CHAPTER VIII

THE DECISION TO ACCEPT THE DJEDDAH RECONCILIATION DEAL

(MARCH 1978)
Except perhaps for the decision to request the UAR's military assistance, this decision, made at the very end of the period, was the most important of all those made by the YAR during the 1960s, including the others covered by this study. The significance of the decision to accept their conciliation agreement concluded with Saudi Arabia in Djebeda during March 1970, lies in the impact it had on the internal and external environment. The most important consequence for the Republican régime was the termination of hostile activities by the Saudi-backed Royalist elements and the recognition of the YAR by Saudi Arabia on 23 July, 1970.

Following crippling military reversals, in early 1969 the military organisation of the Saudi-backed Royalists, who had been challenging the Republican government for nearly six years, finally seemed to have disintegrated, and Saudi Arabia at last became convinced of the necessity of coming to terms with the Yemeni Republic. However, a further year passed before the terms of reconciliation were agreed and it was not until March 1970 that the Reconciliation Agreement was presented at the Djebeda conference. The decision-making process took several months, from March to July 1970, with the problems of implementation taking up most of this period.

The Operational Environment

There were a number of environmental factors which impinged on the decisional setting, three of which were particularly relevant. They were the changing position of Saudi Arabia, the West's refusal to establish relations with the YAR, and the crisis in the domestic economy. The fact that the Royalists counter-revolution had been
related to the Saudi position vis-à-vis the YAR, made these three components inter-related. It was the invitation to the YAR to participate in the Djedda Islamic conference that constituted the decision stimulus.

The Saudi Position

The prospects for reconciliation between the YAR and Saudi Arabia which appeared promising in the first half of 1969 were seriously threatened when, in late October of that year, the Royalists launched a surprise military offensive aimed at regaining the northern city of Sadah. On their own, the Royalists would have been totally unable to mount such a challenge to the Republican government; events of the previous year had shown how dependent they had been on Saudi support, and when Saudi Arabia, for its own reasons, had terminated its aid to them following the collapse of the siege of Sana'a in mid-1968, the Royalists had been unable even to hold on to the territories they were controlling in the northern part of the country. In the following few months, the Republican forces had rapidly increased their hold on these territories; on 6 September, 1969 they had captured Sadah and a month later they captured Waylah and Kitaf, the last Royalist strongholds.1

Although initially Saudi Arabia did not admit that it had resumed military aid to the Royalists, the YAR leaders were convinced that the Kingdom was behind the renewed hostilities. This led to renewed tension between the two countries throughout the second half of 1969. Kadi al-Iryani tried to challenge King Faysal politically by making an unsuccessful attempt to raise the issue for debate at the Fifth Arab
Summit Conference in Rabat in December, 1969. This attempt was unsuccessful because the Arab leaders gave priority to the more pressing issues pertaining to the continued confrontation with Israel. There was even a danger of direct military confrontation on the occasions when the battle for Sadah spilled over the border, with Yemeni planes hitting Royalist positions on the Saudi side and Saudi aircraft retaliating.

There are different interpretations of this sudden change of the Saudi policy towards Yemen. Some suggest that the Saudi resumption of aid to the Royalists was merely a response to their underlying concern over the Republican capture of Sadah, a stronghold so close to their borders, while others believe the Saudis might have felt that a Royalist revival was still possible. However, others believe that the Saudis merely wanted to convey a message to the Republicans to the effect that they could not stabilise their régime before a compromise of some sort had been negotiated with Riyadh and the Yemeni Royalists. More specifically, it was suggested that should Sadah fall into Royalists hands, which indeed happened in mid-February 1970, the Republicans would adopt a more conciliatory approach.

The YAR's relations with the PRSY had also become a pertinent factor in the renewed entente between Sana'a and Riyadh. King Faysal, to whom the NLF were nothing but communists, had, during 1968, provoked a number of internal uprisings in the northern areas of South Yemen with the purpose of destabilising the régime in Aden. By November 1969, the situation had escalated into open conflict, with the Saudi and South Yemeni forces battling for control of al-Wadia'h, a point along their common borders. Despite the rift with Aden which had occurred earlier in the year, the YAR took the side of South Yemen and al-
Iryani worked with the South Yemeni President, Salim Rubi'a, to put the al-Wadia'h issue before the Rabat summit. This infuriated the Saudis, who were seeking to win the YAR over to their side, and the announcement on December 9 by Prince Sultan, the Saudi Defence Minister, of an aerial raid by YAR planes on Saudi territories was linked to Riyadh's anger. Nevertheless, the intra-Yemeni solidarity strengthened the reconciliation between Sana'a and Riyadh. A Western source suggested that it was the realisation that it would be difficult to sustain open conflict with the YAR while attempting to overthrow the South Yemeni régime which led Saudi Arabia to terms with the Republican régime in Sana'a.

The need to establish good neighbourly relations with Saudi Arabia was cited by the YAR leadership as the principal motivation for the Government's decision to accept the Djedda Accord. Indeed, upon his return from the conference it was justified by al-Ayni on those very grounds.

**Relations With The West**

Another external factor which influenced the decision on the Djedda reconciliation was the YAR's interest in establishing relations with the West. For over a year, the YAR government had been seeking to establish relations with the principal Western states, for mainly economic reasons. As mentioned previously, these attempts were frustrated by the insistence of the latter that the Yemeni Republicans should first settle their differences with Saudi Arabia. However, several factors led these Western states to look more favourably on the establishment of relations with Sana'a. The resumption in July
1969 of YAR-West German relations and the promulgation in the following month of legislation encouraging foreign investment in Yemen had improved the West's image of the YAR.\(^8\) In addition, the decision by Great Britain during 1968 to withdraw from the Gulf by 1971, together with the simultaneous increase of Soviet and Chinese aid to the PRSY (and through it to radical groups in the area) had led the Western governments to urge a Saudi compromise with the moderate régime in Sana'a. According to official Yemeni sources, both the USA and Italy were instrumental in convincing Saudi Arabia of the need to come to terms with the Yemeni Republic, and acted as intermediaries in the indirect contacts between Sana'a and Riyadh prior to the Djeckta dialogue of March 1970.\(^9\)

**The Economic and Financial Crisis**

Another environmental factor was the state of the economy. The economic situation, as explained in the previous chapter, had become increasingly strained during 1969 as the financial crisis became ever more acute. In 1969, the riyal was worth less than 30 per cent of its 1964 value; by 1970, the value of exports amounted to only 7 per cent compared with imports, and government revenues covered only 56 per cent of current expenditure.\(^{10}\)

The problem was rooted in the economic stagnation of the preceding three years and was constantly exacerbated by increasing government expenditure necessitated by the continuing war. Immediately upon coming to power on 2 September, 1969, al-Kurshmi's government adopted stringent austerity measures to cope with the situation, including the reduction of government expenditure by 60 per cent, temporary
suspension of the issue of currency, and introduction of certain new taxes. However, these measures were never implemented because of strong opposition from the armed forces and tribal armies.

The rising cost of the war made it difficult for the government to secure even essential funds for running its daily activities and the public services were substantially reduced. The inability of the al-Kurshmi cabinet to implement its policy while satisfying the demands of the army of the tribes led to its resignation on 2 February, 1970. Consequently, the YAR leadership became even more convinced that the only permanent solution to the problem lay in settlement of the war. In such depressing circumstances, they were aware that the options available to the YAR were severely limited since continuation of the war was becoming financially unsustainable.

**The Invitation To The Djedda Conference**

In early March 1970, the YAR Foreign ministry received an invitation to participate in the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference due to take place in Djedda on 23 March. All Muslim states were invited to the Djedda Conference and all accepted the invitation except the PRSY and Syria. The invitation was sent by the provisional secretariat consisting of Morocco, Senegal and Somalia, but was widely interpreted as a sign of Saudi desire to talk to the Yemeni Republicans. It seemed that the YAR leaders were expecting the invitation since they had prior knowledge of the Saudi intention to open a dialogue and they were receptive to it. Although they set conditions for taking part in the conference, the fact that the YAR attended the conference contrary to its previous objections supports this assumption. The conference
itself was an implementation of a decision adopted by the Islamic summit held in Rabat in September 1969 as a response to the burning of the al-Aksa mosque in Jerusalem that summer.

By that time, King Faysal appeared ready to open direct, though not official, dialogue with the Yemeni Republicans. This reconciliatory approach was conditioned by the King's increasing fears of mounting threats during 1968 and 1969 from disturbing developments in South Yemen and the Gulf as well as internal upheavals at home. For nearly seven years, the Saudi monarch has consistently maintained that the war in North Yemen was between the legitimate government of the Imam and the Republican usurpers. He refused to talk to the Republicans because, as he put it, the conflict was an internal Yemeni matter and insisted that the Republicans should talk to their Royalist countrymen instead. King Faysal maintained this position even during the time when he was engaged in indirect contact with al-Iryani. No details are available on the nature of these contacts, which Yemeni sources believe to have taken place during 1969 and the first two months of 1970. It seems, however, that the king was insisting on a Yemeni government in which the Republicans and the Royalists were equally represented. A change in the king's position was conveyed at a meeting held in Beirut in the first week of February 1970 between leading Royalists and Republican personalities. During the meeting, the Royalists disclosed that King Faysal was now ready to come to terms with the Republican government and would support a settlement within a Republican framework. Among suggestions for ways of furthering the dialogue was the proposal that a ceasefire be called while negotiations took place. But nothing came from this due to Republican outrage at the capture of Sadah by Royalist forces in mid-February, shortly after the Beirut talks had ended. Clearly the
Royalist offer reflected a change in King Faysal's attitude, and this was made even more apparent by participation in the Beirut talks of Shaykh Kimal Adham, his brother-in-law. Thus the invitation to the Djedda Islamic Conference came as no surprise to the YAR decision-makers.

**Perceptions of the Decision-Makers**

As with other decisions in this study, members of the Republican Council and member of the Cabinet were all ostensibly involved in the decision-making process. In practice, however, the decision evolved within the ultimate decision-taking elite comprising, in addition to al-Iryani, the two other members of the Republican Council, Muhammad Ali Uthman and Hassan al-Amri, Premier al-Ayni as well as Shaykh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar. As chairman of the Consultative Assembly, Shaykh al-Ahmar was not a member of the formally authorised decision-making unit but he played an important part in all stages of the decisional process.

Perhaps it was no accident that the same men who, as leaders of the November 1967 government, initiated the reconciliation policy in the first place, subsequently became responsible for its implementation. Muhsin al-Ayni's tenure as prime minister lasted less than two months, from 5 November to 22 December, 1967 when he resigned the office to be appointed personal representative of al-Iryani and the country's permanent representative at the UN. He later went on to be the YAR's ambassador in Moscow. Meanwhile, al-Iryani had by force of his personality and his political skill become a driving force for the cohesion of the Republic. The confidence invested in him by his
colleagues was confirmed in November 1969 when the National Council refused to accept his decision not to stand for re-election for the chairmanship of the Republican Council. The political crisis which resulted from the resignation of al-Amri's cabinet early in July demonstrated the difficulty of finding leaders acceptable to all political factions and consolidated al-Iryani's position as a universally unobjectionable leader.\textsuperscript{18}

Al-Iryani's contribution to the consolidation of the Republic was temporarily hampered in October 1969 by the resumption of Royalist military operations, which clearly marked the renewal of the Saudis' hostile posture towards the YAR. The ensuing tension between Riyadh and Sana'a was in contrast to the atmosphere which had prevailed over the previous twelve months. During that time the situation was, from the YAR leaders point of view, reassuring; not only were the Royalists rapidly disintegrating but Saudi Arabia was also giving every indication that it was ready to reconsider its policy towards North Yemen. The Saudi decision in February 1969 to allow for the first time Yemenis holding Republican passports to make their pilgrimage to Mecca was just one of these indications.\textsuperscript{19} For a while the YAR leaders might have felt that there was no need to make concessions to the Royalists any more, especially since emotions were running high against the government's policy of encouraging the return of ex-Royalists. Even contacts being made with the implicit blessing of the Republican Council between Republican and Royalist personalities in Beirut at the time were threatened by inter-Republican disagreement on the issue. In July 1969, Lieutenant-General al-Amri rejected a proposal for formal but secret talks between the two sides in Athens, saying that such talks should be conducted openly.\textsuperscript{20} The resumption of the Royalist offensive alerted the YAR leaders to the fact that the
military defeat of the Royalists would not in itself end the war. Negotiations would have to take place in which both the interests of the Saudis and their Royalists allies would be accommodated.

Among the members of the governing élite, al-Iryani held the consistent view on the need for accommodation with the Royalist side, meaning Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Royalists. Although he was convinced of the antagonistic Saudi attitude to the Yemeni Republic, he believed that a permanent state of hostility between the two countries was not necessarily inevitable. He believed that if it had not been for al-Baydani's provocative gestures towards Saudi Arabia and his public threats in the early days of the Revolution, the Saudis might have resigned themselves to the de facto situation and recognised the YAR in the early days of its inception. 71

Al-Iryani's reconciliatory views towards Saudi Arabia and his advocacy of the Djedda deal were coloured by an awareness of the need to placate King Faysal and allay the king's fears of the Republican régime. This in turn was based on his astute perception of the Saudi King. The Yemeni president perceived the Saudi monarch as a stubborn and proud bedouin chief who would not concede without face-saving devices, even when he was on the wrong side. Al-Iryani's assessment of Faysal's character was formed from his meetings with the Saudi leader on several occasions. The latter's hostility to any establishment of Republican rule in Yemen had been known to al-Iryani ever since he exchanged views with the then Crown Prince Faysal in 1961. 72 Although King Faysal's attitude towards the Yemeni Republic appeared to alter in 1969, particularly in light of the resumption of the YAR-FRG relations in July 1969, he could not change his position easily, especially since he felt moral obligations to the defeated
Yemeni Royalists. This was confirmed when, during the First Islamic Summit Conference held in Rabat in September 1969, King Faysal rejected an attempt made by the Amir of Kuwait to initiate a dialogue between the two. The king said he would never recognise the YAR and refused even to shake hands with the Yemeni President.\(^1\)\(^2\) The King's intransigence did not discourage al-Iryani who was intent on diluting the king's suspicion of the Yemeni Republic so that a constructive dialogue could begin between the two sisterly countries. In December 1969 he took the initiative during the Rabat Arab summit and appealed to King Faysal to spell out his misgivings of the Yemeni Republic which lay at the root of the Kingdom's continued hostility. Again the King refused to back down claiming that he had no quarrel with the YAR, adding that in order to settle the war in Yemen, the Republicans had to come to terms with their Royalist "brothers". In October 1969 he made a direct appeal to King Faysal to put an end to the Kingdom's interference in Yemen, affirming that the Yemeni revolution was a revolution for the Yemeni people who desired peace for themselves as well as for others.\(^3\)\(^4\)

Kadi al-Iryani wholeheartedly welcomed the reconciliation proposals communicated to him by his prime minister on 25-26 March, 1970 and supported the return of the Royalists to Sana'a in the face of fierce opposition from many Republicans. This attitude towards the return of the Royalists was in keeping with his long-held beliefs. Like other early reformers of the Free Yemeni movement, al-Iryani had always advocated the sort of political change that would replace the Imam's divisive policies with those which would achieve greater national unity. The establishment of the Republic was certainly a radical change, from the tyrannical rule of the Imam to constitutional rule based on the will of the people. But national unity, long sought by
the older generation of the Free Yemeni Movement, was thought to have been eclipsed by the civil war which had divided the Yemenis into Republicans and Royalists. Al-Iryani was one of the three moderate leaders who had initiated a policy of national reconciliation early in 1963 and had never deviated from it. This policy, which took shape during the Khamir Popular Conference of 1965 and constituted the core of the post-November government, was based on two principles: to uphold the Republican régime and at the same time to restore national unity by the incorporation of the "misled elements" (followers of the deposed Imam) to the legitimate fold of the Republican régime.25

Al-Iryani made his views on the return of the Royalists known to the Republican Council and Cabinet when they met in joint session on March 27 to consider the progress of the Djedda talks. He told the meeting that the Royalists return and the inclusion of some of them in the government was one element in the proposed reconciliation which he personally would have no difficulty in accepting.26 When the senior Royalist figures arrived in Sana'a on May 23, al-Iryani delivered a welcoming speech in which he suggested that the differences between Republicans, like himself, and the Royalists, like Ahmad al-Shami, a leading Royalist of moderate leanings, were really only over whether the government should be Republican or Imamic. He said that while in prison for their part in the 1948 revolt, both he and al-Shami had held the same views and

"wished for [the sort of] progress for the Yemeni people as has been achieved today under the Republic.... where the Yemeni people govern themselves, uphold their sovereignty against any foreign intervention, develop their society, live freely... and, beyond and above all, preserve benevolent

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religious values... These were ideas shared by both of us (at the time)... We differed on the means of achievement but now we share the same values and hold similar views." 

Like al-Iryani, Premier al-Ayni had been an advocate of reconciliation since the idea first took shape in the Kharamir Conference resolutions, the resolutions upon which the Nu'man government's policies were based. As a radical nationalist, al-Ayni was inclined not to accept a compromise with the anti-Republican forces. As a pragmatist, however, he saw no other way of settling the war. He was confident the Republic could withstand any Royalist military assaults but he also knew the YAR lacked the capability to achieve an outright victory against the Saudis and their Royalists clients. In his policy statement, which he put before the National Council on 16 April, 1970, he admitted that continuation of the war could achieve no decisive victory and could only bring more misery to the country. He said that acceptance of the Djedda accord was the only way to establish fruitful relations with Saudi Arabia and to enable the Yemenis to forgo their past differences and work together for a more prosperous future. Above all, the agreement aimed at putting an end to the conflict which, in his words had "devastated our country, destroyed our dignity and made us dependent on others, always receiving but giving nothing in return." He added, "I would have deceived you if I said we could accomplish anything while we are confronted with war, anarchy, and destruction." 

Al-Ayni repeated the same pragmatic views when, upon his return from Djedda, he explained the government's decision to the officer corps. Responding to the astonishment expressed by some of the audience of the government's consent to the return of the Royalists, he made it clear he saw no other way of settling the war,
saying to the resentful officers "had you succeeded in overcoming the Royalists we would not have needed this deal." 9

The Decisional Process

The invitation to the Djedda Conference offered the YAR decision-makers an opportunity to further the country's foreign policy objectives of which they were acutely conscious. In no way did the invitation constitute a surprise to the Yemeni leadership. In essence, the decision to accept the invitation was a carefully calculated tactical move which aimed at facilitating a direct dialogue with Saudi Arabia. Although the predecisional activities covered the month of March, 1970, the formal consideration of the issue and the subsequent decision took only two days. However, it took a further month before a decision on the implementation was adopted on 26 April.

The Pre-Decisional Stage

A joint meeting of the Republican Council and the Cabinet was convened on 16 March to consider the official response. Al-Iryani's contacts with King Faysal were not disclosed but the possibility of holding talks with the Saudis and the Royalists was exhaustively discussed. It was decided that participation would by itself be advantageous to the Republic for it would simultaneously emphasise its commitment to the Islamic cause and enhance the régime's image in the Islamic world. If the looked-for talks did materialise, so much the better. 10 The premier did not participate in the meeting because he was out of the capital, but he was obviously consulted beforehand for he had
announced the Government's intention to take part in the conference on 11 March, five days before the government formally took the decision. On 20 March, the high policy élite, including Shaykh Abdallah ibn-Husayn al-Ahmar, held a meeting to discuss the issue. No information is available as to what was discussed in that meeting but the subsequent talks in Djedda suggest that the meeting was crucial to final agreement on the issue.

The Djedda dialogue was successful because the Saudis had decided to change their Yemeni policy. Until 1969, they had supported the Royalists in their bid to restore the Imamate to Yemen, but when the Royalists failed in this task and regional politics forced a change in the Saudi foreign policy, King Faysal began to consider them a liability. By the time the Djedda Conference took place, the king had already decided to come to terms with the Yemeni Republic and encouraged the Royalists to negotiate with the Republican delegation. Faced with the prospect of being left with no support, the Royalist leaders held a meeting where it was agreed that those who wished to take the Saudi advice could do so and the others could go their own way. On 20 March, when he realised that most of his supporters would take the former option, al-Badr issued a statement urging Yemenis of all persuasions to meet in a national conference in order to decide on their future government. Later, when the agreement between the Republican and Royalist sides had crystallised, al-Badr gave his permission to the Royalists to consider the proposals and arrive at their own decision, undertaking to be bound by the will of the majority of the Yemeni people. Shortly afterwards he left for Britain, implicitly admitting that his campaign for the restoration of the Imamate to Yemen was finally over.
The Saudi desire to reach a modus vivendi with the Yemeni Republic was reflected during the Djedda talks in several ways, the most important of which was their acceptance of the Republicans' basic demands. In a series of informal talks between the YAR delegation and Saudi officials, which were facilitated by the good offices of a number of Arab foreign ministers participating in the conference, it became clear the Kingdom was not insisting on its old views. No Saudi objection was raised to either of the fundamental Republican conditions - no compromise on the Republican régime and banishment of the Hamid al-Din family. The only controversial issue was the Saudi suggestion of a national reconciliation conference. King Faysal was anxious not to look as if he had abandoned the Royalists for the Kingdom's own interests and thus he insisted that any Saudi-YAR rapprochement must be preceded by a settlement arrived at by direct negotiation between the Republicans and the Royalists. A national reconciliation conference was proposed as a way to formalise the Royalist return to Yemen within the existing Republican structure.\(^3\) The YAR's Premier rejected this idea on the grounds that it would only give the Royalists a formal status vis-à-vis the government.\(^3\) Al-Ayni suggested that simple ongoing talks were more practical and would yield more positive results.\(^3\) Not wishing to cause disruption of the talks by pressing the issue, it would seem that the Saudis decided to leave the matter to the Republicans. No written agreement was concluded when the talks ended on 28 March, but the accord between the two parties did not refer to the conference issue. The accord covered the following:

* a strict ceasefire
* discontinuation of hostile propaganda
* cessation of Saudi aid to the Royalists
* return to Yemen of the Royalists, except the Hamid al-Din family. **

How The Choice Was Made

Despite the fact that reconciliation with the Royalist side had long been an objective for the post-November leadership, there were Yemenis who opposed such a policy; so al-Iryani was keen on secrecy. Details of the ongoing talks in Djedda among the high-policy élite were communicated to the cabinet only at a later stage. On 26 March, while negotiations were proceeding in Djedda, al-Iryani summoned the Republican Council and the Cabinet to keep them abreast of the situation, but only the general outlines of the accord were disclosed. **

Full details of the proposed accord were disclosed by al-Ayni upon his return from Djedda on 29 March. The decision evolved during the next two days into face-to-face contact between members of the ultimate decision-making unit. On 30 March, al-Iryani met with all members of the delegation to discuss the outcome of the Premier's mission to Djedda, and on the same day al-Ayni and Shaykh Abdullah al-Ahmari met with General al-Amri for the same purpose. The following day, al-Ayni briefed a joint session of the Republican Council and Cabinet on his delegation's participation in the Djedda Conference, as well as the contacts undertaken with the Saudis, but in response the two councils were only required to approve and legitimise the choice that had already been made by the decision-making élite. In all probability, it was al-Iryani who actually made the decision to accept the Djedda
deal. While Premier al-Ayni was in Djedda conducting the talks, Muhammad Ali Uthman and General al-Amri, the other members of the decision-making élite were out of the capital. Al-Amri had some reservations about the Djedda accord and withdrew to Ta'iz but was eventually reconciled to the extent that he headed the YAR's first official delegation to Saudi Arabia on July 1970. Muhammad Ali Uthman was fully supportive of the accord and his absence was explained by some sources as being due to his strained relations with the prime minister.

These consultations were followed by a joint meeting of the Republican Council and Cabinet on 31 March with a view to consider the Premier's report on his mission to Djedda. Although most of the cabinet members did not know the full details of the proposed deal, no one raised any serious question. This was partly because they already knew the main features of that deal but mainly because they all shared the same view on the basic demands for any peaceful settlement of the war. Ever since the first peace talks in Erkuwit in 1964, the Republicans had insisted on two basic demands as a precondition to any peaceful settlement - maintenance of the Republican régime and exclusion of the Hamid al-Din family. As the proposed deal appeared to have met both these demands, the two councils had promptly decided to accept it. The Information and Yemeni Unity Affairs Minister, Abdallah Humran, announced that the two councils had agreed to the prime minister's report and had thanked al-Ayni and members of the delegation "for the service they rendered to the sons of Yemen so that they could return to their country and take part in its development and also for ending the war and friction which cost the Yemenis so much."
Ten days after the decision was agreed, the first practical step in the implementation of the Djedda accord was taken. In mid-April there was a ceasefire. Saudi Arabia ordered the Royalist forces to terminate military operations and also asked the Royalist commander to withdraw from the al-Djawf region.

The stipulation in the Djedda accord that the Royalists should be allowed to return to their homes was unnecessary simply because ever since November 1967 the government in Sana'a had constantly worked for the return of the Royalists (with the exception, of course, of the Hamid al-Din family). Many Royalists had in fact already returned and by the time the Djedda talks started, the rest were divided among themselves as to their best course. Those who enjoyed special status and were politically committed to the Royalist cause, like Hashim ibn Hashim the long serving Information Minister in the Imam's cabinet, held back, trying to obtain as many concessions from the Republicans as possible before accepting Republican rule. Many tribesmen whose stake in the war was purely financial decided there was no point in holding out, especially after it became evident that the Saudis were about to stop payments. Their shaykhs had several meetings in Djedda with Premier al-Ayni who urged them to go back to Yemen while at the same time refusing the Saudi pressure to negotiate with them as equals. Many eventually returned on their own.

Last-minute difficulties against implementation were raised by some ex-Royalists, mainly tribal shaykhs, who insisted on holding a national reconciliation conference, an idea that had already been rejected by the YAR government. There are two explanations for this:
either these shaykhs were not aware of the less than firm commitment of King Faysal to the idea or the Saudi King himself might have been trying to push the idea behind the scenes as far as possible. These shaykhs gathered in Raydah, about 100 miles north of Sana'a over a period of a few days demanding that a conference be held. Initially the government ignored them but eventually al-Ayni agreed to meet with them at al-Rawdah on the outskirts of the capital. Somehow these elements were reconciled and gave their allegiance to the Republic without any preconditions. On 11 May, 1970 the YAR premier announced that most of them had dispersed and some had returned to Sana'a to declare their allegiance to the Republic.

In the case of this decision, implementation was a particularly difficult stage of the decisional process. Not only was there dissension over the proposed reconciliation conference issue, but a difficult problem was posed by the refusal of many Republicans to accept Royalists back into the government; most Republicans believed this would enable the Royalists to undermine the Republic and might distort its revolutionary character. The return in the first half of 1969 of leading Royalists had already provoked strong opposition, mainly from the intellectuals and various political groups, and Kadi al-Iryani had no illusion as to the reaction concerning the government's decision to include leading Royalists in the Republic's institutions. Both he and al-Ayni did their best to prepare the Republicans psychologically for this eventuality. Initially, on 30 March, al-Ayni said that no specific agreement had been arrived at in Djedda with regard to this matter and that he merely urged the Royalists he met to return to their country. However, in the following days, a commitment regarding the Royalists was disclosed in his report to the joint meeting of the Republican Council and Cabinet.
It took one month of intensive campaigning by the YAR leaders to convince opponents to the Djedda accord of the propriety of the government's action. This effort amounted to a rationalisation of the decision after it had already been taken. However, due to the significance of the issue, al-Ayni had undertaken pre-decisional consultations with the various political pressure groups. According to him, before leaving for Djedda he had consulted the Nasirites, the Ba'athists and the communists. All showed an understanding of the imperatives for the potential accord but insisted they could not support it publicly and might even express opposition.

Nevertheless, the opposition to the government's position was not effective enough to warrant a change of policy. There had been no opposition from within the two real centres of power - the tribes and the army - and the intellectuals lacked unity and organisation. More importantly, al-Iryani had joined forces with al-Ayni and their combined influence enabled the deal to be progressed. Some suggested that al-Iryani had foreseen opposition to the eventual reconciliation package and persuaded al-Ayni to head the government because of the latter's appeal to the young officers and intellectuals who were most deeply opposed to reconciliation with the other side. Both Republican leaders took it upon themselves to rationalise the decision, and each appealed to a different Republican segment. While al-Iryani was respected by the conservatives, al-Ayni was acceptable to the radicals. But since the conservatives were basically supportive of reconciliation, the real burden fell on al-Ayni.

For obvious reasons, the government was most concerned with the position of the military. In January 1970, possibly due to the beginnings of opposition with the army to a possible accord, the government removed the principal figures in the High Command known to
be radicals and replaced them with loyal officers. Subsequently the new command was gratifyingly receptive to the government's policy. No sooner had al-Ayni returned from Djedda, than Colonel Muhammad al-Iryani (Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and relative of Kadi al-Iryani) and Colonel Musayn al-Maswari (the new Chief of Staff) sent, on April 1, a note congratulating the delegation on their success. A few days later, al-Ayni held a meeting with the senior officers at the High Command headquarters to explain the Djedda accord and the reasons behind the government's acceptance of it. This was followed by a similar meeting with junior officers for the same purpose. Questions were asked during these two meetings, but no objections to the government's decision were raised.

Al-Ayni also held a meeting at the National Council headquarters where he explained the Djedda accord to civil servants from various parts of the country. Overall, he is said to have spoken to 700 officers, military cadets, civil servants and leaders of public opinion.

Although there was a certain amount of internal political pressure, there were no legislative constraints on the government's policy. The National Council's authority over the executive was enhanced by new powers accorded to it by a recent Republican decree, but it did not discuss the matter when this issue was referred to it. The National Council which was dominated by conservative shaykhs, had always supported the government. Most of its shaykhly members had enthusiastically supported the government's policy of reconciliation with the Royalists. The Council had rushed to support the reconciliation deal reached at Djedda even before the government presented its report on the issue. Upon hearing the report on the Djedda talks which Shaykh ibn al-Ahmar presented on 7 April, in which
he had been a participant, the Council announced its approval of all the steps taken. Shaykh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar was an old ally of Kadi al-Iryani and had been associated with the moderate Republicans ever since the first intra-Republican discord surfaced in 1963.51 For his part, al-Ayni reported to the Council on 14 April; three days later, on 17 April, the chairman of the Council sent a letter to the chairman of the Republican Council in which he conveyed their support for the government and further authorised it and the Republican Council to take whatever steps were necessary to reach a final agreement with Saudi Arabia over settlement of the war.52

According to an official Yemeni source, King Faysal stipulated during the Djedda talks that the establishment of relations between the Kingdom and the YAR was contingent upon the successful reconciliation of Republicans and Royalists within a period of three months. If the king had in fact made such a stipulation, Kadi al-Iryani would have had this target date in mind when, at the end of April, he decided to tackle the problem. He called for an emergency joint meeting of the Republican Council and Cabinet. This meeting, which was also attended by Shaykh ibn al-Ahmar, was held on 25 April, 1970. At the conclusion, the Information and Yemeni Unity Affairs Minister made a statement in which he said that:

"the two councils, in their joint session, have considered the steps which should be taken to enhance the bases of peace in the light of the understanding reached during the participation of the Yemeni delegation, headed by the Premier and Foreign Minister Muhsin al-Ayni, in the Islamic Foreign Minister's Conference. The two Councils have approved the
The decision did not specify either the number of posts or the nature of the portfolios to be allocated to the Royalists. In mid-May Colonel Yahya al-Mutawakkil, a Republican officer who had family contacts on the Royalist side, was sent to Djedda where he arranged the final details for the Royalist's entry into Government. On 23 May, thirty senior Royalists arrived in Sana'a and on the same day three Republican decrees were issued. The first appointed Ahmad al-Shami to membership of the Republican Council along with Ahmad Muhammad Nu'man who had been living in Beirut ever since his release from Cairo in October 1967. By the second decree, four Royalists were appointed to the Cabinet as ministers for state, public works, justice and Awkaf (Islamic endowments). The third decree provided for the appointment of twelve others to membership of the al-Madjlis al-Watani (the parliament), including Shaykh Ali al-Ghadir who was appointed vice-chairman of the Council. Three days later it was announced that all confiscated estates and properties belonging to the Royalists, except those belonging to the Hamid al-Din family, were to be returned to their former owners.

Of equal significance in the same decree was the appointment of three Royalists as governors of Sadah, al-Dawf and al-Mahabshah, all near the Saudi border. Some sources suggest that this was a condition of the Djedda accord. An American authority on Yemen gathered the stipulation was that areas which had been under nominal control of the Royalists were to be administered by Royalist personnel. Indeed, this decentralisation of authority was, according to the same source, at the core of the understanding.
Even after the YAR government had carried out its part of the Djedda accord, Saudi Arabia hesitated for two months before it granted recognition to the Yemeni Republic. Some Republican leaders believed that King Faysal was still sceptical of the Republicans' ability to implement the agreement in the face of internal opposition and preferred not to rush recognition. Others told the writer the Saudis were merely sticking to the three-month deadline stipulated at Djedda.57 On 21 July, 1970, a large delegation led by General al-Amri began a six-day visit to Saudi Arabia. During the visit, on 23 July, Saudi Arabia formally announced its recognition of the YAR, explaining that recognition was accorded, as the official statement puts it, because the Republican side had followed the steps agreed upon in Djedda, in March 1970.58 On July 26, at the conclusion of the visit, a joint communiqué was issued which stated that:

"as far as future bilateral relations were concerned the two sides have agreed to exchange diplomatic representation at ambassadorial level. Economic, cultural and commercial relations at various levels will also be exchanged. Bilateral agreements in all these fields will also be concluded. Furthermore, the two sides affirmed their resolve to cooperate in a fruitful and constructive manner aiming at achieving the interests of the two sisterly countries."59

However, a period of adjustment lasting nearly one year was to pass before any real co-operation was initiated between Sana'a and Riyadh. Furthermore, it took two years before the Kingdom sent its first resident ambassador to Sana'a, in May 1972.
The fact that reconciliation with Saudi Arabia also ended the Republican-Royalist war meant that most environmental components were affected by the decision. Full examination of these effects would clearly be beyond the scope of this study. The following section will therefore be limited to effects which became apparent during the first year.

The behaviour of Saudi Arabia towards the YAR throughout the war became a vital element in the latter's decisional format. The reconciliation decision added to the significance of that element in several ways. It generally enabled the Kingdom to approach the YAR decision-makers directly and, through some of them, penetrate the decision-making system of the Republic. As early as 1971, Saudi Arabia began paying regular subsidies to the three important forces in the Republic's structure. This constituted annual budget support for central government, payment of the armed forces personnel and direct subsidies to the tribes. The kingdom reportedly exerted immediate and direct pressure on al-Ayni's government to collaborate with Riyadh's persistent endeavours to destabilise the NLF government in Aden. The YAR's own relations with the PRSY were adversely affected by the decision, as the latter perceived a threat to its security in the northern government's reconciliation with Saudi Arabia. Immediately after the decision was announced, the PRSY began to show signs of unease. This prompted al-Iryani in mid-June to send a letter to the PRSY president, in which he drew attention to certain insinuations critical of the reconciliation and reportedly warned against any escalation of such tendencies. Earlier, on 6 May, Premier al-Ayni had sent a letter to his Southern counterpart
explaining the situation and assuring him that no harm should come from the YAR-Saudi reconciliation.63

YAR relations with other Arab states were only slightly affected by the decision. The radical Arab régimes in Syria, the UAR, Iraq and Algeria appreciated the reasons behind the YAR action and none objected to it.64 The Arab conservative régimes welcomed the prospects of Saudi-YAR co-operation and on 15 August Jordan went so far as to reinstate its recognition of the YAR. However, the Arabs in the Gulf perceived a threat from the radical South Yemeni régime and, much as did Saudi Arabia, expected the YAR to take positive action to promote a change in Aden towards a régime of more moderate complexion.65

The eventual acceptance of Royalists by the Republican government and the end of more than seven years of fighting were perceived by the YAR leaders as a vindication of their moderate policies, both domestic and foreign. This perception was enhanced by recognition of the YAR by Britain and France within a week of the Saudi recognition; Iran and Turkey added their recognition shortly afterwards.66 Although no immediate economic aid flowed from the West, the stage was obviously set for future co-operation. Equally gratifying to the Yemeni leaders was the fact that the scope of their country's relations had become broader. They concluded that their non-alignment policy had at last paid off.67

With respect to the international environment, the decision generally had a favourable impact. Contrary to Western reports, the USSR had consistently urged a peaceful settlement to the war and showed no reservations towards the national reconciliation. Nevertheless, al-
Ayni took no chances and assured the socialist countries through their Sana'a embassies that the government decision was motivated solely by the need for infusions of aid.68 Al-Ayni's argument was apparently accepted but YAR-USSR relations, which were already stagnant, remained so for the first few years of the 1970s.65

Two major internal environment components were particularly receptive to the feedback effect: the political structure and the economic capability. Incorporation of ex-Royalists into the state's structure had only a mild and short-term effect on the composition of these institutions. At the beginning of 1971 when Ahmad al-Shami was appointed an Ambassador to the United Kingdom, ex-Royalists in the National Council were not elected to the newly established Madjlis al-Shura (the Consultative Assembly), while their colleagues in the cabinet at that time were out by 1975.70 A more important effect of the decision was reflected in consolidation of the post-November leadership's political capability. The national unity brought about by reconciliation improved the credibility of the régime whilst simultaneously enhancing its conservative character. A Western source observed that the Permanent Constitution promulgated in December 1970 embodied the thinking of the older generation of the Free Yemenis who dominated the régime.71 However, there were still many Republicans who remained suspicious of this reconciliation. This was shown by students protest strikes which took place in several towns. Some radical officers were transferred from posts on suspicion that they might interfere with the arrangements.72

Contrary to expectations, the YAR's economic capability was not greatly enhanced as a result of reconciliation, at least not immediately. Several countries provided technical assistance, but
little was offered in a way of direct financial support. The YAR leaders had hoped that the Saudi recognition would be followed closely by economic aid, and in fact economic aid had actually been promised during al-Amri's visit to the Kingdom in July 1970. However, Saudi financial support did not materialise until a year later, in mid-1971. Meanwhile, the financial crisis had partially receded due to a $6 million loan obtained from a Dutch Bank, guaranteed by the Saudi government. But during the first half of 1971 the situation deteriorated again and there was no knowing when relief would come.
NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII


3. Exchange of aerial raids took place on occasions through that stage of the war (November 1969 - February, 1970).

4. Personal interviews, see also *The Times*, 19 January and 3 April, 1970.


9. Personal interviews.


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12. See Robert Burrowes, op. cit., p.35.


16. During the Rabat Islamic Summit (September 1969) the YAR delegation had opposed the decision to hold the Islamic Foreign Minister's meeting in Djedda, in view of the then tense relations between Sana'a and Riyadh. See al-Diplomaci, No.21, 1 April, 1970.


22. ibid.

23. From chairman al-Iryani's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated December, 1989.

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24. ME/3212/A/1.


26. Personal interviews.

27. Text of the speech in al-Diplumaci (weekly newsletter) published by the Public Relations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No.25, 30 May, 1970.


30. ibid.


32. Al-Badr repeated this proposal on the eve of the Djedda Islamic Conference. See ME/3336/A/5; al-Hayat, 23 March, 1970. Information on the intra-Royalist argument was conveyed to the writer by ex-Royalist leaders.


36. None of the reports on the negotiations covered all points of the accord. See The Economist, 11 April, 1970; The New York Times, 15 April, 1970. Complete list of the agreed points was provided by Muhsin al-Ayni in his replies to the writer's inquiries dated February 1990.

37. Personal interviews.


39. Personal interviews.

40. Personal interviews.

41. Al-Thawrah, 31 March and 1 April, 1970.


45. Al-Thawrah, 31 March, 1970; SWB, ME/3342/A/7-8.


47. Personal interview.

48. Al-Thawrah, 1 April, 1970.

49. From the replies of Colonel al-Iryani, op. cit.

50. From the writer's interview with Shaykh Abdallah ibn al-Ahm, October, 1988.

51. In general, the tribes and their shaykhs including ibn al-Ahm were supportive of the moderate (traditionalist) Republicans who consistently maintained that the tribes were the crucial power in the country and their interests should be accommodated. Shaykh ibn al-Ahm's trust of Kadi al-Iryani was manifested when, during the turmoil in Sana'a of 3 October, 1967 he told the Arab Tripartite Commission that the tribes authorised al-Iryani to speak on their behalf. See Akher Sa'ah, November 8, 1967.

52. Al-Thawrah, 22 April, 1970; al-Hayat, 8 April, 1970.

53. Al-Djumhuriyyah, 26 April, 1970.


57. Personal interviews with prominent figures on both sides - Republican and Royalist.


64. Replies of Muhsin al-Ayni to the writer's enquiries dated February 1990. Al-Ayni mentioned that the Algerian President Boumedien had told King Faysal of his support of the reconciliation on Yemen.

66. Great Britain recognized the YAR on 29 July, France on 24 July, and Iran followed on 9 September, 1970.

67. See al-Iryani's comments on the returns of the reconciliation in al-Thawrah, 8 May, 1970.

68. Personal interviews; Joseph Mallone The YAR's Game of Nations, op. cit., p.545. Premier al-Ayni had told the writer that the Soviets were wholeheartedly supportive of the reconciliation and, contrary to Western media reports, had always urged an end to the war.


70. For composition of the six post-reconciliation cabinets which included ex-Royalists, see Sidjil Watha'ik, op. cit., pp.31-45.


72. ibid.