

PREM 19/384

SECRET

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Visit ~~by~~ by the PM of the  
Yemen Arab Republic, Mr. Abdul  
Aziz Abdul Ghani

YEMEN

AUGUST 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
		<b>File Series closed</b>					
		<b>PREM 19/384</b>					
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<del>28.9.79</del>							
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Yemen  
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TO ROUTINE CERTAIN MISSIONS AND DEPENDENT TERRITORIES  
GUIDANCE TELEGRAM NUMBER 1 OF 4 JANUARY 1980

IMPOUNDING OF PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN REPUBLIC'S AIRCRAFT

1. THE YEMENI AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT WHICH CAME TO COLLECT MR ABDUL GHANI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC, AT THE END OF HIS VISIT TO BRITAIN (21-30 NOVEMBER) REMAINS STRANDED AT HEATHROW AIRPORT UNDER A HIGH COURT INJUNCTION TAKEN OUT BY BRITISH MIDLAND AIRWAYS (BMA).

LINE TO TAKE

2. HMG DEEPLY REGRETS THIS INCIDENT WHICH CAME AT THE END OF A VERY SUCCESSFUL OFFICIAL VISIT BY MR ABDUL GHANI. MRS THATCHER WROTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER APOLOGISING FOR THE EMBARRASSMENT AND INCONVENIENCE CAUSED AND THE LORD PRIVY SEAL SPOKE TO MR ABDUL GHANI ON THE EVENING OF THE INCIDENT. MR HURD ALSO EXPRESSED OUR DEEP REGRET IN TWO MEETINGS WITH THE YAR AMBASSADOR.

3. (IF ASKED) HMG SOUGHT AND OBTAINED AN ASSURANCE (ORAL) FROM BMA THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THE AIRCRAFT. IN THE EVENT, DESPITE THIS ASSURANCE, AN INJUNCTION WAS OBTAINED BY BMA.

FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION

4. YEMENI AIRWAYS' SOLICITORS IN LONDON STILL HOPE TO OVERTURN THE INJUNCTION ON THE GROUNDS THAT BMA ISSUED A FRAUDULENT ASSURANCE. WE ARE PROVIDING AFFIDAVITS RELATING TO THE ASSURANCE.

5. MINISTERS ARE NOW CONSIDERING A YEMENI PROPOSAL THAT HMG PROVIDE A FINANCIAL GUARANTEE TO THE COURT TO EFFECT RELEASE OF THE AIRCRAFT. IN RETURN THE YAR GOVERNMENT WOULD EXCHANGE NOTES INDEMNIFYING HMG AGAINST ANY FINANCIAL LOSS.

/BACKGROUND

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## BACKGROUND

6. THE INCIDENT HAS SOURED UK/YAR RELATIONS AND UNDERMINED MUCH OF THE GOODWILL GENERATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. THE YAR GOVERNMENT HAVE RECALLED THEIR AMBASSADOR AND STATED THAT THEY LOOK TO HMG TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE AIRCRAFT SINCE WE HAD CONVEYED THE ASSURANCE THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST IT. BMA CLAIM THAT THE ASSURANCE WAS ONLY GIVEN ON CONDITION THAT THEIR DISPUTE WITH YEMENI AIRWAYS FOR TWO MILLION POUNDS COMPENSATION FOLLOWING CANCELLATION IN FEBRUARY 1978 OF A LEASING CONTRACT WOULD BE RAISED IN THE OFFICIAL TALKS. NO SUCH UNDERTAKING WAS GIVEN.

7. FEELING IN THE YAR CONTINUES TO RUN HIGH AND THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS THAT THE ISSUE MIGHT BE MADE A 'GENERAL ARAB' ONE. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT YEMEN IS NOW REFUSING SOME IMPORT LICENCES FOR BRITISH GOODS.

CARRINGTON

BY TELEGRAPH

BONN	DUBAI	DAMASCUS
PARIS	ABU DHABI	ALGIERS
BIS NEW YORK	MUSCAT	CAIRO
WASHINGTON	BEIRUT	KHARTOUM
ADEN	JEDDA	RABAT
AMMAN	KUWAIT	TRIPOLI
BAGHDAD	TEL AVIV	TUNIS
BAHRAIN		
DOHA		

[ALL ROUTINE]

AND SAVING TO CERTAIN OTHER POSTS

FCO/WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION  
CIDADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
GUIDANCE

SUBJECT

cc FCO

jfh



Yemen  
PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

10 DOWNING STREET

SERIAL No. 1163/79<sup>T</sup>

THE PRIME MINISTER

6 December 1979

I was most distressed to learn that you had been prevented from returning to Sana'a on 30 November at the end of your visit to Britain as a guest of Her Majesty's Government because of British Midland Airways' injunction on the Yemenia aircraft.

This was a most embarrassing development which I wholeheartedly deplore. I must apologise most profoundly to you for the embarrassment and inconvenience which you and your family and all the members of your party suffered as a result of British Midland Airways' action.

It is my sincere hope that this unfortunate incident will not affect the excellent relations between our two countries, and in particular that the goodwill which your visit has generated will not be lost. Both our governments must build on the positive results of your visit to strengthen our friendship still further and Her Majesty's Government certainly intend to work sincerely to achieve this objective.

His Excellency Mr. Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

6 December 1979

*Letter sent*

*for Mr. Hurd 6/12/79*

*Dear Mr. Hurd*

Yemen Arab Republic

You should know that the otherwise successful visit of the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic, who called on Mrs Thatcher on 22 November, ended on a rather sour note.

British Midland Airways who have a claim amounting to some £2 million against Yemen Airways arising from the latter's cancellation of a contract to lease two BMA aircraft in February 1978 obtained a High Court injunction impounding the aircraft which had come to collect the Prime Minister and his party on 30 November. As a result the party were obliged to remain overnight in London (the Prime Minister was also accompanied by his wife, who is expecting a baby in a month's time) and to travel by another airline the following day.

The situation, and our embarrassment, was made a great deal worse by the fact that the Yemenis sought our assurance that the dispute between the airlines would not present any difficulties over the arrival and departure of the Prime Minister on a Yemeni aircraft. When we took the matter up with British Midland they assured us that they would not embarrass the Prime Minister. We duly told the Yemenis we saw no problem. The company now claim that their assurance was given against an undertaking that the dispute would be raised in the official talks. No such undertaking was given and when BMA were subsequently told on two occasions that the matter would not be raised they did not challenge this.

The incident has inevitably affected our bilateral relations to which the visit had given a useful boost. Although the Prime Minister's reaction was restrained, the YAR government, like us, have been made to look very foolish. They have reminded us that this was an official visit and say they expect HMG to retrieve their aircraft. Mr Hurd has explained to the YAR Ambassador that while we deplore BMA's action we are unable to intervene in a civil dispute and that the Yemen Airways legal adviser should continue his efforts to get the injunction lifted. The Ambassador has also indicated that an apology from HMG at a high level would be welcomed and this is obviously the least gesture we can make towards a guest of the Government who has been seriously embarrassed by the action of a British company in breach of an assurance which we had obtained from them.

M O'D B Alexander Esq

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An oral apology has already been given to the Yemen Prime Minister by the Lord Privy Seal. But a written apology would naturally have greatest impact if it went from the Prime Minister. The Yemeni Ambassador has suggested this on instructions from his Prime Minister. Lord Carrington hopes, therefore, that the Prime Minister can agree to send such a message. I attach a draft text which can be sent to Sana'a by telegram; the signed original can then follow by bag.

We are considering in addition what to say to BMA.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stuart Hampson (Department of Trade).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P Lever', written in a cursive style.

Y P (P Lever)  
Private Secretary

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DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despach/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

TO:

Your Reference

His Excellency the Prime Minister  
of the Yemen Arab Republic  
Mr Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

SUBJECT:

CAVEAT.....

Your Excellency,

I was most distressed to learn that you had been prevented from returning to Sana'a on 30 November at the end of your visit to Britain as a guest of Her Majesty's Government because of British Midland Airways' injunction on the Yemenia aircraft.

This was a most embarrassing development which I wholeheartedly deplore. ~~As you know the company had assured the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that, while they hoped the dispute would soon be resolved, they had no intention of causing embarrassment during Your Excellency's visit, and our Ambassador was instructed in good faith to pass this assurance on to your Government.~~ I must apologise most profoundly to you for the embarrassment and inconvenience which you and your family and all the members of your party suffered as a result of British Midland Airways' action.

I know you will understand ~~that~~ the nature of our legal system precludes the Government intervening in a civil dispute of this sort between two private bodies. I understand that YEMENIA's legal adviser is in touch with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and they will be able to explain the position in more detail.

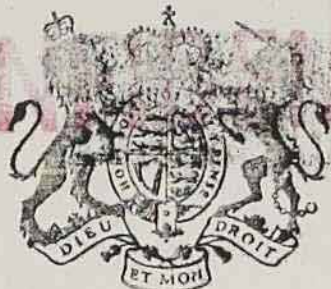
/It

Enclosures—flag(s).....



It is my sincere hope that this unfortunate incident will not affect the excellent relations between our two countries, and in particular that the goodwill which your visit has generated will not be lost. Both our governments must build on the positive results of your visit to strengthen our friendship still further and Her Majesty's Government certainly intend to work sincerely to achieve this objective.

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cc: Master Sec DS  
Middle East SE  
PM Tans Abd Galt  
hoiks  
Yemen

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 November 1979

Dear Paul,

Call by the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

The Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic, Mr. Abdul Ghani, called on the Prime Minister yesterday evening as arranged. He was accompanied by Mr. Shohati, Mr. Muhanni, Mr. Eriyani and one other official. Mr. Moberley and Mr. Walker were also present.

The conversation was not of sufficient interest to warrant a formal record but one or two points that arose may be worth noting.

On relations between his country and South Yemen, Mr. Abdul Ghani said that the South Yemen was moving increasingly close to the Soviet bloc. As a result, the unity talks between the two countries were going extremely slowly. The majority of the people in his country wanted to live under a democratic regime with a mixed economy and scope for free enterprise. They would not accept a totalitarian system. Mr. Abdul Ghani compared the policies of his Government with those of Mrs. Thatcher in encouraging individual initiative. He said that this policy was in keeping with the Arab character and was working well.

As part of his democratic policy, Mr. Abdul Ghani said that the Government was encouraging the development of small industry in the Yemen Arab Republic. He saw considerable scope for enterprise based on British know-how, Arab capital and Yemen labour. He said that he was very satisfied with relations between his country and the United Kingdom and that his visit was going well. He expressed interest in the prospect of an investment guarantee agreement with the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister said that she understood that he would be discussing this further with Mr. Hurd the following day and that she hoped that agreement could be reached. More generally, Mr. Abdul Ghani said he was seeking closer links with individual Western countries and with the EEC. He expressed the hope that Britain would support the development of closer links between the YAR and the EEC. He was hoping for an increase in aid. He preferred to develop relations with the West, particularly in education, rather than with the Soviet bloc.

There was a brief discussion of the Arab/Israeli dispute. Mr. Abdul Ghani said that he welcomed the Foreign and Commonwealth

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/Secretary's

Secretary's speech at the UN General Assembly in September. He thought that Britain had a role to play and hoped that we would be prepared to go further in the recognition of Palestinian rights. The Middle East looked to Britain for guidance and leadership. The Prime Minister said that recent initiatives seemed to have run into the sand. The Camp David process was at present getting nowhere. She recalled her discussion with King Hussein in October. Referring to his efforts to get the PLO to moderate their terrorist activities, she said that it was these activities which prevented her from recognising the PLO. The world was taking note of what the PLO had to say and there was therefore no longer any need for them to indulge in terrorist activity. It was not enough to talk about the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination. The matter had to be thought through more thoroughly. Acknowledgement of the Palestinian's rights and of Israel's right to exist would have to be simultaneous. Mr. Abdul Ghani said the PLO had come a long way since the hijacking incidents of the early 70s. If the Palestinian right to a homeland was accepted, it would be easier to influence them. But it would be very difficult for the Palestinians to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. Mr. Moberley commented that a Security Council resolution coupling the two aspects of the problem might be helpful.

The meeting ended with expressions of mutual esteem. Mr. Abdul Ghani invited the Prime Minister to visit the Yemen Arab Republic. The Prime Minister indicated an interest in visiting the Middle East in due course. The Prime Minister also expressed the hope that another member of the Government might be able to visit the YAR at some stage.

*Yours ever*

*Richard Alexander*

Paul Lever, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Yemen (2)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*Prime Minister*

19 November 1979

*Paul - 21/11*

*fs.*

Dear Michael,

Call by the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

His Excellency Mr Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani will call on the Prime Minister at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 22 November. He will be accompanied by Mr Ahmad Muhsin Al Muhanni, Minister of Municipalities who also acts as Deputy Foreign Minister and either Mr Mohammed Hizam Al Shohati, Minister of the Economy, or by the YAR Ambassador Mr Al-Eryani. Mr Walker, our Ambassador in Sana'a will also be available if required.

*I have asked him to be present. / Paul*

I enclose briefing for the Prime Minister's use together with Personality Notes on Mr Abdul Ghani and his party. They all speak good English.

Mr J C Moberly, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, will accompany Mr Abdul Ghani on the call.

*Yours*

(P Lever)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street

BRIEFCALL BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLICIntroduction

1. This will be the first official visit by a Yemeni Prime Minister to the U.K. However Mr Abdul Ghani came here frequently between 1971-75 as Governor of the Central Bank and has since made several private visits.

2. The Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) is of political importance because of its strategic position in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Red Sea area. As such it is a target for subversion for the Soviet Union and the Marxist People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). A hostile regime in the YAR, particularly if aligned with PDRY, would threaten Saudi security and the stability of the whole peninsula. Mr Abdul Ghani's visit provides an opportunity to express our support for the moderate non-aligned policy of the YAR. We should however have no illusions over the durability of the present regime. The Prime Minister has survived in office through two Presidential assassinations and though President Saleh's position now appears stronger than at any time since he came to power 17 months ago, it cannot be considered secure.

3. Mr Abdul Ghani is anxious that his visit should add substance to our relations in the economic, cultural and political fields. The YAR is proving to be a growing market for British firms and the programme includes discussions with Mr Nott and with bankers and senior businessmen. Mr Abdul Ghani will also have talks with Lord Carrington (immediately before the official lunch) and with the Minister of State at the FCO.

Points to MakeBilateral

4. Programme reflects importance of expanding trade further. UK companies increasingly aware of opportunities in YAR both for direct exports and as consultants/contractors for development projects.

5. How is Development Programme progressing? Will continue to assist through our aid programme within our limited ability. No major cuts but no increase possible at present. Important therefore to ensure maximum benefit from current projects.

YAR/PDRY Relations

6. Glad of improvement after fighting in February. But can we really expect unity? Southern Arabia should not become an arena for interference by outside powers.

7. How does YAR view growing Soviet influence in PDRY (recent Friendship Treaty)? How are YAR's relations with Russia and Saudi Arabia?

Arab/Israel

8. Must not jeopardise current peace efforts but concerned that momentum for a comprehensive settlement should be kept up. Ready to play our part in this. Critical of Israeli inflexibility, for example over settlements and autonomy.

9. But Arab side must also be flexible and recognise Israel's concern for security.

10. We accept importance of PLO for Palestinian views but dealings with them are difficult while they have not renounced terrorism and refuse to accept Israel's right to exist.

BRIEFCALL BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLICEssential Facts

1. The Yemen Arab Republic, with a population of some eight million (more than Saudi Arabia), an ancient culture and a sophisticated but unprofitable system of traditional agriculture, is one of the most interesting and unusual countries in the Middle East. It avoided western colonisation due to the toughness of its people and the wildness of the terrain. Only in the last decade has it slowly opened up to outsiders.
2. Since the civil war (1962-1970), which ended monarchical rule, efforts to impose central government control have produced tribal dissidence and internal instability. President Saleh came to power in June 1978. He has survived at least one assassination attempt and was criticised for the Yemen Arab Republic's poor performance in the fighting in February this year with the PDRY. He is however growing into the job and has for the moment neutralised opposition. He has tried to broaden the base of the Government to take account of the various factions: tribal, military, pro-Saudi, Ba'athists, Leftists. A summary of developments in the YAR during 1979 is attached.

UK/YAR Relations

3. Cordial. The YAR regards us as a friend with influence and long experience of the Arabian peninsula. Large Yemeni community in UK (Sheffield, Cardiff). Very little Ministerial contact: Mr Tomlinson (then PUSS, ODM) first British Minister to visit YAR (April 1978).

Trade

4. Our exports (mainly machinery, transport equipment and food stuffs) have increased from £6 million in 1974 to £48.5 million in 1978 - more than to East Germany. Several British companies have won major contracts and consultants active. Cable & Wireless recently signed ten-year agreement worth £20 million. YAR exports to UK negligible.

UK Aid

5. Modest technical co-operation programme (about 40 experts in YAR, 25 scholarships in UK) costing £1.5 million per annum. Concentrated in rural sector and English language teaching.
6. No capital aid in view of YAR's substantial support from Arab and international sources.
7. The British Council have an office in Sana'a.

Economic

8. YAR one of the world's poorest countries in terms of per capita income. No natural resources, little industry and an inefficient agricultural system. However marked up-turn in the last three years because of (a) the grants and loans from rich Arab neighbours and international Institutions and (b) remittances, estimated at £600 million in 1978, from its one million nationals working in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Government has embarked on an ambitious five-year development programme (1976-1981) concentrating on road and port improvements, power stations and public services.

Foreign Relations

9. YAR attempts to balance its dependence on Saudi Arabia, whose financial support is vital, against the opposite influence of Soviet military aid and the pull of the PDRY. The Yemenis, both in YAR and PDRY, traditionally regard themselves as culturally and tribally superior to the Saudis who reciprocate these prejudices. The Saudi attitude to YAR is therefore ambivalent: determined to prevent its subversion by the PDRY but wary lest it become strong enough to threaten Saudi Arabia itself.

10. YAR relations with the USSR are of long standing but the YAR has also looked to the West, particularly the USA, for military supplies. However frustrated by delays in the Saudi-American arms programme, the YAR is reported to have signed an arms agreement with Russia which will include MiG-21 aircraft and T62 tanks. A Soviet-PDRY Treaty of Friendship was signed on 25 October during the visit to Moscow of Abdul Fattah Ismail, PDRY Head of State. It contains a provision (standard in Treaties of this kind) for immediate consultations in situations constituting a threat to peace. The USSR is a major arms supplier to the PDRY - Soviet, Cuban and East German advisers play a major part in many Ministries and the armed forces.

11. Both Yemens are committed to seeking a political union. But opposition from their respective mentors, the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia and the totally opposed ideologies of the two governments make real union most unlikely. The two governments recently agreed to increased economic and cultural co-operation as a first step.

Arab/Israel

12. As an Arab country YAR supports the Palestinians and front line Arab States against Israel. Criticism of the Camp David agreement has been low key because of good relations with Egypt.





THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC ; 1979

1. At the outset of 1979 the Government of the YAR under an inexperienced right wing President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was weak, comparatively unpopular, and isolated. It could not claim to control more than 50% of the national territory, and the warlike Zaidi tribesmen of the North were client to Saudi Arabia and fiercely independent of the Yemeni authorities in Sana'a. In the South and East the National Democratic Front, exiles backed by the Communist Government of Aden, was conducting guerilla warfare, and President Saleh's army, undermanned, poorly led and badly equipped (its obsolete Soviet equipment had not been replaced by the American weaponry long promised by a hesitant Saudi Arabia) found it hard to make headway against them. Despite his weakness, President Saleh provoked retaliation from the PDRY by launching guerillas over its borders, and neglected his relations with other Arab states, especially Iraq and Libya which had inspired an abortive coup attempt against him in October 1978.
  
2. In February N.D.F. guerillas and PDRY troops and militia, with Soviet and Cuban 'advisers' in support, attacked the YAR on four fronts. The out-tanked and out-gunned North Yemeni army was forced to retreat, and it seemed likely that not only would President Saleh's Government collapse, but the southern half of the country might be taken over by an N.D.F. regime which was client to the Soviet supported PDRY. However Zaidi tribesmen from the North stiffened YAR military resistance, and the Arab states, led by Iraq, Jordan and Syria, intervened, imposing a cease fire and withdrawal of the invading forces. But as a result of his defeat President Saleh was compelled, at a meeting in Kuwait with the Marxist President of the PDRY, Ismail, to agree to the early unification of the two Yemens. Opinion in North Yemen, ran strongly against the agreement, as it was believed that Ismail, who threatened another war if union was not achieved, intended to use it to gain Communist domination of North Yemen by peaceful means. President Saleh had to explain, privately, that he had only agreed to give himself time to prepare for further fighting.
  
3. The YAR Government set about strengthening its forces, broadening its base, and ending its isolation. The re-equipment of the Army started in February when the Saudis, shocked by the PDRY attack, appealed to the Americans to make an emergency delivery of the long promised equipment. The armed forces were re-organised and Americans, Jordanians, Saudis and Taiwanese arrived to train them. The Sana'a Government expanded its nominated legislative Assembly to include its critics and promised general elections within the year. In the meantime it conducted the first municipal elections in the country's history. It gave greater publicity to its development projects, and its members toured the provinces. Gradually the Northern tribes estranged from Saudi Arabia by a frontier dispute, and realising that the Government did not want unification, rallied to its support. In the meantime the YAR sent missions to Arab capitals to explain the position, and gain support. They repaired their fences with Libya, Iraq, and Ethiopia, all of whom could cause them trouble.



4. By the autumn the YAR had achieved a position of comparative strength vis à vis its Communist southern neighbour. The PDRY had no friends in the Arab world, its economy was in trouble, and many of its leaders were strongly opposed to President Ismail's policy of 'unification or war'. During the late summer they compelled him to agree to leave the country while they normalised relations between the two Yemens. As a result their leader, the PDRY Prime Minister, insisted that he come to Sana'a for negotiations at the beginning of October when Ismail was away in Bulgaria. This forced President Saleh to insist that his own Prime Minister, Abdul Ghani, who was due to visit Britain on 1 October, ~~to~~ stay in Sana'a to participate in the negotiations.

5. These negotiations resulted in the tacit abandonment of the unification agreement, in favour of increased economic and cultural co-operation. The YAR Government insisted on the free movement of populations in the hopes that the interchange might produce pressures which would force the Aden Government to ameliorate its Communist rule. But they realise that the PDRY, which has just signed a 21 Year Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union, could still turn against them and attack with Soviet, Cuban, and Ethiopian military support. So they are continuing to expand, train and re-equip their armed forces, which have a long way to go before they are fully effective; to cultivate friendship with other Arab and Western states, and to broaden and democratise their support within North Yemen.

## BASIC FACTS

## YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Population: 7.08 million (1973) of whom 1.5 million work abroad

Area: 195,000 km<sup>2</sup> (75,290 sq miles - about twice the size of Ireland)

Capital: Sana'a (population 150,000 approx)

Other Principal Cities: Hodeida (population 90,000 approx)

Ta'iz (population 80,000 approx)

Religion: Muslim. The Zaidis, a branch of the Shia Muslims, in the North and East of the country; and the Shafeis who belong to the orthodox or Sunni Muslims, on the coastal plain and in the South.

Language: Arabic

GDP: US \$2130 m: per capita US \$390 (1977)

<u>UK/YAR Trade:</u>	(£ million)	UK Exports	UK Imports
1977		28.4	0.5
1978		48.5	7.3
1979	(up to May 1979)	21.8	0.1

UK Subjects in YAR: There are approximately 500 UKPHs. Most are employees of British firms and dependants.

Currency: Yemeni Riyal: (YR) 9.3814 = £1.00

Economy: Oil has not been found. Most of the population are engaged in subsistence agriculture. The YAR exports very little, however US \$1.3 billion per annum enters the YAR as a result of remittances from Yemeni workers in Saudi and the Gulf.

Principle Trading Partners: (by percentage) 1977

Imports from:	
Japan	15.2
Saudi Arabia	12.8
West Germany	6.8
United Kingdom	6.5
India	5.4
USA	4.7
EEC	28.3

President: Ali Abdullah Saleh

Prime Minister: Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani

Formally, the President is advised by a People's Constituent Assembly of 159 members. An Advisory Council of 15 members also meets under the chairmanship of the President to discuss internal and external matters of national interest. In practice the support of the armed forces is essential to maintain power.

  
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ABDUL GHANI, ABDUL AZIZ

Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

Born 1939 at Haifan. Secondary education, teacher training course, and one year of teaching in Aden. Colorado University, USA, 1960-64; graduated M Econ. Senior Teacher of English Language, Social Sciences and Commerce at Bilqis College, Aden, 1964-67. Then returned to YAR, and from 1968 to 1971 held in quick succession the posts of Manager of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Minister for Economy, Head of the Technical Office at the Supreme Council for Planning, and Chairman of the Yemen Petroleum Company. Governor of the Central Bank 1971-75. Prime Minister since January 1975.

Against expectations, Abdul Ghani has proved a strong and able administrator, running the Government machine effectively under successive Presidents Hamdi, Ghashmi and Ali Saleh. He has been consistently friendly to us, and was delighted with the excellent treatment he received for a kidney complaint at St Thomas' Hospital in 1977. He visited his old University, Colorado, in 1978 to receive an Honorary Degree. Perhaps because of this, and the lavish attention the Americans continue to shower on him, he is inclined on occasions to favour them rather than us.

Speaks fluent English. Honest and hard working. Has an agreeable, self-deprecatory, humourous manner. His wife is from Aden. Has five children, of whom one had polio when young, and was treated in Great Ormond Street Hospital in August 1976.

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SHOHATI, MOHAMMED HIZAM AL

Minister of Economy since October 1968

Born Ba'dan 1936. Studied at Universities of Georgetown, Harvard and Hertford College, Oxford (Diploma in Economic Development). After working for USAID in Sana'a he was employed as an economics expert with the Kuwait Fund 1965-68, latterly taking charge of all the Fund's activities. Member of World Bank missions to Yemen in 1969 and 1970.

Friendly, frank, helpful and efficient. Clearly well-suited to his present post. Speaks fluent English.

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MUHANNI, AHMAD MUHSIN AL

Minister of Municipalities

Born about 1934 in Sana'a. Educated in Cairo and at Lafayette College, East Pennsylvania (BSc Chemistry); and Toulaine University New Orleans where he followed a post graduate course in public health and tropical medicine.

Returned to YAR in 1960 to work on Taiz water supply. Director General Ministry of Health 1962/63. In 1964 he went to United Nations New York as a Regular Officer Technical Assistance. 1971 Chief Project Manager UNIDO, Vienna. 1974 Minister of Municipalities for four months. He then returned to UNIDO Vienna as the YAR Representative. Reappointed to his present post in March 1979.

He acts as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Minister's absence.

Speaks good English.



ERİYANI, MR MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH AL  
YAR Ambassador to London

Born in 1934. On completion of secondary education in 1958, entered the Military College, graduating in 1961.

Held successive commands, eventually becoming Commander in Chief of YAR Armed Forces in 1973. A Founder Member of the Yemen Union Political Party, constituted in 1973 and dissolved following coup in June 1974 which brought Colonel Hamdi to power. Appointed Ambassador to London July 1974.

Holds rank of Lt Colonel but prefers to be known as "Mr". While in London he has learnt English and become a popular and respected member of the Diplomatic Corps. Has two wives and eight children.



19 NOV 1979



Yemen

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~~6/19/11.79.~~

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 October 1979

VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN  
ARAB REPUBLIC

I am writing to confirm that the Prime Minister is looking forward to seeing the above gentleman on Thursday 22 November at 1800 hours at 10 Downing Street.

You will kindly be submitting a brief to reach this Office not later than Monday 19 November.

Ghani

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Paul Lever, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

TWR

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

2 October 1979

Dear Michael,

Visit by the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab  
Republic

As I have already told you by telephone, Mr Abdul Ghani, who was to have called on the Prime Minister at 1015 today has been asked by President Saleh to postpone his visit. We assume that this is in connection with the talks which have been taking place in Sana'a in the last few days with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen about proposals for unity between the two countries.

The Yemenis have asked whether it may be possible to re-arrange the visit for the second half of November. We would like to give them a positive response, since the justification for the visit, which we originally proposed, remains. Could you let me know whether the Prime Minister is agreeable, subject to a suitable time being found, to receiving Mr Abdul Ghani briefly on the same basis as originally planned?

Yours etc

Paul Lever

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street

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COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

Yemen



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

28 September 1979

Visit postponed. Keep handy.

Dear Michael,

Call by the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

Paul - 28/9

The Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic, Mr Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani will call on the Prime Minister at 10.15 on Tuesday 2 October. He will be accompanied by Dr Hassan Muhammed Makki, Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Minister, and either Mr Mohammed Hizam Al Shohati, Minister of Economy, or the YAR Ambassador in London, Mr Mohammed Abdullah Al-Eryani.

Subject to developments at the Rhodesia Conference, Lord Carrington would propose to be present at the meeting. Mr Walker, our Ambassador in Sana'a, will also be available if required.

/ I enclose briefing for the Prime Minister's use, together with personality notes on Mr Abdul Ghani and his party. They all speak good English.

I am writing separately about a particular aspect of our assistance to Yemen.

Yours etc

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## CALL BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Introduction

1. This will be the first official visit to the U.K. by a Yemeni Prime Minister. However Mr Abdul Ghani came here frequently as Governor of the Central Bank from 1971-75 and has since paid several private visits.
2. The YAR has assumed increasing importance for Britain as a commercial market and as a moderate non-aligned state in a strategically sensitive corner of Arabia. It looks to us (and the West as a whole) for support against the threat from the marxist People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). The country has suffered chronic political instability in recent years - President Saleh's two predecessors were assassinated and his own position is precarious. We should therefore have no illusions about the durability of the present regime (although the Prime Minister has survived in office through these presidential assassinations).
3. Mr Abdul Ghani is anxious that his visit should add substance to our relations in the economic, political and cultural fields. He will be able to discuss the prospects (though he is already aware that we cannot offer more development aid at present) with Mr Nott and Mr Marten and he will be having political talks with the Minister of State at the F.C.O. He will also see British Council and meet a number of businessmen and bankers.

Points to MakeUK/YAR Relations

4. Welcome this first visit by Yemeni Prime Minister to the U.K. This reflects our close and friendly relationship which is developing well.
5. Your programme marks importance we both attach to expanding trade further. U.K. companies increasingly aware of opportunities in YAR both for direct exports and as consultants/contractors for development projects.
6. Will continue to assist YAR's development through our aid programme within our limited possibilities. No major cut but no increase possible at present. Your discussion with Mr Marten offers chance to ensure maximum benefit from current projects.

Military Assistance

7. Hope to send small team to identify naval training and other needs shortly. £50,000 set aside this financial year for training in U.K.

YAR/PDRY Relations

8. How are unity talks progressing? What is significance of Mr Kosygin's visit to Aden? Any hope PDRY can escape from Soviet grip?

Iran and Regional Security

9. How do you see Iran's influence in the Gulf? What steps are countries in the area taking towards regional security co-operation?

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10. We do not recognise PLO as sole representative of the Palestinians although we accept it is an important force whose views must be taken into account in any settlement.

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11. Soviet/Cuban troops should withdraw. Problems of the area must be resolved by the countries involved; OAU can play important role.

## ESSENTIAL FACTS

1. The Yemen Arab Republic is the "Arabia Felix" of legend. With a population of some 8 million (bigger than Saudi Arabia) an ancient culture and a sophisticated but unprofitable system of traditional agriculture, it is one of the most interesting and unusual countries in the Middle East. It is also the least known, having avoided colonisation due to the toughness of its people and the wildness of its terrain. Only in the last decade has it slowly opened up to outsiders.

UK/YAR Relations

2. Cordial. The YAR regards us as a friend with influence and long experience of the Arabian peninsula. Large Yemeni community in U.K. Mr Tomlinson first British Minister to visit YAR (April 1978).

Trade

3. Our exports (mainly machinery, transport equipment, food-stuffs) have increased from £6 million in 1974 to £48.5 million in 1978 (more than to East Germany). Among top four suppliers. YAR exports to UK negligible. Costains, Marconi, Sir Alexander Gibb, Sir William Halcrows and Howard Humphreys have won major contracts. Cable and Wireless have just signed 10 year agreement worth £12 million.

UK Aid

4. Modest technical co-operation programme (about 40 experts in YAR; 25 scholarships in UK) costing £1.5 million per annum Concentrated in rural sector. Main project, to set up animal health division has run into difficulties through the hostility of some officials in the Ministry of Agriculture.

5. No capital aid in view of YAR's substantial support from Arab and international sources.

6. The British Council have an office in Sana'a.

Military/Police Assistance

7. The YAR has asked for our help in the organisation, training and equipping of its fledgling navy. The MOD hope to send a small appraisal team shortly.

8. For the first time YAR has received an allocation (£50,000) for military training in Britain. A number of police officers receive training here under our aid programme.

YAR Internal Situation

9. A densely populated but diverse country, the YAR has historically been divided between the two main religious sects; the Shi'ite Zaidis in the northern highlands and central part of the country and the Sunni Shafais of the central uplands and southern sector. Since the civil war (1962-70) which ended the Iman's rule, efforts to impose central government control have produced tribal dissidence (the northern Shaikhs formed the backbone of resistance to the Republicans) and internal instability. President Saleh has been in power for 15 months and has survived at least one assassination attempt. He has been criticised for YAR's poor performance in the fighting in February with PDRY and for his advocacy of unification between the two countries. Saleh has tried to broaden the base of his government to take account of the various power groups, tribal, army, pro-Saudi, Baathists, leftists.

Foreign Relations

10. Remittances from Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia amount to around £600 million a year although very little of this passes through government hands. Saudi finance underwrites the budget deficit and is the major source of development aid. But Saudi attitude to YAR is ambivalent: determined to stop its subversion by PDRY yet wary lest the more populous YAR become strong enough to threaten Saudi Arabia itself.

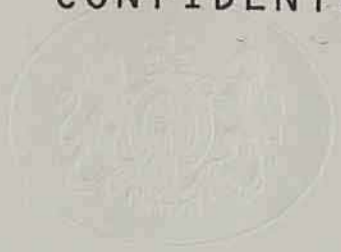
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12. Despite the presence of Russian military advisers, YAR relations with the Communist bloc are poor - due mainly to Russian political and military support for PDRY. Mr Kosygin visited Aden 16/17 September. Relations with the moderate Arab states are good.

Arab/Israel

13. As an Arab country YAR supports the Palestinians and front line Arab states against Israel. Criticism of the Camp David agreement has been low key because of good relations with Egypt.



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14. We do not recognise PLO, but have occasional contacts at official level. All Arab states recognise PLO as sole representative of Palestinians. Most EEC countries (EG French, Germans, Italians) have had some contact at Ministerial level.

Iran and Regional Security

15. Recent unrest among Shi'a Muslims in Gulf States especially Bahrain. Khomeini is both example and source of authority for them. But no government is at present endangered. Saudi Arabia has indicated support for Bahrain. Gulf States' Foreign Ministers may meet soon to discuss security co-operation. In Iran itself Khomeini seems in control, with the Left in disarray and the Kurds quelled for the moment. But regional dissent is one of Khomeini's greatest problems.

Horn of Africa

16. YAR shares the concern of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Sudan at the spread of Soviet influence in the Horn and at the threat to security of the Bab El Mandeb Straits. But the close consultation which had developed between these three states has ceased since Camp David. For reasons of Islamic and Arab solidarity YAR sympathises with the Eritrean Liberation Movement.

## BASIC FACTS

## YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Population: 7.08 million (1973) of whom 1.5 million work abroad

Area: 195,000 km<sup>2</sup> (75,290 sq miles - about twice the size of Ireland)

Capital: Sana'a (population 150,000 approx)

Other Principal Cities: Hodeida (population 90,000 approx)

Ta'iz (population 80,000 approx)

Religion: Muslim. The Zaidis, a branch of the Shia Muslims, in the North and East of the country; and the Shafeis who belong to the orthodox or Sunni Muslims, on the coastal plain and in the South.

Language: Arabic

GDP: US \$2130 m: per capita US \$390 (1977)

<u>UK/YAR Trade:</u>	(£ million)	UK Exports	UK Imports
1977		28.4	0.5
1978		48.5	7.3
1979	(up to May 1979)	21.8	0.1

UK Subjects in YAR: There are approximately 500 UKPHs. Most are employees of British firms and dependants.

Currency: Yemeni Riyal: (YR) 9.3814 = £1.00

Economy: Oil has not been found. Most of the population are engaged in subsistence agriculture. The YAR exports very little, however US \$1.3 billion per annum enters the YAR as a result of remittances from Yemeni workers in Saudi and the Gulf.

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Imports from:	
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West Germany	6.8
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India	5.4
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EEC	28.3

President: Ali Abdullah Saleh

Prime Minister: Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani

Formally, the President is advised by a People's Constituent Assembly of 159 members. An Advisory Council of 15 members also meets under the chairmanship of the President to discuss internal and external matters of national interest. In practice the support of the armed forces is essential to maintain power.

CONFIDENTIAL

ABDUL GHANI, ABDUL AZIZ

Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

Born 1939 at Haifan. Secondary education, teacher training course, and one year of teaching in Aden. Colorado University, USA, 1960-64; graduated M Econ. Senior Teacher of English Language, Social Sciences and Commerce at Bilgis College, Aden, 1964-67. Then returned to YAR, and from 1968 to 1971 held in quick succession the posts of Manager of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Minister for Economy, Head of the Technical Office at the Supreme Council for Planning, and Chairman of the Yemen Petroleum Company. Governor of the Central Bank 1971-75. Prime Minister since January 1975.

Against expectations, Abdul Ghani has proved a strong and able administrator, running the Government machine effectively under successive Presidents Hamdi, Ghashmi and Ali Saleh. He has been consistently friendly to us, and was delighted with the excellent treatment he received for a kidney complaint at St Thomas' Hospital in 1977. He visited his old University, Colorado, in 1978 to receive an Honorary Degree. Perhaps because of this, and the lavish attention the Americans continue to shower on him, he is inclined on occasions to favour them rather than us.

Speaks fluent English. Honest and hard working. Has an agreeable, self-deprecatory, humourous manner. His wife is from Aden. Has five children, of whom one had polio when young, and was treated in Great Ormond Street Hospital in August 1976.

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MAKKI, DR HASSAN MUHAMMED

Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Minister since June 1979.


Born 1933 in Hodeida. A Shafi'i. His father held important positions in the Imam's era. Educated in Egypt and at universities of Rome (Doctorate in Economics) and Bologna. As a student he became a socialist. During the Civil War staunch advocate of the policy "Yemen for the Yemenis - not for the Imam or the Saudis or Egyptians".

From 1960-68 he was successively Chairman of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Minister of Economy, Minister of Communications and Foreign Minister. Ambassador to Italy 1968-70 and to FRG 1970-72. Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs 1972-74 then, briefly, Prime Minister. Permanent Representative to the UN and Ambassador to Washington 1974-75. Rector of Sana'a University 1975-76 then re-appointed Ambassador to Italy.

A man of high intellectual calibre. Owes his influence to the understanding of public affairs gained from his father, to his having been one of the first generation of Yemenis to have a modern university education and to his left wing views having been in keeping with his times. Despite his progressive views has evinced suspicion of Russian role in Bab el Mandeb.

An easy conversationalist. Speaks Italian and English. Suffers from heart trouble and his return to office was therefore something of a surprise.

CONFIDENTIAL



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Minister of Economy since October 1968

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Friendly, frank, helpful and efficient. Clearly well-suited to his present post. Speaks fluent English.

CONFIDENTIAL




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CONFIDENTIAL



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Points to MakeUK/YAR Relations

4. Welcome this first visit by Yemeni Prime Minister to the U.K. This reflects our close and friendly relationship which is developing well.
5. Your programme marks importance we both attach to expanding trade further. U.K. companies increasingly aware of opportunities in YAR both for direct exports and as consultants/contractors for development projects.
6. Will continue to assist YAR's development through our aid programme within our limited possibilities. No major cut but no increase possible at present. Your discussion with Mr Marten offers chance to ensure maximum benefit from current projects.

Military Assistance

7. Hope to send small team to identify naval training and other needs shortly. £50,000 set aside this financial year for training in U.K.

YAR/PDRY Relations

8. How are unity talks progressing? What is significance of Mr Kosygin's visit to Aden? Any hope PDRY can escape from Soviet grip?

Iran and Regional Security

9. How do you see Iran's influence in the Gulf? What steps are countries in the area taking towards regional security co-operation?

Recognition of PLO

10. We do not recognise PLO as sole representative of the Palestinians although we accept it is an important force whose views must be taken into account in any settlement.

Horn of Africa

11. Soviet/Cuban troops should withdraw. Problems of the area must be resolved by the countries involved; OAU can play important role.



## ESSENTIAL FACTS

1. The Yemen Arab Republic is the "Arabia Felix" of legend. With a population of some 8 million (bigger than Saudi Arabia) an ancient culture and a sophisticated but unprofitable system of traditional agriculture, it is one of the most interesting and unusual countries in the Middle East. It is also the least known, having avoided colonisation due to the toughness of its people and the wildness of its terrain. Only in the last decade has it slowly opened up to outsiders.

UK/YAR Relations

2. Cordial. The YAR regards us as a friend with influence and long experience of the Arabian peninsula. Large Yemeni community in U.K. Mr Tomlinson first British Minister to visit YAR (April 1978).

Trade

3. Our exports (mainly machinery, transport equipment, food-stuffs) have increased from £6 million in 1974 to £48.5 million in 1978 (more than to East Germany). Among top four suppliers. YAR exports to UK negligible. Costains, Marconi, Sir Alexander Gibb, Sir William Halcrows and Howard Humphreys have won major contracts. Cable and Wireless have just signed 10 year agreement worth £12 million.

UK Aid

4. Modest technical co-operation programme (about 40 experts in YAR; 25 scholarships in UK) costing £1.5 million per annum Concentrated in rural sector. Main project, to set up animal health division has run into difficulties through the hostility of some officials in the Ministry of Agriculture.

5. No capital aid in view of YAR's substantial support from Arab and international sources.

6. The British Council have an office in Sana'a.

Military/Police Assistance

7. The YAR has asked for our help in the organisation, training and equipping of its fledgling navy. The MOD hope to send a small appraisal team shortly.

8. For the first time YAR has received an allocation (£50,000) for military training in Britain. A number of police officers receive training here under our aid programme.



### YAR Internal Situation

9. A densely populated but diverse country, the YAR has historically been divided between the two main religious sects; the Shi'ite Zaidis in the northern highlands and central part of the country and the Sunni Shafais of the central uplands and southern sector. Since the civil war (1962-70) which ended the Iman's rule, efforts to impose central government control have produced tribal dissidence (the northern Shaikhs formed the backbone of resistance to the Republicans) and internal instability. President Saleh has been in power for 15 months and has survived at least one assassination attempt. He has been criticised for YAR's poor performance in the fighting in February with PDRY and for his advocacy of unification between the two countries. Saleh has tried to broaden the base of his government to take account of the various power groups, tribal, army, pro-Saudi, Baathists, leftists.

### Foreign Relations

10. Remittances from Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia amount to around £600 million a year although very little of this passes through government hands. Saudi finance underwrites the budget deficit and is the major source of development aid. But Saudi attitude to YAR is ambivalent: determined to stop its subversion by PDRY yet wary lest the more populous YAR become strong enough to threaten Saudi Arabia itself.

11. After the fighting in February between the YAR and the PDRY which was halted by Arab League mediation the two Presidents renewed a 1972 undertaking to unite their countries. Discussions still taking place (Mr Abdul Ghani is a strong supporter of unification). It is unlikely, with two such totally opposed ideologies, that the goal will be achieved. Moreover the PDRY government itself in some disarray.

12. Despite the presence of Russian military advisers, YAR relations with the Communist bloc are poor - due mainly to Russian political and military support for PDRY. Mr Kosygin visited Aden 16/17 September. Relations with the moderate Arab states are good.

### Arab/Israel

13. As an Arab country YAR supports the Palestinians and front line Arab states against Israel. Criticism of the Camp David agreement has been low key because of good relations with Egypt.



#### Recognition of PLO

14. We do not recognise PLO, but have occasional contacts at official level. All Arab states recognise PLO as sole representative of Palestinians. Most EEC countries (EG French, Germans, Italians) have had some contact at Ministerial level.

#### Iran and Regional Security

15. Recent unrest among Shi'a Muslims in Gulf States especially Bahrain. Khomeini is both example and source of authority for them. But no government is at present endangered. Saudi Arabia has indicated support for Bahrain. Gulf States' Foreign Ministers may meet soon to discuss security co-operation. In Iran itself Khomeini seems in control, with the Left in disarray and the Kurds quelled for the moment. But regional dissent is one of Khomeini's greatest problems.

#### Horn of Africa

16. YAR shares the concern of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Sudan at the spread of Soviet influence in the Horn and at the threat to security of the Bab El Mandeb Straits. But the close consultation which had developed between these three states has ceased since Camp David. For reasons of Islamic and Arab solidarity YAR sympathises with the Eritrean Liberation Movement.



BASIC FACTS

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Population: 7.08 million (1973) of whom 1.5 million work abroad

Area: 195,000 km<sup>2</sup> (75,290 sq miles - about twice the size of Ireland)

Capital: Sana'a (population 150,000 approx)

Other Principal Cities: Hodeida (population 90,000 approx)

Ta'iz (population 80,000 approx)

Religion: Muslim. The Zaidis, a branch of the Shia Muslims, in the North and East of the country; and the Shafeis who belong to the orthodox or Sunni Muslims, on the coastal plain and in the South.

Language: Arabic

GDP: US \$2130 m: per capita US \$390 (1977)

<u>UK/YAR Trade:</u>	(£ million)	UK Exports	UK Imports
1977		28.4	0.5
1978		48.5	7.3
1979	(up to May 1979)	21.8	0.1

UK Subjects in YAR: There are approximately 500 UKPHs. Most are employees of British firms and dependants.

Currency: Yemeni Riyal: (YR) 9.3814 = £1.00

Economy: Oil has not been found. Most of the population are engaged in subsistence agriculture. The YAR exports very little, however US \$1.3 billion per annum enters the YAR as a result of remittances from Yemeni workers in Saudi and the Gulf.

Principle Trading Partners: (by percentage) 1977

Imports from:

Japan	15.2
Saudi Arabia	12.8
West Germany	6.8
United Kingdom	6.5
India	5.4
USA	4.7
EEC	28.3

President: Ali Abdullah Saleh

Prime Minister: Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani

Formally, the President is advised by a People's Constituent Assembly of 159 members. An Advisory Council of 15 members also meets under the chairmanship of the President to discuss internal and external matters of national interest. In practice the support of the armed forces is essential to maintain power.



CONFIDENTIAL

ABDUL GHANI, ABDUL AZIZ

Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

Born 1939 at Haifan. Secondary education, teacher training course, and one year of teaching in Aden. Colorado University, USA, 1960-64; graduated M Econ. Senior Teacher of English Language, Social Sciences and Commerce at Bilqis College, Aden, 1964-67. Then returned to YAR, and from 1968 to 1971 held in quick succession the posts of Manager of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Minister for Economy, Head of the Technical Office at the Supreme Council for Planning, and Chairman of the Yemen Petroleum Company. Governor of the Central Bank 1971-75. Prime Minister since January 1975.

Against expectations, Abdul Ghani has proved a strong and able administrator, running the Government machine effectively under successive Presidents Hamdi, Ghashmi and Ali Saleh. He has been consistently friendly to us, and was delighted with the excellent treatment he received for a kidney complaint at St Thomas' Hospital in 1977. He visited his old University, Colorado, in 1978 to receive an Honorary Degree. Perhaps because of this, and the lavish attention the Americans continue to shower on him, he is inclined on occasions to favour them rather than us.

Speaks fluent English. Honest and hard working. Has an agreeable, self-deprecatory, humorous manner. His wife is from Aden. Has five children, of whom one had polio when young, and was treated in Great Ormond Street Hospital in August 1976.

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

MAKKI, DR HASSAN MUHAMMED

Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Minister since June 1979.

Born 1933 in Hodeida. A Shafi'i. His father held important positions in the Imam's era. Educated in Egypt and at universities of Rome (Doctorate in Economics) and Bologna. As a student he became a socialist. During the Civil War staunch advocate of the policy "Yemen for the Yemenis - not for the Imam or the Saudis or Egyptians".

From 1960-68 he was successively Chairman of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Minister of Economy, Minister of Communications and Foreign Minister. Ambassador to Italy 1968-70 and to FRG 1970-72. Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs 1972-74 then, briefly, Prime Minister. Permanent Representative to the UN and Ambassador to Washington 1974-75. Rector of Sana'a University 1975-76 then re-appointed Ambassador to Italy.

A man of high intellectual calibre. Owes his influence to the understanding of public affairs gained from his father, to his having been one of the first generation of Yemenis to have a modern university education and to his left wing views having been in keeping with his times. Despite his progressive views has evinced suspicion of Russian role in Bab el Mandeb.

An easy conversationalist. Speaks Italian and English. Suffers from heart trouble and his return to office was therefore something of a surprise.

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

SHCHATI, MOHAMMED HIZAM AL

Minister of Economy since October 1968

Born Ba'dan 1936. Studied at Universities of Georgetown, Harvard and Hertford College, Oxford (Diploma in Economic Development). After working for USAID in Sana'a he was employed as an economics expert with the Kuwait Fund 1965-68, latterly taking charge of all the Fund's activities. Member of World Bank missions to Yemen in 1969 and 1970.

Friendly, frank, helpful and efficient. Clearly well-suited to his present post. Speaks fluent English.

CONFIDENTIAL



ERİYANI, MR MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH AL  
YAR Ambassador to London

Born in 1934. On completion of secondary education in 1958, entered the Military College, graduating in 1961.

Held successive commands, eventually becoming Commander in Chief of YAR Armed Forces in 1973. A Founder Member of the Yemen Union Political Party, constituted in 1973 and dissolved following coup in June 1974 which brought Colonel Hamdi to power. Appointed Ambassador to London July 1974.

Holds rank of Lt Colonel but prefers to be known as "Mr". While in London he has learnt English and become a popular and respected member of the Diplomatic Corps. Has two wives and eight children.



CONFIDENTIAL

SALLAM, MUHAMMAD ABDUL AZIZ

Chef de Cabinet

Born about 1930. A Shafi'i. Educated in Egypt and at Temple University, Philadelphia, and University of California - where he read Political Science. Taught mathematics, biology and English at Bilqis College, Aden, 1961-2.

After serving as Minister in Embassy, Baghdad 1963-4 was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister 1964-5 and Foreign Minister 1966-7 after which he went into exile in Cairo until 1970. Has since served in MFA, YAR Embassy in London 1973-75, and most recently as Deputy Permanent Representative at the UN.

Friendly and amenable. Speaks good English. His wife is from Aden. They have 3 sons.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

*This is a copy. The original  
has been extracted and  
retained under s. 3(4)*



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

28 September 1979

*Dear Michael,*

Call by the Prime Minister of the  
Yemen Arab Republic

I am sending you today the briefing for Mrs Thatcher's meeting with Mr Abdul Ghani on 2 October.

In order to avoid having to raise the security classification of the brief, I am writing separately to mention that an SAS team is due shortly to visit Sana'a to advise on internal security and counter-subversion procedures. They will be updating a report prepared in 1973 by \*~~~~~\* a former SAS officer. The Prime Minister may wish to say that we recognise the importance to the Yemen of internal stability. We will consider how we may be able to help once the team has reported.

*Yours etc*

Paul Lever  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street

*\*~~~~\* name deleted and retained  
under Section 3(4).*

*(A)Wayland  
12 July 2010*

SECRET

Yemen.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

21 September 1979

~~Mr Sanders MS~~

+ fa, Paul 24/9

Dear Michael,

Visit by the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

In your letter of 22 August you told me that the Prime Minister has kindly agreed to see Mr Abdul Ghani. I confirm that 10.15 on Tuesday 2 October would be convenient. We shall endeavour to restrict Mr Abdul Ghani's party to his Foreign Minister, Dr Hassan Muhammad Makki, and one other. Our Ambassador in Sana'a, who is being recalled for the visit, will also be available if required.

We have noted your deadline for briefing.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street





Mrs. STEPHENS

BF 28/9/79

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 August 1979

Visit by the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic

Paul Lever wrote to me on 13 August about the forthcoming visit to the UK, from 1 to 6 October, of the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic, Mr. Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani.

The Prime Minister has seen this letter and accepts Lord Carrington's recommendation that she should receive Mr. Abdul Ghani briefly while he is here. The Prime Minister has agreed to meet him for half an hour, at No.10, on Tuesday 2 October at 1015. I should be grateful if you could confirm in due course that Mr. Abdul Ghani will be able to come to No.10 at that time.

I should also be grateful if you would arrange for briefing to be prepared for the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr. Abdul Ghani; it would be helpful if this could reach me not later than 1700 on Friday 28 September. Please let me know at the same time who is likely to accompany him on his call.

802

J.S. Wall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 August 1979

Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Prime Minister

Could you agree to see  
Mr. Abdul Ghani for half an  
hour at 10.15 on 2 October?

Yes

11/78

Dear Bryan,

VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Mr Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani has been invited to spend a week in the United Kingdom as an official visitor from 1 to 6 October as part of our sponsored visit scheme. We are proposing that he should make official calls in London on 2 October. Lord Carrington hopes that the Prime Minister may be able to spare the time to have a half hour's meeting with Mr Abdul Ghani on that day.

The Yemen Arab Republic is a small country, but is assuming increasing importance for us both as a commercial market (1978 UK exports equal £48.5 million) and as a moderate state in the strategically important area of the Red Sea/Horn of Africa. The Yemen Arab Republic's pro-Western stance is dictated partly by her justified mistrust of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen's territorial intentions and by her close alliance to Saudi Arabia. The United Kingdom has a modest development programme in YAR. We are also involved in some training for her police and security forces. Mr Abdul Ghani himself has been Prime Minister for over four years, unusual in a country which has suffered chronic instability in recent years. A personality note is enclosed.

Yours etc

Paul  
(P Lever)

ABDUL AZIZ ABDUL GHANI

PRIME MINISTER OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Born 1939 at Haifan. Secondary education, teacher training course, and one year of teaching in Aden. Colorado University, USA, 1960 - 1964; graduated M Econ. Senior Teacher of English Language, Social Sciences and Commerce at Bilqis College, Aden, 1964-67. Then returned to YAR, and from 1968 to 1971 held in quick succession the posts of Manager of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Minister for Economy, Head of the Technical Office at the Supreme Council for Planning, and Chairman of the Yemen Petroleum Company. Governor of the Central Bank 1971-75. Prime Minister since January 1975.

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14 AUG 1979

