CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION
The Findings

This investigation into the four major decisions has identified the procedures followed by the policy-makers in the decision-making process. These procedures have been included in the decisional process of the investigation but are distinguished here to facilitate categorisation. Decisional procedures differ from one case to another, and the procedures considered here are those which were shown to be of most relevance. Although the pattern was not all followed in all the decisions examined here, they could be considered in toto as representing the procedures adopted by the YAR decision-makers during the war period. These are: the search for alternatives, consultations, perceptions of policy options, the pattern of choice, and implementation.

The Search For Alternatives

Despite the fact that the decisional situation properties in the Khartoum (August 1967) and Djedda (1970) Agreements were quite different from each other, the YAR decision-makers responded to them in a similar manner. Neither al-Sallal nor al-Iryani attempted to search for alternative policies to cope with the new situation. Instead, both maintained existing policies. In this context al-Iryani, who had ample time to gather information and consider alternatives to the Djedda proposals, responded to the situation much like al-Sallal who was under real stress during the day the Khartoum Agreement was announced. Both resorted to what might have looked like "defensive avoidance strategy". However, far from being so, the maintenance of existing policies was based on the assumption that the
policy had been carefully developed over time and, in addition, represented a consensus policy. Al-Sallal explained his rejection of the reactivation of the Saudi-Egyptian agreement of August 1965 on Yemen (the Djedda Agreement) by the fact that the agreement had been rejected by both the Government and people of Yemen. On the other hand, acceptance of the Djedda proposals of 1975 was explained by al-Iryani by the fact that they met Republican terms for political settlement of the war.

These instances point to the possibility that even in decision-making, decision-makers could, in certain cases, make a rational basis. Such a conclusion would confirm that clarity of goals would suppress the irrational influences on the decision-making. It might also confirm the validity of the widely held proposition which contends that the primacy of individuals in the decision-making process in third world countries, decisions in these polities exhibit less rational qualities.

Despite the fact that, in the cases of the PRSY and his colleagues in the YAR leadership would have had choices, their options were still perceived as limited. Limitations were related not to constraints in the environment but rather emanated from another fundamental factor, namely the lack of capacity to achieve the desired objectives.
Consultations

In two of the four cases examined in this study, the YAR leadership perceived the need to also consult other states before taking decisions, to explain the need to them after they were adopted. The YAR leadership was careful to inform other states of the YAR's intention to resume relations with the FRG in 1969, much as did their predecessors who in the summer of 1967 undertook to solicit the views of other states over the Khartoum Agreement. It is significant, however, that while non-Arab states were consulted and/or informed about the YAR policy in only two decisions, pertaining to the Khartoum Agreement and the intention to resume relations with the FRG, Arab states were consulted on virtually all four decisions. While frequent contacts with non-Arab governments stemmed from the need for political support and/or military assistance, the more consistent consultation with Arab governments suggest an awareness of the possible impact of Arab reaction to the YAR domestic politics. In the FRG case, the eagerness of the YAR leadership to consult other Arab states before it took the decision showed how keen it was to avoid possible Arab criticism and consequent public fury.

Consultation with domestic interests became an established procedure and, as we saw from this investigation, fairly wide-ranging consultations were held before each of the four decisions was taken. These consultations, however, aimed mainly at ascertaining the views of the military and the tribal shaykhs, and secure their support. Whilst highlighting the vital nature of the issues involved, these consultations reflected the need by the régime for both internal and external support. At a local level, regular consultations with representatives of the influential groups and the lack of enthusiasm
for mass political organisations brought out the dilemma confronted by many third world states regarding public participation in the formulation of state policies. It was a matter of being torn between the need for public support of the government's decisions and apprehension of too much public involvement in the process.

**Perceptions of Foreign Policy Options**

In weighing their policy options, the YAR leaders generally based their calculations on the perceived lack of capabilities to influence the predominantly hostile environment. In the PRSY case, the decision-makers perceived their options to be narrowed by lack of military capabilities sufficient to resist the Royalist forces which began to tighten their siege of the capital by the end of November 1967 whilst simultaneously projecting a forceful position with regard to the anticipated independence of South Yemen. Al-Iryani's citation of the NLF commitment to Yemen's unity as the reason for recognising the PRSY was one way of concealing the régime's inability to pursue active policies on both vital issues at the same time.

The decision concerning resumption of relations with the FRG (1969) revealed a pattern followed by the YAR in exploiting the opportunities latent in their external environment. Lacking the material capacity to influence the West regarding provision of much needed economic aid to the Yemeni Republic, the YAR leaders took advantage of the FRG's need to stem the accelerating rate of recognition of the GDR during 1969 and offered re-establishment of severed relations with Bonn in exchange for economic aid. The FRG Government's eagerness to re-establish relations with the Yemeni Republic was reflected in the
frequent visits during the first months of 1969 to Sana'a by West German non-political missions, which enhanced the YAR leadership's perception of the value of their political leverage vis-à-vis the FRG.

This case supports the theory advanced by some students of comparative politics to the effect that even small and resource-poor states like Yemen possess certain capacities to influence the international system to their advantage. A recent study concluded that a small state may influence a larger state if it possesses a desired "resource", be it a valued commodity or strategic location. The small state may threaten to align itself with the other side if satisfaction is not obtained. Given vision and a tendency for taking bold initiatives by their leadership, such states could overcome constraints manifested in their limited material capacity and pursue a more active foreign policy.

At the same time, the Yemeni case highlights the limitations of theories which link the foreign policy actions of small states solely with their material capacity. It should be noted, however, that the prior willingness of the FRG to trade off resumption of relations for economic aid and the communication of this willingness to Sana'a eliminated the need for the YAR leadership to survey the environment for such an opportunity. Inability of the small and poor states to respond to foreign policy problems and opportunities is usually attributed to incomplete information emanating from the lack of sufficient human and material bases for foreign policy negotiation.
**The Choice Pattern**

In all the cases examined here, decisions were made by the formal decisional forum, the Cabinet in the Khartoum case and jointly by the Republican Council and the Cabinet in the other three cases. They were arrived at by consensus, although the way consensus was achieved differed between cases. In the decision on reconciliation (1970) and the decision on resumption of relations with the FRG (1969), the shared belief among members of the decisional unit rather than the external threat was the decisive factor in achieving consensus. In both cases, members of the ultimate decisional unit - members of the Republican Council and the prime minister - shared the same basic values defined in terms of reconciliation with the Royalists and openness in foreign policy. These constituted agreed policies which enabled the formal decision-making forum, the Republican Council and the Cabinet, to take prompt and unanimous decisions on each of the above-mentioned issues.

Conversely, there was no consensus within the government in the case of the Khartoum decision. However, there was national consensus in opposition to the Agreement, which led the Cabinet members receptive to the accord to conceal their opposition and concur in the unanimous decision adopted by the Cabinet rejecting the Saudi-Egyptian accord. The consensus within the Government was ensured by al-Sallal when, on 12 October, he formed a new Cabinet comprising only individuals supportive of the government's policy in this respect.

While the war only indirectly affected the way the decisions were adopted, it became the major determinant of the pattern by which the choice was made in the case of the FRSY decision (1967). Views within
both the Republican Council and the Cabinet which were opposed to recognition of the imminent declaration of an independent South Yemeni state were put aside amidst the feeling regarding the need for solidarity against the Royalists, who at that time were tightening their siege of Sana'a.

**Implementation**

One of the characteristics of YAR decision-making during the period covered by this study was the salience of external environmental factors to the implementation of decisions. Lack of sufficient military and political capabilities to coerce other actors and lack of material enticements to persuade them to co-operate affected the way decisions were implemented. The difficulties encountered by the YAR decision-makers in achieving a full and speedy implementation to the two decisions on Reconciliation and the Khartoum accord reflected the limitations within the external environment. In the case of the reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, the YAR leadership were frustrated by the delay of King Faysal's recognition of the YAR in implementation of the Djedda deal; it had to resort to persuasion which culminated in the Kingdom's recognition nearly four months after the accord was reached between the two states.

In the case of the Khartoum Agreement (1967), al-Sallal's hesitation to deny entry to Yemen of the Arab Tripartite Commission during the summer of 1967 in implementation of his decision to reject the Saudi-Egyptian accord underlined the YAR's limited capacities to carry out its decisions.
The study has identified the various YAR foreign policy inputs and the interaction among these components within the decision-making system in selected cases during the war period. More specifically, it has pointed to the influences on this polity, the individuals responsible for converting these influences into decisions, and the process followed in the formulation and implementation of these decisions.

The External Influences

The political and military polarisation which prevailed during the 1960s on both systemic (international) and sub-systemic (regional) levels was the most important of the external influences which impinged on YAR foreign policy-making. During the first five years of the Yemeni revolution, from 1962-1967, the Saudi-Egyptian involvement which came mainly within their politico-ideological rivalry constituted the most important of these external influences. Until June 1967, the Saudi-Egyptian conflict and Egypt's direct intervention in YAR policies influenced both the direction and content of YAR foreign policy. In the last three years of the 1960s the Arab pressures on the Yemeni Republic continued, not only in the form of the Saudis persistent attempts to force a political change in Sana'a but also in the intensification of the Saudi conflict with the PDSY.

With regard to influences from the non-Arab environment, the rivalry between the two superpowers was the most relevant. The strong Soviet support of the Yemeni revolution was in accordance with their strategy of undermining the West's influence in the Arabian Peninsula. This triggered a response from the principal Western countries. In the
pre-1968 period, both Western and Soviet interests in the Yemen conflict was reflected in active, albeit indirect, involvement of both, with the West aiding the Royalists and the Soviets supporting the Republicans. The Egyptian withdrawal from Yemen in the aftermath of the June 1967 war contributed to the decline of American and Soviet interest in Yemeni affairs, thus making the international environment relatively less relevant to YAR foreign policy, although the Soviet role continued to be vital to Sana'a throughout 1968.

The Internal Influences

Concern for the security of the Republic, which was triggered by the Royalist counter-revolution, became the most relevant factor in determining YAR foreign policy-making during the 1960s. This sense of insecurity was compounded during the active fighting (1962-1968) by the Republicans' continuing perception of their insufficient capacity to ensure the survival of the régime. As a consequence, the pre-1969 foreign policy activities were restricted mainly to relations with countries which provided political and material support, including the UAR and the Soviet Union. Due attention was given to other important values, i.e. economic development and national reconciliation, only when the Royalist threat had subsided in late 1968. When that time came, YAR foreign policy activities were re-orientated towards relations with Saudi Arabia and the principal Western states which were perceived to possess the capabilities to help bring about the desired goals. Another major influence was the orientation of the pre- and post-1967 governing élite. The UAR intervention in Yemen was urged by almost all Republicans (but most strongly by the radicals) including President al-Sallal, who sought to increase the YAR
capabilities of achieving its goals (including security) by aligning the YAR with the UAR and forging closer relations with the Soviet Union and Arab revolutionary governments. Conversely, the moderates who assumed power on 15 November, 1967 undertook to disassociate the YAR from intra-Arab bickering. A policy of reconciliation and openness was pursued during the last three years of the 1960s as a means of insulating the Republic against the negative effects of the Arab and international environment while at the same time benefiting from all possible opportunities for the achievement of the régime's main objectives.

The Decision-Makers

While the official forum had changed with the changing constitutional arrangements, both President al-Sallal and Chairman al-Iryani had decisive roles in the formulation of YAR foreign policy. A combination of constitutional and political instability and the need for rapid decisions under the pressures of war conditions strengthened the primacy of the head of state in policy-making. Members of the ultimate decision-making unit, who after November 1967 included members of the Republican Council and the prime ministers, played an important role in the process of state, but al-Iryani continued to have the decisive say. His position within the group was due to the need for his political skill, his revolutionary credentials and his status as a religious judge (Kadi). In this respect, the situation is typical of that described by Sidney Verba in his study of leadership within a small group. He concluded that a person will assume a leading role if he is perceived to be effective in serving the cause and goals of the group and possesses certain characteristics among
which is a respectable social status.\footnote{4} Public participation in the formulation of foreign policy was urged by the head of state, who involved representatives of public opinion in the pre-decisional consultations. The military and the tribes had generally insisted on playing a role in the policy-making. But even in cases where these two groups reflected lack of interest, the head of state ensured that he consulted some of their representatives.

**The Pattern Of Policy Making**

Observation of YAR decision-making during the war reveals a pattern quite different from the suggestion advanced by J. Robinson and R. Snyder to the effect that interaction among members of a decision-making unit is usually mediated by an elaborate communication network.\footnote{5} In considering their political options, the YAR decision-makers depended on face-to-face communication with no bureaucratic elements involved. The sensitive nature of foreign policy issues and the resultant allocation of foreign policy to top government were the main factors which determined the procedures followed in the process. Such influence was discernable in the fact that decisions in the four cases covered in this study were formulated within the ultimate decisional unit (the Republican Council and the Cabinet in the post-1967 era) in a strictly secret manner. Pre-decisional consultation among individuals outside the decision-making unit covered only the broad outlines of possible policy, but the formulation of the specific decision was the function of members of the ultimate decision-making unit (in the post-1967 era) and were reflected in the consensus which characterised the choice-selection process.
From the foregoing conclusions, it has become clear that the war situation was the most important determinant of YAR foreign policy-making during the 1960s. Such a conclusion inevitably raises the question of the relevance of this study. One might specifically ask the following question: If many aspects of the YAR foreign policy-making at that period were linked to the war situation, how relevant is this study to the understanding of the process in general?

In answering this question, attention must be drawn to the fact that although the situational context changed after the end of the war in 1970, most of the other variables persisted and until recently changed very little. The scarcity of national resources and the resultant need for external support continue to form permanent elements in YAR foreign policy-making. In addition, several components of the decision-making system are linked to the degree of socio-political modernisation and are slow to change. A manifestation of this predicament is the snail-like institutional development which resulted in the continuation of the domination of personalities over the decision-making process. Another interrelated phenomenon is the slow pace of social and political mobility which resulted in the continuation of many of the 1960s leadership in power to this date. On the other hand, because of the linkages of intra-Arab politics, the YAR will continue to be attached to the Arab environment where most of the systemic constraints and opportunities originate. A prominent Yemeni politician has even suggested that the Yemeni leaders in the pre and post-revolutionary era followed a consistent pattern in their endeavour to insulate the country against foreign domination by balancing the influence of aspiring powers. These are considerations which constitute an element of continuity in YAR foreign policy-making, regardless of the nature of the situation, and therefore make
this study relevant. In any event, the study could not claim to be either exhaustive or unchallengeable. Its main objective has been to provide some insight into the YAR's foreign policy-making during an extraordinary period of the country's history. It would have achieved a major objective if it could stimulate further inquiries into this unexplored field in the affairs of this little-studied Middle Eastern polity.
NOTES ON CHAPTER IX


3. ibid., p.425.


6. Muhammad A. Nu'man, the then Advisor to the Chairman of the Republican Council in an interview with al-Thawrah, 23 July, 1970.