

Authority NND 969049

XDIS

By CM NARA Date 6-12-03

Memorandum

TO : NEA - Mr. Sisco

THRU: NEA - Mr. Davies

FROM : NEA/ARP - Richard W. Murphy

SUBJECT: Discussion with Ambassador Thatcher re Saudi Interest in Overthrowing Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) - BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

1971-1-25, Iyani, Saudi, ~~Plot~~ Plot

You told Rodger and me just prior to our departure last week that you would like a further reading from Nick Thatcher about Saudi planning to overthrow the Government of PDRY and any suggestions he might have on what our response should be.

I discussed this with the Ambassador January 19 in Riyadh. I told him we had called for a Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) on the South Yemen situation which we hoped to have completed within three weeks. (The Agency has promised it by mid-February. I asked what he thought we should say to the Saudis at this point. He said he felt the Saudis were in no rush for our answer and we could delay it. He added that he thought personally when we answered we should at least get on the record our assessment of the likely Soviet reaction to any serious threat which Saudi Arabia might mount against PDRY. He commented that the King and his advisors consider themselves much better judges than we of PDRY's situation and its capabilities to resist stepped-up efforts at its overthrow. However, our expertise on the Soviets is something the Saudis cannot even claim to match. Thus he felt any answer we finally do make should feature this estimate. He agreed that it would also be useful to work in an estimate on the possible Chinese reaction, particularly if we assessed it likely that Soviet-Chinese rivalry would stimulate the Soviets to dig in their heels lest they be bested by Peking in offering support to PDRY.

Frank Shakespeare received about as full a review of Saudi thinking about PDRY from the Saudi Director of Intelligence as that same official gave our Station Chief in Jidda the week before. Shakespeare briefed the Under Secretary on his conversation during the return trip to Washington from Tunis January 23. Shakespeare in talking with me stressed the topic had

POL 15 Yemen *XR* *POL 32-1 Saud-Yemen*



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NEA / AR P - Richard W. Murphy

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Handwritten notes:
 DATE: January 25, 1971
 (30) [unclear]
 (1/25/71)
 [unclear]

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By **CM** NARA Date **6-12-08**

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been initiated by the Saudis and said he came away from his discussion impressed by the seriousness with which the Saudis view this situation and with the fervency of their hope that the United States will support Saudi efforts at an overthrow.

Mr. Irwin, as I mentioned in this morning's staff meeting, wants further briefings on the Peninsula "in a few days time." We will not have the SNIIE in hand by then. In any event, Mr. Irwin made clear what he wanted was a free-ranging informal discussion of the Peninsula's problems in which all possible options on PDRY, the Islands and border disputes and prospects for Saudi stability would be aired.

The new maps on the Peninsula, including a special one for the Gulf Amirates, will be ready this Friday. I will forward a briefing paper for your use with Mr. Irwin by Thursday.

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