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By CM NARA Date 6-12-03

OFFICE OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

1972 OCT 26 PM 4 58

DATE: Oct. 18, 1972
SPYFLO-PBR

1972-10-18, (Yemen), US, South

SUBJECT: Situation in Yemen

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Ahmad Zabarah, Charge d'Affaires a.i., Embassy
of the Yemen Arab RepublicThe Honorable Rodger P. Davies, Deputy Assistant
Secretary, NEAThe Honorable Alfred L. Atherton, Deputy Assistant
Secretary, NEAThe Honorable William R. Crawford, Ambassador-designate
to the Yemen Arab Republic

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

DISTRIBUTION: NEA AmEmbassy Jidda
NEA/ARP Sanaa
INR/DDR/RNA /NR-8

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Mr. Zabarah said he had been asked to call on the Department to convey information on the present situation between the YAR and the PDRY. He had that morning received a long cable from Sanaa giving a situation report. He said that the town of Qataba was still under fire by PDRY forces which were continuing to occupy YAR border areas overlooking the city. PDRY also had a strong propaganda campaign underway against the YAR. This aggressive PDRY stance was being motivated by the huge assistance it was receiving from the Soviets. Although both Yemens had agreed to Arab League Conciliation Committee's mediation and to the points contained in the October 13 communique issued by the Conciliation Committee (which called for a cease fire and mutual withdrawal of military forces from the border), PDRY was continuing to attack. Mr. Zabarah said that the Yemen was looking to the US for moral assistance and asked if there was anything the US could do to calm down the Adenis. He wondered if the US could ask the British and French, who have relations with PDRY, to play a role.

Mr. Davies observed that continued fighting between the two Yemens was not in the interest of either side. Regional efforts

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(Drafting Office and Officer)

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to settle the problem, such as the Arab League Conciliation Committee, seemed to be the best way of proceeding. We believed the PDRY would find it difficult to justify a violation of the cease fire before Arab public opinion and we hoped these conciliation efforts would succeed. Mr. Dickman mentioned he had heard both sides were scheduled to meet in Cairo on October 21 under Arab League auspices to discuss the border issue and that Prime Ministers from both countries might attend.

Mr. Zabarah confirmed the meeting of the 21st but doubted it would be attended by the Prime Ministers. The last time this had been done, some three months ago, Prime Minister al-Ayni had gone to Cairo but no one from PDRY had any authority to negotiate. Noting that all the members of the Arab League Conciliation Committee had left Yemen, except its chairman, Salim al Yafi, he did not think its efforts would succeed. Moreover, instead of withdrawing 10 kilometers from the border, PDRY forces were now concentrating in the area of As Suggayah (near Bab al Mandeb).

Mr. Davies noted that the US does not have any representation in PDRY. Given the call for a high-level meeting of representatives from the YAR and PDRY in Cairo, this appeared to be an effective way to assure continued mediation. The US had very little information on what was going on in the border areas but we believed attempts to settle the issue peacefully within a regional context was the most desirable and practical course. Meanwhile, Mr. Davies promised to continue to keep in touch with Zabarah over the situation in Yemen.

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