This study examines the way in which certain foreign policy decisions were made in the latter stages of the Republican-Royalist war of the 1960s. It seeks to explain how decisions were made, under what circumstances, who the decision-makers were, and what the influences were, internal as well as external, which bore on the foreign policy making of the Yemeni Republic.

In addressing these questions four major decisions are analysed. These are:

1. The rejection of the Khartoum Agreement on Yemen concluded by the Egyptian President Djamal Abd al-Nasir and King Faysal of Saudi Arabia on 31 August, 1967;
2. The recognition of the independence of the People's Republic of South Yemen on 30 November, 1967;
3. The resumption of diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany on 15 July, 1969;
4. The acceptance of the proposed reconciliation agreement with Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Royalists on 31 March, 1970.

These decisions were all made in the second half of the war, beginning at a time when Egyptian influence in Yemen had receded and a more autonomous YAR policy was emerging. These decisions were made by different élites, in response to various stimuli, and under divergent settings and could thus be taken as representative of YAR decision-making in this period.
This investigation confirms that in Yemen, as with other third world countries, the decision-making process was dominated by personalities, and in particular by the two heads of state, Marshal Abdallah al-Sallal and Kadi Abd al-Rahman al-Iryani. However, contrary to the assumption of the primacy in the decision-making process of the personal predispositions of the principal decision-makers, especially in stress situations, the personal predisposition of the two heads of the Yemeni Republic were largely subordinated to the supreme objective of the régime defined in terms of the survival of the Republican system.

External factors helped to shape the decision-making process. The YAR, as a poor-resource developing state, had insufficient capacity to either defend itself against the Royalist military threat or achieve other less vital objectives such as economic development. For these, it had to rely on external assistance and as a result, other states, especially the UAR and USSR in the pre-1968 era, became important in the decision-making calculus. In another aspect, the Royalist threat dictated the need for solidarity within the YAR governing élite and facilitated the adoption of decisions on the crucial issue of security by consensus. Similarity of views and the existence of shared values among the post-November 5, 1967 government, ensured the perpetuation of this pattern of decision-making with respect to almost all issues.

One of the objectives of the study is to contribute to analysing comparative foreign policy decision-making, and some conclusions are related to propositions pertaining to decision-making in third world countries. However, other conclusions show that, in the Yemeni situation, the existing theories have only limited applicability.