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Introduction

There was no significant change in YARG relations with Communist countries in the past year. Relations with the USSR remained strained due to heavy Soviet arms shipments to Southern Yemen (PDRY) and concomitant refusal to provide spare parts and replacements for the YAR's badly deteriorated Soviet-origin arm inventory. The replacement of pro-Ba'athi Prime Minister Muhsin al-Ayni by Saudi supported Abdulllah al-Hajri in January 1973 deprived the Russians of a major channel of influence. Russian aid remains at a low level, consisting mainly of completing military and economic aid spheres, Soviet policy in Yemen seems to be designed to provide the minimum needed to safeguard its earlier heavy investment, while waiting for the appearance of a more sympathetic YARG and devoting the major part of its attention to Southern Yemen with its strategic location at the Bab-el-Mandeb straits. The Soviet Union is seconded in this policy by its Eastern European allies who maintain a presence in Yemen, particularly East Germany.

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As has been true for a number of years, the People's Republic of China enjoys considerably more popularity in the YAR. Its present major capital project, construction of an asphalted road from Sanaa to Sa'ada, with a long spur from Amran to Hajja, will obviously transform the economy of northcentral Yemen just as previous Chinese, American, and Russian roads have transformed other areas of the country. Although the Chinese are recognized as having a strong position in Southern Yemen, there is no strong disparity between their effort in the two Yemens as is the case with Soviet assistance. Moreover, the Chinese presence in the YAR is quiet and businesslike and there is respect for the solid work accomplished in their projects.

I. Appraisal of Political-Economic Relations

Soviet Union

The current period of Soviet relations with Yemen began with the first extension of Soviet aid to the Imamate in 1956 and continued with the establishment of the Republic in 1962 through the withdrawal of Egyptian forces in the fall of 1967 and the subsequent largescale Soviet military assistance in late 1967-early 1968 which enabled Republican forces to turn back a massive Yemeni Royalist attempt to retake Sanaa and the surrounding populated areas. However, even when Russian military assistance was most vital to the YAR (late 1967) there was considerable Yemeni irritation at Soviet heavy-handedness, which included demands by the Russian Ambassador that he outrank all other Ambassadors as a kind of Marxist papal nuncio and that he have the right to call on President Iryani at any time, with or without an appointment.

Since 1970, Russian military assistance has stopped and consequently the YAR inventory of obsolete and ill-maintained Russian military hardware has steadily deteriorated into immovable junk in the absence of replacements or spare parts. This has led to mounting anger on the part of Yemeni military leaders who feel increasingly apprehensive over the rapid buildup of Soviet-supplied PDRY armed forces. These leaders also realize that the YAR's military shortcomings are well-known to PDRY through the hundred or so Soviet military technicians and advisors and a number of Soviet-trained YAR company and field grade officers sympathetic to the PDRY regime. As a

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consequence, the YAR military has expressed a desire to turn to western sources of arms, in part through Saudi financing, in the past year. The Soviets, who are undoubtedly aware of this desire, have in recent months reportedly agreed to provide a small amount of badly needed spare parts and some helicopters. This response indicates to us a desire to provide the minimum input needed to maintain Soviet predominance in the military aid sphere. The reported arrival in Sanaa on November 10 of about 30 Soviet heavy military trucks may represent this new policy of minimal responsiveness.

On the economic aid side, the Soviet Union is still working on a list of projects agreed upon with ex-President Sallal in 1964. Many of these projects have been announced with fanfare by the Russians so many times that they have become a source of derision. At present the Soviets are adding a second stage to the Bajil cement plant which was completed in 1973 approximately 5-6 years overdue, but have abandoned their promise of constructing a fish processing plant and cannery in Hodeida. Instead the Soviet Union reportedly has agreed in principle to rehabilitate Hodeida port (dredging, increased berthing, and lights for nighttime navigation of channel); a team was sent to survey the port last spring. A number of Soviet doctors are still working the hospitals of the three major cities, where they are providing gratefully received medical help, although the level of medical standards and sanitation are far below what most other countries would consider acceptable.

The Soviet Union responded to YAR appeals for wheat to alleviate famine by promising to provide 3500 metric tons in 1973. A substantial portion, if not all, of this wheat arrived in the late summer.

At the diplomatic level Soviet relations with the YAR have been burdened by bungling and strongly disliked Ambassadors, the selection of which is perhaps the best indicator of the low priority the Soviet Union has accorded Yemen in recent years. Mirzo Rakhmatov, who served in Sanaa from September 1966 to August 1972 was an object of derision even among his own staff for his overbearing and insensitive treatment of Yemeni officials, particularly in his unwelcome attempts to pressure the YARG to repay its overdue loan obligations.

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Vasili Kornev has continued his predecessor's tradition and is noted chiefly for his rude manners, stupendous consumption of vodka, and his frequent and boring outdoor receptions at which senior YAR guests at the head table have fallen in the habits of trading in-group jokes in rapid Arabic at the expense of their hosts.

Although the Soviets continue to benefit from the presence of a few friends at senior levels in the YAR, such as Deputy Prime Minister for Internal Affairs Hasan Makki, the departure of Muhsin al-Ayni as Prime Minister and his replacement by the Saudi-supported conservative Abdullah al-Hajri in January 1973 deprived them of a major channel of influence. Since that time numerous pro-Ba'athi al-Ayni supporters in the government have been eliminated or neutralized.

Despite present low state of Soviet-Yemeni relations, we doubt if these will deteriorate much further (they could not and continue), because of two considerations of prime importance to the YARG. First, it does not want to foreclose any options on possible future foreign aid. The Soviets are providing some aid, however reduced, and will probably do so in the future to maintain a position in Yemen in which they have already invested much money and effort. Secondly, the YARG views non-alignment as a form of insurance policy which will keep it out of international disputes and enable it to pursue its real interest of receiving assistance from all potential donors. However, unless the Soviet Union increases substantially its aid to the YAR and reduces its military aid to PDRY, we do not see any prospects for YAR-USSR relations to improve significantly in the near future.

People's Republic of China
Chinese aid, like the Russian's, dates back to the days of the Imamate, but unlike Russian aid it was never tied to Egyptian support of the Sallal regime and has been limited to solid development projects. The Hodeida-Sanaa road and the Sanaa textile factory are successful capital projects for which even western-oriented Yemeni leaders express gratitude. The Sanaa-Sa'ada road and its Amran-Hajja spur both under construction, are also gratefully regarded by the Yemenis.

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The main road to Sanaa is now over sixty percent paved to about twenty kilometers beyond the town of Huth. Chinese medical teams are also operating on a modest scale as in past years.

As previously reported, the PRC granted the YAR a loan of 8.5 million sterling in August 1972 during former Prime Minister Ayni's visit to Peking. The loan is interest-free with repayment in twenty years after a grace period of ten years. To the Embassy's knowledge, the only obligation on this loan to date is for a new hospital in Taiz, construction of which began with the laying of its cornerstone in September 1973. Approximately twenty Chinese technicians are engaged in the project.

Chinese relations with the YAR remained good, although not close in the past year. Chinese diplomats and technicians keep very much to themselves and have little contact with Yemenis outside of their work. The Chinese reputation in Yemen rests on good performance in their economic assistance and the view of China as a sober hard-working country which supports the Arab cause, but does not have any particular axe to grind in internal Yemeni affairs.

Eastern Europe

The Eastern European presence in Yemen has in past years meant largely East Germany (Czechoslovakia also has a small Embassy), which in 1973 upgraded its representation in the Yemen from a Consulate General to an Embassy when the YAR recognized the GDR immediately after the two German states signed their Basic Treaty. The importance of the East German aid presence has declined, however, particularly with the loss in August 1973 of the new intra-city telephone expansion project to the West German firm Siemens. The East Germans continue to maintain the inter-city link (Taiz-Sanaa-Hodeida) but their contract to run the telephone maintenance school in Sanaa will expire this year and reportedly will not be renewed. The East German experimental farm in the Tihama coastal plain has been sharply reduced in staff.

The main function of the GDR Embassy in Sanaa seems to be to support the Russian Embassy. Senior YAR leaders strongly

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supported the awarding of the new telephone contract to Siemens due to their belief that all telephones are bugged by the East Germans and conversations reported to the Soviets. The present GDR Ambassador, who also served in Sanaa as Consul General in 1966-67, is viewed by his West German colleague as a party workhorse turned out to pasture.

II Local Communist Party Membership

Local membership remains insignificant. Local Marxist extremists prefer to work under the various clandestine party organizations (Yemeni Labor Party, Yemeni Youth Party, etc.) which are extensions of the PDRY National Front organization. While indistinguishable from Communists, except in the relative poverty of their ideology, extremists find it more appealing to associate themselves with the NF groups which can claim to be Yemeni and Arab nationalist.

III Diplomatic, Consular and Trade Relations

Albania	-	NRA ^a	E ^b	E ^c	E	NRA	E ^d
Bulgaria							
CPR							
Cuba							
Czechoslovakia							
East Germany							
Hungary							
Mongolia							
North Korea							
North Vietnam							
Poland							
Rumania							
USSR							

- All non-resident Ambassadors are located in Cairo
- The CPR has a branch office in Taiz
- Czechoslovakia has also a non-resident Ambassador in Cairo in addition to its Sanaa Embassy headed by a Charge d'Affaires
- The Soviet Union has consulates in Taiz and Hodeida

IV A Information and Cultural Activities Other Than Exchanges

The Soviet Union maintains a relatively low key but wide-ranging cultural and information program in Yemen. Its two cultural centers in Sanaa and Taiz both contain modest libraries, offer Russian language classes and regular film showings, and occasionally sponsor lectures or social evenings. The Russian Embassy distributes Arabic-language magazines which are also on sale at a few book stores. It concentrates

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its informational efforts on secondary and post-secondary students, and on young professionals and semi-professionals. Sanaa Higher College has under consideration a Soviet Embassy offer of a Russian language teacher, but has not yet acted upon it.

Several times weekly, Novosti news agency releases, principally on Russian economic and cultural developments, appear in the Yemeni press. Several copy editors are known to supplement their salaries with donations from the Russian Embassy, and the Yemeni press is marginally more favorable towards the Soviet Union than either the Yemeni government or the educated man in the street. The Yemeni press, however, is by no means an outright Soviet tool. The government-controlled radio picks up several news items per week on the Soviet Union from other regional broadcasting services, but for the most part these bear no trace of being direct Soviet "plants". (Much radio material in fact is supplied by Saudi Arabia.)

The Chinese informational program is much more circumscribed than the Russian, being limited essentially to the assignment of Chinese sports instructors to youth clubs, and to the distribution of Arabic language magazines. In addition, the Chinese-run technical school in Sanaa imparts a modicum of Mao thoughts to its intermediate and secondary level students, along with technical know-how. The Chinese trade fair, held in Sanaa this summer, was as much an informational as a commercial show. Occasionally a PRC-related piece appears in the Yemeni press, but these are usually limited to events in which Yemen has a direct interest, such as significant official visits or aid programs. In keeping with its overall image as a nation of workers, the Chinese Embassy seems to concentrate its informational activities on young members of Yemen's working class who have completed an intermediate education.

IV B Cultural and Educational Exchanges

Several high-level Yemeni delegations visited the Soviet Union this year. In the spring, a military delegation headed by Commander in Chief Col. Muhammad al-Iryani went to Russia on an orientation and shopping tour, but apparently returned without the military hardware and spare parts they desired.

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(See Part I) Consultative Assembly President Shaikh Abdullah bin Husain al-Ahmar headed a parliamentary delegation on a VIP tour of Russia during the month of August; a religious delegation, led by Yemen's Mufti Qadi Ahmad Zubara attended an Islamic Conference in Tashkent. A group of second-echelon Yemeni government leaders were delegates at the World Peace Conference in Moscow in October. In return the Soviet Union sent a senior military delegation to attend Yemen's Revolution Day celebrations in September and a group of Supreme Soviet members to Sanaa in May 1973.

The Soviet Embassy offers approximately eighty-five university level scholarships to Yemeni students each year, which are awarded to candidates selected by the Ministry of Education. Although the Yemeni government can ill afford to turn down any scholarship assistance, it does not hold the Soviet scholarships to high esteem. Since even technical education in Russia is heavily larded with political indoctrination, the Ministry of Education generally assigns less than the brightest students to Russian universities. In a few instances the Soviet Embassy apparently has short-circuited the Ministry of Education and awarded scholarships directly to its proteges as political rewards.

There have been no significant visits by Yemeni officials to the People's Republic of China since the visit by then Prime Minister Muhsin al-Ayni in August 1972. The Chinese Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade visited Yemen this summer to open the Chinese Trade Fair. The Chinese Embassy has not operated a university scholarship program for Yemeni students, but it has been reliably reported that it will offer a handful of scholarships next year. It has, however, offered technical scholarships at the secondary level for a number of years.

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