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Border Clashes between North and South Yemen. - Earlier Unrest. Agreement on Unification of the Two Yemeni States.

Clashes between North Yemen (the Yemen Arab Republic) and South Yemen (the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) occurred on the border of the two countries during the early months of 1972, and more serious fighting broke out in September. Through the mediation of the Arab League, however, a cease-fire came into effect during October, and at the end of November an agreement was signed in Tripoli (Libya) providing for the eventual unification of the two Yemeni States. Earlier, clashes had occurred from time to time on the border of South Yemen and Saudi Arabia, due to the incursions of irregulars—mainly political exiles opposed to the left-wing regime in South Yemen—and also on the border between South Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman. Details of these and related developments are given below.

Irregular forces operating from Saudi Arabian territory made a series of unsuccessful raids into South Yemen between October 1970 and June 1971. According to government statements in Aden, between 500 and 700 political exiles had crossed the border from Saudi Arabia on Feb. 20, 1971, in an attempt to isolate the eastern provinces of Hadhramaut and Mahra and set up an independent State, but were defeated in fighting with local forces on Feb. 29–84, losing 175 killed and 50 captured. Another unsuccessful raid was reported in the Baihan area on June 25, 1971.

The raids were reported to have been carried out by supporters of the former sultans of the Federation of South Arabia and of the banned South Arabian League. After an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Nasser Muhammad, on May 22, 1972, by a man who forced his way into his office and fired several shots at him, the Ministry of the Interior stated on June 11 that the attempt had led to the discovery of a terrorist network run by the South Arabian League, allegedly in collusion with Saudi Arabia [The name of Hassaniya shown for the Prime Minister in 24788 B indicates his tribal affiliation.] Until 1972 the campaign against the ruling National Liberation Front (NLF) had not been supported by the exiled leaders of the rival nationalist organization, the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY). Mr. Abdul Qawee Mackawee, the general secretary of the FLOSY, had revealed on Jan. 4, 1971, that Mr. Muhammad (then Defence Minister) had met him in Cairo a few days before and had invited him to return to Aden or to take up a government appointment abroad; Mackawee stated, however, that he would not consider returning until all exiled members of his organization were free to do so.

According to press reports, the raiding forces were recruited from the thousands of exiles who had left South Yemen for North Yemen or Saudi Arabia, including political leaders, soldiers, businessmen, clerks and artisans. *The Guardian* reported on March 15, 1972, that several hundred officers and nearly one-quarter of the 12,000 men had left the Army, and that the population of Aden was said to have fallen from 220,000 to less than 80,000. The mass exodus was attributed in part to the economic crisis caused by the closing of the Suez Canal, as a result of which the number of ships using the port of Aden had fallen from 500 to less than 100 a month, and in part to the increasingly left-wing policies adopted by the Government since the removal of President Qahtan as-Shaabi in June 1969

[see 23451 A].

Following the change of regime, the South Yemen Government nationalized about 40 British, French, American and other foreign firms, including banks and insurance, trading, port operation and petroleum distribution companies, on Nov. 27, 1969. A new series of nationalization measures followed the replacement of Mr. Mohammed Ali Haithem by Mr. Muhammad as Prime Minister on Aug. 2, 1971 [see 24788 B]; these took the form of "spontaneous workers' revolts", which led to almost all businesses still in private hands being taken over by workers' committees. A decree of Aug. 5, 1972, nationalized all commercial and residential buildings, but guaranteed to each family the right to own its own home.

A number of executions on subversion charges took place in 1970. Seven men accused of being agents of the former sultans were shot for treason and sabotage on March 20, 1970, and two others convicted of killing a security officer on March 30. Mr. Ali Salem al Kindi, a former provincial governor, Mr. All Abdul Alim, a former president of the Supreme People's Court, and three other men were shot on Oct. 22, after being convicted of plotting to overthrow the regime. Mr. Kindi and Mr. Alim were reported to be supporters of ex-President as-Shaabi, who had been expelled from the NLF on Jan. 6, 1970. Mr. Faisal Abdul Latif as-Shaabi, the former Prime Minister, who had been expelled from the party at the same time, was officially stated on April 3, 1970, to have been killed while trying to escape from a detention camp.

Increasingly strained relations between North and South Yemen led to a series of clashes on the border of the two Yemeni States between February and May 1972.

Mr. Haithem, then Prime Minister of South Yemen, had previously met the North Yemeni leaders at Taiz (North Yemen) on Nov. 25–26, 1970, when it was agreed that preliminary measures should be taken with a view to the formation of a federation between North and South Yemen. A communique stated that joint committees had been formed to study economic and other problems, including a common currency and tariffs and co-operation in industry and banking. Offence was caused in the North, however, by the decision to change the name of the People's Republic of South Yemen to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, which the Northern Prime Minister, Mr. Muhsin al Aini, described as an indication that "they want us to remain as two separate countries" [see 24364 C; 24436 A].

Relations between the two countries deteriorated in 1971 as South Yemen adopted a more radical policy and North Yemen established increasingly friendly relations with Saudi Arabia. The situation in North Yemen was further complicated by the rivalry between the traditionalist Zaidi (Shia Moslem) tribes of the northern provinces and the more progressive Shafeis of the southern provinces, who tend to look for support to South Yemen.

The South Yemen Government stated on Feb. 22, 1972, that a nine-hour attack by about 2,000 mercenaries had been repelled on the previous day in the Baihan area, and that 65 of the raiders had been killed—among them Sheikh Ali ben Naji al Ghadir, the chief of the powerful Khaulan tribe and a prominent royalist leader in the civil war in North Yemen. The Minister of Information, Mr. Abdullah al Khamri, told journalists on Feb. 27 that the mercenaries had used 100 Ford lorries to cross the border from North Yemen; that they had been armed with American weapons; and that documents proving that American military instructors were directing the mercenaries had been captured. North Yemeni sources, on the other hand, alleged that Sheikh Ghadir and over 60 of his followers had been invited to a feast in South Yemen and treacherously murdered.

North and South Yemen accused each other on March 12 of massing troops on the border: Mr. Aini alleged that Northern villages in the Baida and Harib regions had been bombed and shelled, while the Southern Government maintained that mercenaries from the North had been allowed to raid its territory and lay mines there, which had killed at least seven people in the past year. The Northern Embassy in Beirut alleged on March 26 that 80 people had been killed in recent incidents, this report being denied by the Southern authorities.

The Southern Government announced on April 3 that it was prepared to discuss with the Northern Government proposals for ending the crisis, including the withdrawal of troops and tribesmen from the border, the ending of subversive activities by mercenaries operating from the North, and the establishment of commissions to settle frontier disputes. This offer produced no reaction from the Northern Government, which announced on May 10 that several soldiers had been killed on both sides in a border clash the previous day. No serious incidents were reported during the next four months, however.

Apparently as a result of the border tension, the FLOSY joined the alliance of "National Forces opposed to the Communist Regime in South Yemen". A spokesman for the alliance stated in London on May 3 that the "National Forces" were drawn from the FLOSY, the South Arabian League, the former sultans' supporters and dissident members of the NLF, and that their political leadership included Mr. Mackawee and Mr. Abdallah al Asnag [another prominent member of the FLOSY and a Minister in the North Yemen Government—see 24876 B]. The alliance's armed forces, numbering about 4,000 men, were commanded by Brigadier Nasser Buraïq Aulaqi (the former commander of the South Arabian Federal Army), assisted by Colonel Hussein Ashal, who commanded the South Yemen Army after independence, was dismissed when President as-Shaabi was removed, and later fled to the North.

An organization called the United National Front of South Yemen was formed in Sana'a, the capital of North Yemen, on Aug. 20, 1972, by all the political groups in exile, with Mr. Mackawee as its president and Brigadier Aulaqi as head of its military command. Mr. Mackawee, Brigadier Aulaqi and three other members of the Front's political command subsequently visited Jeddah for talks with Saudi Arabian officials; proceeded to Cairo to make representations to Arab Foreign Ministers arriving for an Arab League Council meeting which began on Sept. 9; and went on to Tripoli for talks with Colonel Kadhafi, the Libyan Head of State.

Clashes also occurred during 1972 on the border between South Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman, mainly as a result of incursions into the Omani province of Dhofar by guerrillas of the left-wing "Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf" operating from South Yemeni territory.

An official Omani statement said that the Sultanate's Air Force had bombed gun positions in South Yemen on May 6, 1972, after South Yemeni artillery had fired for 36 hours on the border post of Habrut, killing 10 Omani soldiers. The South Yemen Government described the bombing as a "flagrant violation" of its airspace and accused the Omani Air Force of having violated its airspace 119 times in the past two years.

The Omani Government stated on May 15 that its troops had occupied a number of mountain passes to cut off rebel tribesmen in the Dhofar region from their supply bases in South Yemen. After all troops had been withdrawn from Habrut on May 11 a patrol discovered on May 22 that the post had been destroyed. A communiqué issued in Muscat on May 25 announced that a "Communist base" near Hauf, in South Yemen, had been attacked by Omani troops as a reprisal for the attack on Habrut and

"incessant firing from South Yemen".

The biggest clash in Dhofar to date occurred on July 19, when according to Omani Government sources about 250 guerrillas unsuccessfully attacked a Government position at the coastal town of Marbat, losing at least 60 killed and 12 captured. A communiqué issued in Aden by the "Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf", on the other hand, claimed that the guerrillas had occupied Marbat for 10 hours before being driven out by "British aircraft"; that two British officers and a Jordanian officer had been killed and another 122 Government troops killed or wounded; and that the guerrillas had lost 30 killed and three captured. The British Defence Ministry stated on Aug. 2 that a British corporal had been killed and two British soldiers wounded in the fighting, and that all three had been engaged in training the Sultan's forces.

Fighting again broke out on the border of North and South Yemen on Sept. 26, 1972, although the two sides gave entirely different accounts of the circumstances.

The Southern Embassy in Beirut alleged on Sept. 29 that Northern troops, supported by tanks and heavy artillery, and mercenaries commanded by Colonel Ashal had crossed the border into Dhala province three days previously and occupied four villages, and that 25 people had been killed when a border post was shelled. The Northern Embassy in Beirut, on the other hand, alleged that the Southern forces had launched a ground and air attack on the border town of Qataba, and that a Southern fighter aircraft had been shot down.

The Southern Government on Oct. 1 ordered its troops to cease fire, and called for the formation of a joint committee to investigate the incidents. The Northern Government, however, announced later the same day that Qataba had fallen, and declared on Oct. 2 that it would not agree to a cease-fire until the town had been evacuated. In Beirut the Southern Embassy denied that its forces had occupied any towns in the North, and accused North Yemen of not responding to its call for a cease-fire, whilst the Northern Embassy alleged that the Southern forces were still shelling or bombing four towns in the North. The fighting continued until Oct. 13, when a cease-fire agreement was concluded.

A North Yemen military spokesman stated on Oct. 3 that the Southern forces had evacuated Qataba and that the fighting had subsided; in Beirut, on the other hand, the Northern Embassy asserted on the same day that the Southern forces had launched an air attack on Harib and that the fighting had intensified. The Southern Embassy alleged on Oct. 4 that Northern aircraft had bombed Southern villages for the first time, and that Northern troops had occupied three more villages. A Northern statement of Oct. 5, contradicting that of two days earlier, asserted that Southern forces were still occupying Qataba.

The Southern Government accused North Yemen on Oct. 8 of occupying the Red Sea island of Kamaran after a sea and air attack. Lying a few miles off the Northern port of Hodeida, Kamaran is 70 square miles in area and has a population of about 1,500; some 200 miles north of Aden, it was under British administration from 1915 to 1967, when its inhabitants opted for South Yemeni sovereignty [see page 22415]. The Northern Embassy in Beirut admitted on Oct. 9 that Kamaran had been occupied but claimed that this had been done at the inhabitants' request.

North Yemen claimed on Oct. 8 that its troops had recaptured Qataba, and on the following day accused the South of continuing to shell the frontier regions. The Southern Government, on the other hand, maintained on Oct. 11 that it was still observing a unilateral cease-fire, and alleged that Northern forces were shelling its positions along a 15-mile front. The Northern Embassy in Beirut

asserted on the following day that the fighting had spread from Qataba to the Baida sector, 75 miles to the east.

An Arab League mediation mission, headed by Dr. Salim al Yafi (assistant secretary-general of the League) and consisting of representatives of Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Syria and Kuwait, arrived in Aden on Oct. 4 and flew on to Sana'a on Oct. 8. In its talks with the mission the South Yemen Government proposed that both sides should withdraw their troops from the frontier; that the bases established in the North by its political opponents should be suppressed; and that joint commissions should be set up to discuss the questions at issue. The North Yemen Government proposed the unification of North and South Yemen as the only solution to all disputes in the area, and demanded that Southern political exiles should be allowed to return; that compensation should be paid for the death of Sheikh Ghadir and his followers and for nationalized Northern property; that frontier problems should be settled; and that terrorist activities from the South should be ended.

The mediation mission, which returned to Aden on Oct. 12, announced on the following day that the two sides had agreed to a cease-fire. Troops would be withdrawn 10 kilometres (about six miles) from the frontier, and joint patrols, with Arab League military observers, would ensure that the cease-fire was observed. Representatives of the two Governments would meet in Cairo on Oct. 21, at Arab League headquarters, to discuss the return of the South Yemeni exiles; a settlement acceptable to the families of Northern tribesmen killed by the Southern forces; compensation for nationalized Northern property; the settlement of territorial disputes; the withdrawal of military forces and the reopening of the frontiers; the revival of the joint committees to examine measures for the unification of North and South Yemen; and the preparation of an agenda for a conference of the two Heads of State.

A joint military committee formed to enforce the agreement held its first meeting on Oct. 15, but on the following day North Yemen alleged that Qataba had again been shelled, this being categorically denied by the Southern Government. After each side had accused the other of violating the cease-fire on Oct. 18, the Northern delegation boycotted a meeting of the joint military committee. The fighting finally ended after Mr. Aini and Mr. Muhammad had agreed to a new cease-fire during a telephone conversation on Oct. 19.

Delegations from North and South Yemen met in Cairo on Oct. 21 for peace talks and discussions on the unification of the two countries, and two days later reached an agreement which combined the proposals put forward by the two sides. Mr. Aini arrived in Cairo on Oct. 25 and Mr. Muhammad on the following day, and after discussions signed a peace agreement and an agreement on unification on Oct. 28. The peace agreement provided for the withdrawal of all troop concentrations; the reopening of the border; withdrawal by both sides from areas occupied since Sept. 26; the repatriation of all refugees who wished to return; a ban on all sabotage operations; and the closing of all training camps for refugees.

The unification agreement envisaged the formation of a single State with a republican, nationalist and democratic system of government, with one flag, one capital, one presidential body, and unified legislative, executive and judicial authorities. Seven technical committees, with equal representation for the two countries, would be appointed by the two Heads of State to examine the details of the merger and draw up a Constitution within a year. The two Heads of State would then appoint a joint ministerial committee to organize a referendum on the draft Constitution and general elections.

President Iriani of North Yemen and President Rubayyi of South Yemen met in Tripoli on Nov. 26 to discuss details of the unification plan, and on Nov. 28 signed an agreement in the presence of Colonel

Kadhafi, who was reported to have taken an active part in their discussions. The agreement stated that the people of Yemen would establish a single State, to be known as the Yemeni Republic, with Sana'a as its capital, Islam as the State religion, and Arabic as the official language. The flag of the new State would be red, white and black. The objective of the State would be the achievement of socialism derived from Islamic sources. A single political party—the Yemeni Arab Socialist Union, modelled on the Arab Socialist Union in Egypt and Libya—would be established and would conduct the "struggle against the Imams' regime, old and new colonialism and Zionism". The new State would support "the struggle of the people of the Arabian Gulf [i.e. the Persian Gulf] for freedom, territorial integrity and the protection of its Arab identity against all imperialist ambitions".

Air services between North and South Yemen were resumed on Nov. 30 after having been interrupted for three months, road traffic between the two countries having already been resumed a few days before. —(Times - Daily Telegraph Guardian - Financial Times - Le Monde) **(Prev. rep. South Yemen, 24788 B; North Yemen, 24876 B; Oman, 25180 D.)**

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