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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 Abdullah 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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