of State

washington DC, 8 February 1990

Q. You were, Your Excellency, in Yemen when Yemen-US relations deteriorated in 1967.

A. This happened when 56 Yemeni officials in two aeroplanes were held in Cairo and never came back. One day I went to the Ministry of Finance and I found only two officials; they were Egyptians and if you wanted something done they had to stamp it. When you think about that time you have to remember that what we were trying to do in the Middle East as a whole was to prevent a split between the conservative Arab countries and the progressive Arab countries, a split between the Soviet Union on one side and us on the other. It was called at that time a pluralization, which means that any dispute could become a broader, very serious dispute. And in Yemen we tried with recognition to stand with one foot in either camp. And in fact what was happening, the Saudis were not happy, neither were the Egyptians, each kept pulling us. The situation was difficult for the US. Yes, because the situation was difficult in the Arab world. You have to remember the attacks from Egypt on Saudi Arabia and on Jordan. Anyway the policy failed, because, we think, the government

of Egypt went too far, and ,in my mind, and this is a speculation, after we were thrown out of Yemen, the British had announced that they were leaving South Yemen, and the Egyptians were very confident and decided to stay. They also felt that they were coming into a new era where they have the backing of the Soviet Union, no Arab could oppose them, they would be able to expand their influence in the Arab world. I think Nasser made a terrible mistake when announcing that he was closing the Strait of Tiran and putting his forces into the Sinai. Everybody knows what happened after that. I am not saying anything about who fired the first shot, but those two moves by Nasser were a great mistake. After the defeat in June, Nasser withdraw from Yemen. This was part of the price for dealing with Saudi Arabia, but it was also necessary, because his dreams were finished. After the withdrawal, the friends of Egypt in South Yemen lost and the people who won.... Those decisions created the modern situation of Yemen, I think, between the most radical state in the Arab world and the most conservative state. When you say you don't have a direct relationship with the US, my reply is that, you had the influence of many states, and you were reacting in this context.

Q. According to the market?

A. Yes. After the war the most sensible thing I thought for Yemen was to renew relations.

Q. I think, the Yemenis tried but the US wasn't interested.

A. I dont think that's true.

Q. Some Yemeni officials thought at the time that the US disinterest was based on the fact that its interests were not threatened from the side of North Yemen.

A. In 1967-68 maybe. But at that time the situation was very unclear. The security of Sana'a was very bad.

Q. According to my own notes the YAR Foreign Minister, 'Ali Lutf al-Thawr, met his American counterpart in the UN and discussed the possibility of the restoration of the diplomatic relations. Several statements by President al-Iryani and Prime Minister 'Abd Allah al-Kurshmi showed clearly that Sana'a was very much interested in the re-establishment of relations with the US.

A. We were interested from the beginning as soon as it was clear that the Republic was going to survive as an independent government from attacks from both the south and the north - we were interested. The Yemeni government took steps slowly, step by step, and at the end, Yemen took the step on its own initiative. It was the first step by Arab country to renew relations with the US after the 1967 rupture, but I think it was in the interest of Yemen to do that.

Q. Was the American response, Your Excellency, to the Yemeni initiative in 1972 a result of the British decision to withdraw from the Gulf?

A. Not completely. The American reasons... There were always several reasons: what was the Soviet Union doing in the South, the Soviet success in getting military facilities in the South. We watch this sort of thing very carefully. Second: in the Peninsula we have many friends, but the Saudis have always been the most important friend for the US. We did not want to see another challenge come to Saudi Arabia from Yemen. We wanted good relations and that's why we argued very hard with the Saudis after relations were renewed with Yemen through recognition, and we were largely very successful. The Saudis have their own diplomacy and made their own moves. Third: as you know in diplomacy there are personal elements that sometimes play important roles and everybody who ever worked in Yemen was interested - wanted to try to help. So there always people who said "We need to improve our relations with Yemen." We started an aid program. We worked hard with neighbouring states on aid. It was a good move, I think, for now it is a very good relationship. Four: We also wanted in 1972 to break the front in the Arab world against us. We have relations with Saudi Arabia of course and many of those countries, but we have always wanted relations with all the countries of the Middle East and we don't like to be trapped in the Arab-Israeli struggle, because we have other interests: aid, trade, culture...local different disputes, alliances and things like that. It seems to us that the Arabs had got caught in their rhetoric: "No. No. No." And it was hard for them to change. Privately they will tell us something and publicly something else. So we wanted to begin to create new choices for ourselves and the Arabs after 1967. That was another big reason that relations with Yemen occurred. We went to some other Arab states and said: "We think Yemen is going to be this, would you be interested [in restoring relations with US]? And the Algerians and the Sudanese said yes. The

Sudanese did it and the Algerians did not. So at that time, that was important.

Q. And when were you in the Yemen desk?

A. I was the Yemen desk officer at the time when the relations were renewed in 1972. So, I did that. They were my recommendations that led to that. I brought Rogers to Sana'a. I was first in Yemen in 1966 till 1967 and then as the second man in the Embassy from 1975 till 1978. In 1979-80 I was in the Pentagon where it has a small office for the Department of State and I was responsible for that office when we shipped the arms to Sana'a and now again with 'Ali 'Abd Allah Saleh I am in charge of the Arabian Peninsula affairs.

Q. How do you view the relations from that time?

A. Well, as you know the most important initiatives of the US towards Yemen were in 1979 and 1980. When the South invaded. After the death of al-Hamdi and al-Ghashmi, the army in the North fell apart. There were very few men, they were not completely under control and training was very weak. It looked to us that the South which was in a strong period was trying with Soviet help to push over the new government. To take it over. And the Saudis were also concerned. We did more for Yemen in those months than ever before. When the war started, I was working at that time in the Pentagon. I was more senior in rank than an ambassador. I was a State Department person working over there, advising the Secretary of Defence. There was some request from Yemenis for help, but most from Saudis and also

from other Gulf states. Do something. And we did.

Q. You mean politically?

A. You think so! Military and political. We sent the **Constellation**. We sent planes over Aden so they won't make any mistake over our seriousness. And we sent a message to the head of the Soviet Union privately, warning them that we saw no cause, justification, for problems from the South to the Arabian Peninsula. It was not a threat, but it was very unusual to send a message like this.... We also went into the UN. We coordinated with the Arab League. We shipped weapons, advisors very quickly. We supplied intelligence about who was where. It was a very large package of diplomatic and military efforts, and it succeeded.

Q. On the arms, was there one package or two after the US promised aid in 1976?

A. There was only one package. It was the \$400 million package or less. I want you to understand that we also airlifted tanks in 1979. This was so amazing. We had never ever lifted tanks to anywhere before. One tank one aeroplane. That was a symbol but an important symbol of what we were preparing to do if the situation got worse.

The package of arms was worked out with Saudi Arabia because they paid and because lots of support came from Saudi Arabia. It's a very complicated package. It's better if I say it was a very successful package. After the

war the Soviets got very worried because they had done nothing to help the North only the South.

Q. They supplied the YAR with arms they asked for in late 1979?

A. They felt they were in danger of losing their position in the North, so they offered a very big arms package to Yemen.

Q. Because the Americans didn't?

A. Yes. And the Yemenis accepted, but the Soviets gave more weapons and more aid to the South than the North, and provided more advisors until 1986. In 1986, 1987, 1988 the curves cross. Now the Soviets provide more to the North than to the South. So this is a switch on their part, because the South is a failure - it failed completely.

Appendix VI

Author's interview with Ambassador Muhsin al-'Aini

First YAR Foreign Minister, Prime Minister in 1972, and YAR Ambassador to the US in January 1990.

Washington DC, 7 February 1990

Q. Your Excellency was in Baghdad when the revolution took place in Sana'a and when you were appointed as the first YAR Foreign Minister; what were your first diplomatic moves to secure international recognition of the new-born Republic?

A. I flew at once to Cairo where I met President Nasser. During this visit to Cairo I met ambassadors of the UK, the US and Italy. The Yemeni Charge d'Affaires attended these meetings.

Q. What was your argument to the American ambassador to the UAR?

A. I explained to him the story of the Revolution, its motives, its objectives and our hopes in Yemen that the superpowers would welcome the change and hence recognise the Republican regime. Ambassador John Badeau's reply was "We are looking into the matter

and we will inform our government of your wish."

Q. When you returned to Sana'a following this visit did Your Excellency initiate any contacts with the US Charge d'Affaires in the country?

A. I only stayed one day, subsequently I travelled to the United Nations. As you know the annual meeting of the UN starts in the second week of September and the Royalist delegation was occupying Yemen's seat as on the 17th of the month. It was necessary, therefore, to move quickly to represent the Republic. I arrived there to face this problem especially since the Committee of Credentials discusses the papers on the last few days of the session to deliver its report recommendations to the General Assembly in the last session. That's why everything continued to be the same till the end of the session. So we used the time to present our cause outside the hall where we succeeded in getting a lot of Recognition. President Ahmad ben Bella helped us. And at the end of the session the US who recognised us on the 19th of December helped us to regain the seat of Yemen. There were many Latin American countries who were neutral, but when the US recognised the Republic they followed in its path. During the last session we took over Yemen's seat. Despite its strong connection with Saudi Arabia, the US stand was unforgettable compared to France or Britain who recognised us only in 1970. We consider this American stance very symbolic in the history of YAR-USA relations.

Q. While waiting to replace the Royalist delegation, did you initiate any special contacts with

some American officials to explain further the Yemeni cause?

A. Before recognition I made great efforts to contact the Department of State. I succeeded in meeting Mr Talcott Seelye who was in charge of Arabian Peninsula affairs. But we met in a restaurant which used to be in the place where the Watergate complex now is, because they wouldn't do that officially before recognition. I used the opportunity of being in the UN to take this initiative. In this unofficial meeting, I tried to convince him that if the US wants stability in the Arabian Peninsula, that would be achieved through recognising the Yemen Arab Republic and that Saudi Arabia and Great Britain should do the same thing. "That's the only way to avoid the escalation of struggle, dispute and the Egyptian presence", I argued. I also told Seelye: "If the complaint is because of the Egyptian troops in the Yemen which was surrounded by enemies from south and north, it is natural that the YAR will do anything to protect itself and would seek help from any source". That's why the Americans found that withholding their recognition would force Sana'a to seek the help of any power. At the UN in early December, I also used the opportunity to meet the American ambassador where I pleaded the Yemeni people's cause.

Q. Following the American recognition in 1962, why does Your Excellency think we didn't benefit more from relations with the United States?

Q. That period was very difficult, and the Saudi attack was strong. The Egyptian forces' operations in the country were at their maximum, and hence Cairo was the real ruler. Our

government did not want to lose the support of Egypt naturally while the relations between Cairo and Washington were strained. There was a severe attack by President Nasser - "yeshrabu min mayyatalbahr" (Let them drink water from the sea.)

Q. But as we know the Egyptians worked hard in the beginning to secure American recognition for the new-born Yemeni Republic?

A. Recognition is one thing and Egypt-US relations are something else, despite the fact that Kennedy was trying to improve these relations.

Q. Kennedy supplied lots of arms to Saudi Arabia immediately following the recognition?

A. Of course that was after the raids of the Egyptian air force that bombed some of its areas, when it came under real threat. The US even sent its planes for display over Djiddah. The most important thing was Saudi Arabia because of US interests there on one hand and Egypt and the Arab revolution on the other. American recognition aimed essentially at encircling the problem, to be part of the solution. They tried to solve the problem through Egyptian withdrawal and Saudi withholding their support to the royalists.

Q. But the Saudis refused to accept the American mediation.

A. We didn't make use of the American recognition, because of the very high tension that

characterised the area in that period. There was a war between the royalists and the Saudis supported by the US on one side and Sana'a, Egypt and the Soviet Union on the other. In 1967 the relations were severed because of the Ta'iz incident, and then they were cut completely between the US and the Arab world following the Arab-Israeli war. Relations were only reestablished in 1972. At that time I was hesitant to undertake any action in

this direction because the other Arab countries were all boycotting the US. I was thinking: how can we alone resume these relations? The others in the Yemeni government were very enthusiastic to restore relations with the US especially now that relations with Aden were deteriorating. I was always also asking myself: what is the importance of Yemen to the US?

There were those who used to say America will support us and give us a lot because our economy is in very bad state, but I told them the US won't do anything. I still remember that the late Muhammad Nu'man and Mr. Ahmad Nu'man his father used to tell President al-Iryani: "When the relations are restored our government would get \$30 million." They even decided the amount. My reply was "If you get a million Buksha (cent) then I know nothing in politics. You're wrong." In the mean time the Italian Ambassador who was in charge of the American interests in the country paid the President a visit and told Kadi al-Iryani "If you restore relations, you will get lots of aid". A few days later I received three letters: from the national assembly, from the army and from President al-Iryani. All three letters urged me to restore relations. I called a Cabinet to meet. I explained the situation to them. I told them, "I

am not anti-American. America is represented by the Italian Embassy and, therefore, we don't need to be in a hurry." But the Cabinet insisted on re-establishing diplomatic relations with the US. Then I told them to give an excuse to face the fellow Arabs with.

At that time the Secretary of State of the US was visiting Australia, so I told the Italian Ambassador that he could also visit Sana'a." "You have no formal relations", he replied. But I convinced him on the basis that he had already visited China which did not have formal relations with the US.

Rogers visited Sana'a and at a dinner party we announced the re-establishment of relations. They didn't give us anything. I summoned the Saudi Ambassador and told him, "I can say that those who advised the Yemeni government to restore relations in return for aid have mocked at us." However, I was aware that superpowers do not pay in return for restoring relations.

But afterwards, we benefited from these relations despite the fact no direct aid was received. The International Monetary Fund, the International Food Program and other international institutions for which the US provides most of the finances provided our country with lots of aid. The fact is that following his visit to Sana'a, Mr. Rogers directed letters of recommendation to these institutions asking for help to Yemen, and these letters opened the way for the flow of international aid.

Q. Were there any American conditions for the restoration of relations, or promises?

A. The American government didn't promise anything. Promises came from others. And from my side I was aware that to get paid for restoring relations with a big country is degrading for the small country. As if they had paid for these relations.

Q. What in your view was the direct outcome of the restoration of relations with the US?

A. First: relations returned to normal as they should be. Second: aid came through international institutions.

Q. Dr al-Iryani sees that the American aid following 1972 as technical help, not, as it used to be before the severance of the relations, as development assistance?

A. This became the character of US assistance to the developing countries. This is their decision. We need technical assistance. When Bush visited Sana'a in 1986 I accompanied him on his visit to ^{the YALI} school, and when we left the Institute I whispered to him: "Your Excellency, we didn't have anything else to invite the US Vice-President to visit except this school. The Soviet Union, East and West Germany, China all had big projects in the country like roads, hospitals, airports, harbours, schools, a university etc." When his visit was over I suggested that Washington assist our country with a big project. But their reply was, "This is not US policy. Our concern is to help your country in building the cadres of development

through training, scholarships, and other basic things like water, health and agricultural projects. This is the policy of the US."

Q. As far as I can remember, Your Excellency, the restoration of Sana'a-Washington relations was followed by tension between the two parts of Yemen.

A. In the South there were many bad thoughts about us none of which were true. There never has been a very clear and direct foreign policy like that of the YAR. We restored relations with Saudi Arabia and they said it's a conspiracy. We restored our relations with the US, they interpreted it the same way. On the other hand, the Saudis see any attempt for reunification with the South as a conspiracy against them. And the fact is that when we negotiate with the Russians we are not anti-Americans and when we meet our fellow Southerners we are not anti-Saudis. All we say publicly is the truth, the whole truth. As you know our institutions are very simple. No secret can continue to be unrevealed. There is no invisible government in the YAR.

Q. Does Your Excellency consider that our relations with US witnessed a turning point as result of the American arms package of 1979?

A. It was only one event, involving one package of about \$400 million. Parts of the same package are still held up till now. There was nothing else before 1979 despite many promises.

Part of the package was delivered during the war and the other part was abandoned by Saudi Arabia when the war was over. There is still about \$30 million frozen by the Saudis. When the President enquired about the \$30 million during his visit, he was told Riyadh was freezing it. He argued: "But this is ours. We need to buy spare parts with the remaining amount." But the American reply was, "This was the decision of the financiers." Later on the military aid consisted of the maintenance of the F5 planes and the training of some officers.

Q. What about economic assistance. Do you think it will develop?

A. Unfortunately, the US is in a situation that doesn't enable her to give more assistance. The US is now cutting its aid to many countries. What we achieved during the President's visit was that we succeeded in maintaining the same level of aid and with a very slight increase.

Q. \$45 million?

A. Around that amount.

Q. Do you think a reunited Yemen is more important to the US?

A. The position on reunification is not yet clear. There are reservations from the side of Saudi Arabia and Oman; they suspect a United Yemen. From their side, the Americans are sceptical.

Q. 'Abd Allah al-Ashtal, the PDRY representative in the UN, has said to me that the American view is that the reunification is a Yemeni matter.

A. This is the official stand. All foreign countries are sceptical not only concerning unification but regarding everything in the area. I told a foreign Ambassador, "All borders in the Arab world are artificial."

Q. Does Your Excellency think that the visit of the President to the US in January 1990 is significant? I mean, does it mark the end of the Saudi impact on US-Saudi relations?

A. I think that Bush's visit to Sana'a marked the beginning of direct relations. He emphasized that theme in Sana'a very clearly in his statements. But I say every country, when it decides its foreign policy with a foreign country puts into consideration its relations with the other partners, the other countries of the area.

Appendix VII

Author's interview with Dr 'Abdul-Karim al-Iryani

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the YAR

Sana'a, September 1988.

Q. How are the relations of the YAR with the USA developing at present?

A. Yemen's relations with the United States are dynamic and not static as is the case with all countries. Therefore relations are developing with Washington and the other capitals with whom we conduct relations.

Q. Can we say that our relations with the United States are better now than they used to be?

A. They went through some ruptures. A rupture between 26 September 1962 and 19 December 1962 when American recognition took place. Another rupture from April 1967 to July 1, 1972. Our relations with the US were restored with some harmful legacies. Even one aeroplane or two was retained. But, anyhow, it was restored according to mutual interest. They were restored following a problem and as in the case with West Germany we overcame that problem.

In the political context I can say YAR-USA relations witness continuous development and growth. But there is always something that constraints these relations, namely U.S.-Arab relations in general, and that is why our leadership says to them at every opportunity: "we welcome the growth in our mutual relations but your stance in the Palestinian cause has and would continue to hinder US relations with Arab nations." For example the US expresses its annoyance at media campaigns against US policies whether from the side of Yemen or of other Arab countries. And we reply "You must listen to what we say concerning the issue of Palestine. What you listen to in whispers from others you listen to publicly from the Yemen because we have only one, clear, policy. We don't have a secret one. Our policy is publicly stated." So I say that, though bilateral relations are good, I believe the US-Israel connection constrains US relations with the Arab nations.

It is true that our media campaign against the US is very strong because their accusations concerning Iraq hurt us. They bear responsibility for their positions. US policy opens fire on itself. It is clear that Israel involves the United States in such policies against the Arabs.

Q. On the economic cooperation with the US. Do You see, Your Excellency, that the oil discovery by an American company developed direct YAR-US relations?

A. As a researcher you can say it is impossible that US interest in the YAR before and after the oil discovery could be the same. No. American interest after the oil discovery changed. The logical thing is to say that Yemen is more careful to maintain these relations at present

than before. That is very logical.

Q. What about US assistance and trade between the two states?

A. There are obstructions that stand in the way of the development of trade between the US and the YAR. Trade has improved during the last few years not because Yemen sought it but because the US facilitated trade especially in the agricultural field. Before it was weak due to some constraints, not as a result of a political decision. Certainly the chances for the US are good as long as there are facilitations, but the distance constraint, is still great. That is, the neighbouring countries of East Asia provide us with most of the substitute commodities and goods at cheaper prices. Apart from oil the trade balance, I expect, would continue to be far below our balance with East Asia.

Q. And in terms of US assistance to our country?

A. We can consider US assistance as being in the form of technical assistance up till now. It is not development assistance in the sense that it is structural or industrial. The USAID agencies see that Yemen only needs technical assistance and not development assistance. That doesn't mean in any way that the US assistance is not of value to us. But the Yemeni people does not see it as being of value. The Yemeni people see the material value of the German and Dutch assistance more than they see in the American assistance, because the Dutch and the German assistance includes development as well as technical assistance. And this is

within the context of the evaluation of these packages of aid and though the US aid program reaches nearly to \$45 million, very much more than Germany's and Holland's when we exchange the Mark or the Guilder totals to US Dollars. If you asked any of the Yemenis who helps your country more they will say Germany and Holland. Concerning this we called their attention many times to the fact that we consider the training assistance and training very important. But you must bear in mind, I said this even when I was the Chairman of the Central Planning Organization, that the Yemeni public would never appreciate this assistance unless you connect it to some development assistance.

Until now this advice has gone unheeded. As a researcher you can undertake a questionnaire and ask the public who of the three states helps the YAR more despite the fact that the US dollars are more. We told them choose two or three projects. I told them personally, "You are in a very disadvantageous situation now coming with technical assistance alone", because the Yemeni people did not know development assistance until you undertook the Kennedy Water Project in Ta'iz and the Makha-Ta'iz-Sana'a road, because nobody did anything like that in Yemen before. The Kennedy project was simple but in the eyes of the people was great. Many Yemenis were trained and worked and got salaries from that project and this was reflected in the standard of living of many families. And the same thing came from the road project. That was a historical development. When I founded the Tihama project I remember that I could not find any technicians except those who were trained by the US Development Agency who worked in these two projects in surveying, mapping and topography. By the way, I am still dealing with some of those at present. In today's terms that number of

technicians is nothing, but in their time that was great. They have created in the minds of the people the idea that when America comes into the Yemen there will exist projects, training and new jobs, but after the rupture of 1967-67 the US returned to the Yemen with a new philosophy.

I can say that the Yemeni government certainly appreciates US assistance, but this assistance does not get the same appreciation from the Yemeni public. It does not speak and express itself.

Appendix VIII

Author's interview with Thomas E Meurer

Senior Vice President/Director

Hunt Consolidated, Inc.

London, 22 May 1990

Q. I would appreciate, Mr Meurer, if you could tell me the story of Hunt in Yemen from the beginning.

A. We first were interested in Yemen in 1980, following the visits of an independent Syrian geophysicist, Mou'djib Al-Malazi, who contacted our office in London and expressed his belief that there might be some oil in your country. Dr Ian Maycock and I visited Sana'a in January 1981, and Mr al-Malazi accompanied us. We met many Yemeni officials. The subject of the meetings was that the aeromagnetic survey, which was undertaken by the Yemen government, might indicate the existence of sedimentary basins in the country. After three days of waiting for official permission to visit Marib-al-Djawf area Dr Mycock, the Director of the London office, Mr al-Malazi and I, decided to visit the nearby mountains to see what kind of rocks were available and what age the rocks appeared to be. In this area we were caught by the army and sent to jail in Sana'a, because we were not carrying our passports.

We spent most of the day under arrest. Mr Al-Malazi explained to the officer that we were not spies or criminals but representatives of an oil company. After contacting with the Yemeni authorities (YOMINCO), we were released. On the next day, Mr. Isma'il Musa from the Yemen Oil Corporation accompanied us to the area where we were able to look over the area and check the age of the rocks. The visit also offered me a chance to talk to some other expatriates who were doing business in Yemen. We had a very positive and encouraging meeting with YOMINCO officials. As a result of this visit, Hunt Oil Company decided to negotiate a contract. This was done in September 1981. We "spudded" our first well in January 1984 and it was a discovery which is very unusual. An interesting note is that the discovery was on July fourth of that year, which is the American independence day and a national holiday in America.

When you drill for oil and you find oil, you do not know whether the quantity is commercial or not. You must drill many wells in order to determine if you have enough oil to finance the infrastructure. On September 26, 1985, with number 11 well, we realised that we had 300 million barrels of reserve, which was enough to go forward. That was on your revolutionary day. Another piece of symbolism was that it was May of 1984, when Mr. Hunt and I took a cab from the Sana'a airport and the driver told Mr. Hunt, "You're going to find oil, because it is raining since morning today and when it rains in the morning, it means good luck."

Appendix IX

Ambassador William Stoltzfus

US Charge d’Affaires in MKOY 1959-1961

London, 1 June 1990.

Q. Your Excellency was the first US charge in my country?

A. Before me there was a man called Charles Fergusson who stayed only for few months.

Q. Do you remember when you arrived in Ta’iz as US Charge?

A. I think in June.

Q. Before 1959 there was no US legation and I assumed you were the first.

A. Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Yemen and the US, our Minister in Saudi Arabia was also Minister to Yemen. Some time later the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia became the Minister to Yemen, Mr. Parker T. Hart, who visited the Imam in 1960.

Q. In your view, what was the importance of the US legation in the Yemen as of 1959?

A. To implement the Eisenhower Doctrine. This doctrine aimed at providing assistance to those countries which need such assistance in order to keep them neutral if not pro-Western

countries. And Yemen at that time had active Chinese and Soviet missions. Eisenhower Doctrine implementation in Yemen meant that we should counter the Soviets and the Chinese which were interested in Bab al-Mandab and southwest Asia.

Q. Were the means to implement the doctrine some USAID projects?

A. Yes. USAID started in that year, a water project in the city of Ta'iz, smoothed the road between Ta'iz and Makha before starting the road project of Makha-Ta'iz-Sana'a and an agricultural project in Wadi Zabid.

Q. Do you have any idea why the Imam approved your undertaking such projects in Ta'iz and not in the capital or the northern areas?

A. Ta'iz was Imam Ahmad's diplomatic capital. In Ta'iz there were the British, the Americans, the Italians, the West Germans and the Soviets. He used to spend most of his time in al-Sukhnah. He used to feel more secure there than Sana'a where his father was assassinated by the northern tribes. We chose Ta'iz as a stage for our projects, because we wanted the Imam to see what we were doing. He never trusted foreigners. If we did something in the north he would feel that we were supporting his enemy. He never trusted these tribes because they used to get Saudi money.

Q. So the aid was political?

A. Yes aid is political.

Q. You said Imam Ahmad never trusted foreigners. Do you mean all foreigners?

A. Well, the Chinese were the least mistrusted foreign power in the country.

Q. What were the main events in bilateral relations during your two years in Yemen?

A. First of all our relations were good for we proved to be helpful to the country. In 1959 and 1960 the drought and fire created lot of problems to the Hudaidah province and its surroundings. Therefore, an American warship, which was the first warship to enter the city harbour the Soviets had built, was able to provide emergency assistance to the Yemeni people.

On the other hand, my wife started the first regular school in the city of Ta'iz for the children of the foreign diplomats. The children of the Foreign Minister Abutaleb and of the Chief of the Police joined this school. Imam Ahmad called me to see him in Sukhnah because of the school and I was able to convince him that it would not be against him and so he accepted it. I promised him that my wife alone would be doing the teaching and that is why he accepted it.

Q. Do you feel that the Eisenhower Doctrine achieved its objectives in Yemen during your

two years in the country?

A. Yes. The primary objective was to have a presence there and not to leave it for others. The second objective was to satisfy the Saudis. The Saudis were concerned about the situation in Yemen and were glad that we were there. In fact the Saudi role in Yemen was limited because, I think, the Imam had never trusted the Saudis who were then influencing his northern tribes by paying them money.

Q. I heard from some of your colleagues that you had accompanied President Eisenhower's envoy who had waited to see the Imam in 1957. Is it true that the envoy waited three days to meet the Imam who was asleep?

A. I don't think that he waited that long.

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