CHAPTER V

THE DECISION TO REJECT THE KHARTOUM AGREEMENT

(31 AUGUST, 1967)
Following the Arab-Israeli war in the spring of 1967, the accommodative approach adopted by the UAR during the Arab gatherings in Khartoum during that summer was opposed by the YAR leadership, as it entailed concessions to the conservative Arab régimes which were perceived as harmful to the very existence of the Yemeni Republic. On the last day of the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference held in Khartoum from 1-5 August, 1967, the YAR foreign minister expressed reservations about the UAR's initiative to reactivate the Djedda Agreement of 1965 on Yemen. Later, on 31 August, when President Nasir and King Faysal concluded the Khartoum Agreement on Yemen, the YAR president announced his government's rejection of that Agreement. This went down in history as the first and only time President al-Sallal's government had not only publicly taken a stand in Arab fora independently of its ally, the UAR, but had also adopted a position in opposition to Cairo's wishes. The consequences of this contributed significantly to the failure of the Saudi-Egyptian plan for the settlement of the war in Yemen. It also led to the estrangement between al-Sallal's government and the UAR which contributed to the downfall of the former on 5 November, 1967.\(^1\)

The decision-making activities covered three months, from the first week of August 1967 until 5 November, 1967 when al-Sallal's government was overthrown. As the decision was taken within a very short time, most of these activities fall into the pre-decisional and the implementational stages.
The Operational Environment

One single element in the external environment had an immediate effect on several of the components which governed the range of political choice. The Arab defeat in the Six-Day War against Israel in June 1967 led, among other things, to the withdrawal of UAR forces from Yemen, a move which in turn had important repercussions for two of those components, the security situation in Yemen and the YAR's political structure. The latter in turn had implications on the decision-making structure. However, the Egyptian-Saudi accord on Yemen concluded during the Arab summit conference held in Khartoum in late August and the beginning of September 1967 constituted the stimulus for the decision under consideration.

Implications of the Arab-Israeli War, June 1967

In 1967, the Arab defeat in the war with Israel represented a turning point in the politics of the region as well as for intra-Arab relations as well. The Arab solidarity which prevailed during and after the war ended the sharp polarisation of the Arab states between radical and conservative régimes, a situation which had persisted since the mid-1950s. For the next decade or so, intra-Arab relations were dominated by efforts aimed at forging a common diplomatic and military strategy to cope with the disastrous consequences of the 1967 war. Notwithstanding the demise of the sharp polarisation, the June defeat discredited the Arab revolutionary régimes, especially in Cairo and Damascus, while strengthening the hand of the conservative régimes.
In so far as the war changed the pattern of intra-Arab relations, it also changed the balance of forces between the leaders of the two hitherto opposing camps, namely Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The UAR, the leader of the revolutionary camp, was the worst affected by the war, not only in prestige but also in capability. Its armed forces were shattered, and its economy, as a result of the closure of the Suez Canal and the loss of the Sinai oil wells, was on the verge of collapse. At the same time Saudi Arabia, the leader of the conservative camp, was now in a more advantageous position than ever before. Its special relationship with the USA became of particular value in the light of the latter's influence over Israel; and increasing oil wealth gave the Saudis a special weight in the Arab world. The disparate position of the UAR was soon reflected in its Arab policy. In a bid to achieve a united Arab front against Israel and to obtain badly needed financial aid during the Arab meetings in the summer of 1967, the UAR adopted a conciliatory policy, and its initiative during the Khartoum Arab foreign minister's meeting to reactivate the 1965 Djedda Agreement with Saudi Arabia on Yemen was the most dramatic illustration of that policy. By this move, the UAR not only gave King Faysal a free hand in the Gulf but also forfeited its guardianship of the Arab revolution in Yemen and elsewhere. This change in the pattern of Arab politics was viewed by the YAR with the utmost concern. In the throes of Arab preoccupation with the confrontation with Israel, the war in Yemen was sliding into the background. The YAR themselves feared that the enhanced influence of the conservative régimes and the diminishing power of the revolutionary governments, including that of the UAR, might encourage the former to seize on the situation and intensify their aggression against the Yemeni Republic. For that reason, during the summer of 1967, the YAR leaders were adamant in their calls for the
strengthening of solidarity between the Arab revolutionary régimes and emphasised the commitment of these régimes to the survival of the Yemeni Republic. In a press interview during a visit to Cairo in the first week of August 1967, Major General Abdallah Djuzaylan suggested that the protection of the Yemeni revolution was no less a national duty to Arab revolutionaries than the war against Israel. 3

The Security Situation

The impact of the June war on the situation in Yemen was reflected in the withdrawal by Egypt, during the month of June, of almost half its 30,000 troops for deployment along the Suez Canal. This sudden withdrawal left a military vacuum, for the Yemeni forces were unable to replace the departing Egyptian forces. The degree to which the Republicans had depended on UAR military aid became immediately clear when in the second part of June the Royalists took advantage of the partial Egyptian withdrawal and mounted a successful offensive which left them in control of important towns along the west coast, as well as Harib and Marib in the east. 4 Although most of these Royalist gains were lost when the Republican forces, once more with the help of Egyptian reinforcements, mounted an effective counter-offensive in July, the inability of the Republican forces to stop the Royalists on their own had awakened Republican fears of the consequences of an eventual Egyptian withdrawal.

Ever since the UAR took over the main responsibility for the war in early 1963, Republican military strategy was based on this massive Egyptian support. Partly because of this reliance not much was done to increase the capabilities of the Republican army which at that
stage had a total strength of less than 7,000 poorly-equipped and ill-trained troops. When in June the UAR first started trimming its forces in Yemen, President Abdallah al-Sallal, who at that time could not contemplate the possibility of an Egyptian withdrawal, objected personally to the Egyptian Ambassador in Sana'a. But when during the Arab foreign ministers meeting in Khartoum (August 1-5) the UAR made very clear its intention of withdrawing from Yemen, the YAR leaders began seriously to contemplate what it would mean to carry on the war with no or only limited Egyptian support. The prevailing feeling among the YAR leaders was that because of the popular support for the Republic, the régime could defend itself with just limited external aid. As a result of a Yemeni initiative, a Soviet military team paid a visit to Sana'a in August and a plan for rearming the Republican army was agreed. At the same time, the YAR leaders pleaded for a continuation of a limited amount of Egyptian aid. During a visit to Cairo in the first week of August 1967, Major-General Djuzyylan tried to convince President Nasir of the ability of the Republican forces to defend the Republic if support was reduced to just a few squadrons of the Egyptian air force. The same argument was put by al-Sallal to Nasir during the former's stopover in Cairo on his way to the Khartoum summit. Although President Nasir had made it clear the UAR initiative on the reactivation of the Djedda Agreement was forced on him by the imperatives of the post-June conditions, the YAR leaders insisted that some degree of UAR aid was vital to the survival of the Republic. The YAR statement on August 13 made it clear that part of the reason for rejecting the UAR initiative was its insistence on a continuation of Egyptian aid.
Political Structure

Regardless of the complexity of relations between the al-Sallal régime and that of Nasir, the fact was the latter had given the former its unreserved support. This was illustrated when on 12 August, 1966, the UAR Ambassador in Sana'a intervened to force the return of President al-Sallal despite strong opposition from Vice-President al-Amri and his supporters. Later, in mid-September, when al-Amri and most of the YAR leadership went to Egypt in order to protest to President Nasir, they were arrested by the Egyptian authorities; some were put in jail and others were put under house arrest. The detention of these opposition leaders enabled President al-Sallal to form a new cabinet and resume his hard-line policies, and this served the interests of the UAR at that stage of intra-Arab relations. The majority of members of the new cabinet were either individuals loyal to al-Sallal personally or supportive of his pro-Egyptian policies. 9

This situation was related to the decision under discussion in two ways. Firstly, pro-Egyptian ministers advocated acceptance of the Khartoum Agreement during the cabinet debate on the issue on September 2 upon the return to Sana'a of President al-Sallal. It was reported that these were arrested in early October for helping the entry into Yemen of the Arab Tripartite Commission, contrary to the government's formal position. 10 Secondly, the stability of al-Sallal's government was contingent upon the continued detention in Cairo of the moderate leaders, including Nu'man, al-Iryani and al-Amri. All reportedly had prestige and popular following sufficient to overthrow al-Sallal if allowed to do so, without Egyptian interference. 11 The withdrawal of Nasir's support to al-Sallal would have exposed the latter to the pressure of a very strong opposition. Some believed that the release
in late October 1967 of the moderate Republicans from detention in Cairo was due, partly at least, to Nasir's frustration over al-Sallal's refusal to cooperate with the Tripartite Arab Commission.\(^\text{12}\)

The Khartoum Agreement

From 1-5 August, 1967, the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference was convened in Khartoum to discuss means of co-ordinating Arab action to cope with the consequences of the June war. The UAR president was already trying to reconcile his differences with the conservative Arab governments, not only with a view to obtaining much-needed financial aid but also for the sake of forming a common Arab front against Israel. Efforts to convene an earlier Arab summit in 1966 had been hampered by the prevailing Saudi-Egyptian conflict mainly over Yemen, but Nasir and all the other Arab leaders were aware that unless reconciliation between Cairo and Riyadh was now achieved, Arab solidarity would remain an impossible endeavour. He used the opportunity of the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference to mend his differences with King Faysal. On 3 August, the second day of the conference, the UAR Foreign Minister, Mahmud Riyadh, forwarded a UAR proposal providing for the settlement of the Egyptian-Saudi conflict over Yemen. Item 6 of the plan proposed an immediate reactivation and full implementation of the Djedda Agreement on Yemen, signed by President Nasir and King Faysal on 24 August, 1965. That Agreement envisaged, in addition to withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and a termination of Saudi aid to the Royalists, the formation of a national caretaker government and the holding of a plebiscite for the Yemenis to decide on the future régime.\(^\text{13}\) The one difference between the Djedda Agreement and the new plan lay in the proposal that
implementation of the Agreement should now be assigned to three Arab states rather than to the two contestants themselves, i.e. the UAR and Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{14}

King Faysal was undoubtedly pleased with President Nasir's initiative. The proposal was in line with the declared Saudi objective of securing the withdrawal of the UAR forces from Yemen, but the Saudi leader adopted a cautious view and preferred to wait for more specific details. Therefore, no action on the Egyptian proposal was taken at the Khartoum ministerial conference. The task of hammering out the details of the eventual agreement between King Faysal and President Nasir fell to the Sudanese Premier Muhammad Mahjub and, during visits to Djeidda and Cairo on 20 and 23 August respectively, he managed to secure the approval of the two Arab leaders on the draft of a new accord. Details of the proposed agreement were discussed later when the Egyptian president and the Saudi King came to Khartoum to take part in the Arab summit (29 August - 1 September, 1967). The summit itself was made possible by the rapprochement between the UAR and Saudi Arabia brought about by the Egyptian initiative during the Khartoum ministerial meeting. During a private two-hour meeting held in the house of the Sudanese Premier during the early hours of 31 August, between the Egyptian president and the Saudi King, and with the Sudanese Premier's participation, the details of the proposed agreement were hammered out. The accord, which became known as the Khartoum Agreement, provided for the formation of a committee consisting of three Arab states with the purpose of:

1. Ensuring the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and the simultaneous termination of Saudi military assistance to the Royalists.
2. Helping the Yemenis to achieve unity and stability in accordance with their own wishes.

3. Consulting with Saudi Arabia and the UAR in the implementation of its mandate.\(^{15}\)

In accordance with the accord, the UAR chose Iraq for membership of the commission and Saudi Arabia chose Morocco, while the Sudan was added to serve as the third member. This selective membership became in itself another reason, albeit a less problematic one, for the difficulties which confronted the commission in the implementation of its task. The Iraqi foreign minister, Adnan Khairallah, promoted Republican interests while Dr. Laraki, the Moroccan Foreign Minister, became the champion of the Royalists' cause.\(^{16}\)

The war in Yemen was not on the agenda of the Arab summit, but all the participants welcomed the Saudi-Egyptian accord as a basis for the regeneration of Arab solidarity. Syria and Algeria, who advocated a "steadfast" policy against Israel after the June 5 war, were critical of the predominantly conciliatory tone of the conference and received the accord with a certain coolness. As with previous attempts at settlement of the war in Yemen, the Yemeni leaders were not involved. President al-Sallal was not invited to take part in the talks and was not even consulted on the agreement which clearly was of immediate concern to him and his delegation. President Nasir and King Faysal were, nevertheless, fully aware of the YAR's opposition to the reactivation of the Djedda Agreement, a position not made secret by the Yemeni leaders during the Khartoum ministerial meeting or afterwards. To get around the YAR's opposition, the new accord, based as it was on the 1965 Djedda Agreement, neither explicitly referred to
the issue of the referendum nor did it fix a date for the Egyptian withdrawal. When announcing the details of the Agreement, the Sudanese Premier explained that al-Sallal had not been consulted because the Agreement dealt with the Egyptian-Saudi involvement in Yemen and thus did not concern him.17

Perceptions of the Decision-Makers

Following the imprisonment in Cairo (September 1966) of the "moderate" leaders, al-Sallal's leadership had continued unchallenged. He enhanced his position by forming, on 18 September, a new cabinet comprised mostly of elements either loyal to him or supportive of his pro-Egyptian policies. Except for Major-General Abdallah Djuzaylan who became Deputy Premier and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, and Brigadier Abd al-Latif Daifallah, who assumed the Public Works Ministry, none of the cabinet members enjoyed an independent power base other than some loyalties in the army. Like Dayfallah, Djuzaylan owed his position to his own revolutionary credentials and personal influence within the army rather than to any loyalty to al-Sallal. As one of a group of officers who received their military training in Egypt in the middle 1950s, Djuzaylan played an important role in preparation and implementation of the September 26 Revolution and was favoured by the junior officers to replace al-Sallal once the régime was firmly established.18 Perhaps this was at the root of the personal differences which developed later between the two men and which led to Djuzaylan's brief exile in Cairo in early 1963. His return to the top of the government's structure was urged by al-Sallal who, driven by necessity, rediscovered the common radical orientation which bound him with Djuzaylan against the overwhelming moderate.
opposition. As a vice-premier and deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Djuzaylan played an important part in formulating the decision to reject the Khartoum Agreement, although the crucial role was that of al-Sallal.

Like al-Sallal, Major-General Djuzaylan was a radical nationalist who believed in the necessity of ensuring continued UAR military aid and saw Egyptian support as being within the context of a revolutionary alliance. Even after Egypt's defeat in the June 1967 war, both men believed that the UAR, because of its revolutionary duties towards the Yemeni Republic, was still capable of helping the YAR. According to the "progressive" Yemeni view, the victory of the Yemeni revolution was an achievement for the Arab revolutionary movement as a whole, to which President Nasir's Egypt had already contributed substantially. The fact that the Arabs had lost a battle in the war with Israel made it even more important to preserve the revolutionary gains in Yemen, and this left President Nasir with no alternative but to continue backing the Yemeni Republic.19

Following the announcement in early August 1967 of the UAR's initiative on Yemen, the YAR leadership was still hopeful that, despite the severe setback suffered in the Six-Day War, Nasir would still appreciate the importance of continuing aid to the Yemeni Republic. This view was partly a result of a misconception on the part of the leadership in Sana'a. They interpreted Nasir's overtures to the conservative Arab régimes, including the initiative on Yemen, as a temporary manoeuvre dictated by the difficulties faced by Egypt; once this situation was alleviated Nasir would return to his revolutionary policies and reassert his commitment towards the Yemeni Republic. This view was expressed by Djuzaylan during his visit to
Cairo in the first week of August 1967 when he said: "Those who spread doubts about the continuation of the UAR backing to the Yemeni Revolution are labouring under an illusion. Similar doubts were voiced after the Djedda Agreement was concluded only to be confounded by subsequent events. Current talks about the Agreement might reawaken doubts but facts will once again prove they are mistaken."18

President al-Sallal's reaction to the announcement of the Saudi-Egyptian accord was coloured by the way the news of the accord was conveyed to him. All accounts confirm the fact that the Yemeni president first heard of the accord on the morning of 31 August through the local media while still in his hotel suite in the Khartoum. He was obviously shocked and felt bewildered by the news. According to him it came as a complete surprise, especially since in his meeting with the Egyptian president in Cairo only a few days earlier, the latter had not given any indication whatsoever of such a possibility.21 Foreign Minister Muhammad Sallam told the writer that the fact that the Agreement was negotiated in secrecy was sufficient to raise Yemeni suspicions about the intentions of their Egyptian ally.22

President al-Sallal's response to the news was spontaneous but well measured. He did not rush to denounce the Agreement but did not go to the morning session of the summit conference, making it known that he protested strongly to an Agreement concluded about Yemen by others and in total disregard for him as "President of that country".23 He certainly projected a feeling of injured pride. The YAR was considered by many as a client of the UAR whose affairs could be manipulated to suit Cairo's objectives. Al-Sallal entirely rejected such an attitude and sought to make it clear that he was totally...
opposed to an act taken by external powers to decide the destiny of Yemen while its representatives, who were only a few metres away, were completely ignored. President Nasir was quick to appreciate al-Sallal's rage and the same morning sent his secretary to arrange an appointment so that he could explain things. In his memoirs, the Sudanese Premier mentioned that Nasir urged him to see al-Sallal and explain to him that the Agreement constituted no interference in the internal affairs of Yemen but was rather a solution to the differences between the UAR and Saudi Arabia. President al-Sallal refused to accept this argument. He also remained unconvinced by the explanation given by Nasir at their meeting the same day. In his replies to the writer's inquiries, al-Sallal blamed King Faysal and the Sudanese Premier who, in his view, had plotted the deal and talked Nasir into it.

President al-Sallal was known for his courage but also for his disregard for diplomatic niceties. He distrusted King Faysal and believed the king had taken advantage of Nasir's difficulties to dictate the terms of the Khartoum Agreement in a blatant act of blackmail. Thus when the Yemeni president appeared at the afternoon session of the summit, he reportedly could not control his emotions. He suddenly interrupted the debate and referred to King Faysal who was also taking part in the meeting in rather unflattering terms. While al-Sallal's reaction revealed some of his personal predispositions, his perception of Saudi intentions was influenced by past experience. As one of the participants in the 1948 and 1955 anti-Imam revolts, he had become convinced that the Saudi monarchy, which had played a major part in the failure of the two revolts, would do all it could to destroy the September 1962 revolution so as to ensure that Yemen remained under its exclusive influence. He believed the Saudi monarch
would not stop interfering in Yemen and the Agreement was only another ploy on the king's part to get the Egyptians out of Yemen so that he could impose its own will on the YAR. When Nasir sent his envoy on the morning of 31 August to arrange the meeting between the two presidents, the envoy asked al-Sallal why he felt bitter about the accord. Al-Sallal replied, "You do not understand the Saudis. We know them very well. Our life with them as neighbours has been an uninterrupted chain of bitter experiences. We, therefore, understand the implications of what was agreed upon. As we know the aims of the Saudi régime very well, we know that they will not for a moment desist from doing their best to affect a change in Yemen in order that Yemen comes under their exclusive influence. As long as this is achieved, they do not mind whether the rulers in Yemen are Republicans or loyalists."

The YAR Reaction To The Egyptian Initiative

As we have seen, the Egyptian initiative came as an unpleasant surprise to the YAR leaders. President al-Sallal had had no prior knowledge of the Egyptian intention to put forward such a proposal, and on 4 August he had sent his deputy, Major-General Djuzaylan, to Cairo to seek, among other things, further clarification from resident Nasir. Muhammad Sallam, the YAR foreign minister, had been completely taken by surprise when the Egyptian proposal was originally announced during the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference. He sought instruction from Sana'a and made no comment on the issue during his interventions in the deliberations of the conference.
The Egyptian proposal to reactivate the Djedda Agreement awakened al-Sallal's fears, and since the partial withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Yemen in June he had become suspicious of Egyptian intentions. Even before he was in possession of all the facts, al-Sallal found it necessary to respond to the situation since his Foreign Minister was in Khartoum awaiting instructions. However, al-Sallal had no difficulty in making his own decisions. In view of the diminishing role of the UAR in YAR politics in the aftermath of the June war and the fact that the opposition leaders were still detained in Cairo, al-Sallal could act without major political constraints. Moreover, the suspension of the Republican Council since September 1966 had left the Cabinet as the only functioning authoritative institution in the Republic, and since he was both President of the Republic and Premier at the same time al-Sallal could take decisions without constitutional constraints.

There is no information concerning the procedures al-Sallal followed in formulating his government's response to the Egyptian initiative, but he clearly opted to temporarily maintain the long-established policy which rejected any attempt to question the legitimacy of the Republican régime. On 5 August, foreign minister Sallam made a statement in Khartoum expressing reservations on the UAR initiative. He specifically objected to the idea embodied in the Djedda Agreement to the effect that a plebiscite be held to determine the future form of government for Yemen. Such a proposal, Sallam said, would be an unwarranted interference in Yemen's internal affairs, adding that the Yemeni people had by virtue of the September 1962 revolution already chosen a Republican régime. Although this stance surprised those observers who had believed the YAR government to be entirely submissive to the UAR. Sana'a did not contemplate an actual break
with its ally. President Nasir, for his part, was anxious to emphasise his continued support of the YAR when he received Djuzaylan and Muhammad Sallam on 8 August. There are conflicting accounts as to what precisely was discussed at that meeting. According to one source, President Nasir explained to the two Yemeni envoys the need to form a united Arab front against Israel, an objective which could only be achieved through a settlement of the UAR's differences with Saudi Arabia. But he assured the two Yemeni officials that this would in no way be at the expense of the Yemeni Republic. Furthermore, he pointed out, serious talks about the implications of the UAR initiative should wait until the Saudis formally made their reply.13

It would seem however that the Egyptian assurances were not sufficient to calm the Yemeni leaders. In particular, al-Sallal remembered that the UAR had in the past made compromises detrimental to his government for the sake of a settlement of its conflict with Saudi Arabia over Yemen. In the second week of August, al-Sallal met both Djuzaylan and Sallam who briefed him on their respective missions. It was during this meeting, which was attended by Colonel Ali al-Sallal, the son and trustee of the president and the then Ambassador to Moscow, that the government response was formulated. On 13 August, the cabinet was convened to consider the report of the Vice-Premier Djuzaylan on his meetings with the UAR officials in Cairo and the report of the Foreign Minister Sallam on the Arab Foreign Minister's Conference in Khartoum. After a brief discussion which consisted mostly of enquiries from cabinet members, President al-Sallal made a statement on the Egyptian initiative in which he said that:

"On behalf of the Yemeni people and government, I declare that the YAR in no way accepts anything that infringes directly or
indirectly its independence and sovereignty. I further declare that the Yemen Arab Republic was not a party to the Djedda Agreement which was concluded between the two Arab states, the UAR and Saudi Arabia, and is, therefore, not bound by it. It certainly will neither approve of it nor recognise it. All that is said about a national plebiscite is considered open interference in our independence and a flagrant attack on our sovereignty as well as a violation of the bases of international law. 34

During August, the YAR leadership undertook measures to improve its defences. Contact was maintained with the UAR mainly through the latter's embassy in Sana'a which continued to insist on the importance the YAR-UAR alliance. In reply, the YAR government made it clear it appreciated the need for concerted Arab action to cope with the consequences of the June war and expressed support for the Arab summit to be held in Khartoum later in the month. In his visit to Cairo in the first week of August, Djuzyalan said that for the sake of Arab solidarity, the YAR would not object to the reconsideration of the Yemeni conflict at the proposed conference. 35 However, the UAR ambassador in Sana'a was told the YAR would insist on two essential preconditions: first, the Republican régime should not be compromised in any way; second, the members of the Hamid al-Din family should not be allowed back into Yemen. 36

In his attempts to oppose the Egyptian initiative, al-Sallal sought as much internal support as possible. It is not known whether the popular reaction to the idea at that early stage was spontaneous or had been officially promoted. In any event, the overwhelming majority of Yemenis were against any attempt that would compromise the
Republican régime. On 13 August, a deputation of shaykhs, merchants and intellectuals met al-Sallal to express their loyalty to the Republican régime and their readiness to defend it in every way possible. At the same time, al-Sallal's government sought political support and military aid from other sources abroad to make up for the eventual Egyptian withdrawal. While attending the conference of Arab Finance, Economy and Oil Ministers in Baghdad (15 August, 1967), the YAR finance minister delivered a written message from al-Sallal to his Iraqi counterpart explaining the YAR views on the Egyptian initiative. At a meeting with the YAR minister, President Abd al-Salam Arif gave a somewhat ambiguous answer when he said that "Our efforts to end Arab disputes, including the dispute over Yemen, do not in any way mean the liquidation of the Yemeni revolution." 

In another direction, al-Sallal sought military aid from the USSR, to be delivered direct instead of being channelled through the UAR as previously. Indeed, Djuzaylan's above-mentioned visit to Cairo was reportedly only a stopover, for in fact the Vice-Premier was on his way to the Soviet Union to request military hardware for the YAR army. The trip to Moscow did not ultimately take place but the Soviets responded positively to the YAR request. Some sources believe the deal was calculated by al-Sallal to put pressure on Nasir not to go ahead with his intention to reactivate the Djedda agreement.

How The Choice Was Made

The announcement on 31 August, 1967, of the Saudi-Egyptian accord on Yemen presented the Yemeni delegation with a typical crisis situation. Firstly, the accord was directly related to the future of the
Republic, the supreme concern of the Yemeni régime. Secondly, it came as a surprise to the Yemeni delegation. Finally, the Yemeni delegation felt the time available for response was restricted.

The YAR's governing élite had expected that the matter of the Egyptian initiative was bound to be raised during the Khartoum summit, but they had not anticipated an agreement being arrived at without their prior knowledge, let alone their participation. Before the delegation left for Khartoum for the summit conference, the government had reflected on the possibility of such an eventuality but had felt reassured by the apparent Egyptian desire to remain in touch with Sana'a. It was agreed, nevertheless, that should the Yemeni issue be discussed at the conference in any way that infringed on the country's sovereignty or threatened the Republican régime, the YAR delegation would withdraw immediately. This was exactly what happened, for when the Nasir-Faysal accord was announced in the morning of 31 August, President al-Sallal refused to attend the conference. President Nasir met with al-Sallal in an attempt to allay his fears but the meeting reportedly turned into a very frank exchange of views. Nasir was provoked when al-Sallal told him that the Yemeni Republicans expected Egyptian military aid to continue until the Republic could defend itself. Apparently, Nasir expressed impatience with the Yemeni Republicans who, as he put it, were insisting on an indefinite Egyptian military presence in Yemen instead of trying to become more self-reliant. The Yemeni president was surprised by the change in tone but portrayed no resentment and later resumed participation in the conference.

Despite the resentment he privately felt at the treatment he personally had received from his friend President Nasir and his outrage at what he regarded as the blatant disregard of the YAR's
independence and integrity, al-Sallal was keen not to alienate the Egyptian president. He made no personal comment on the YAR official position towards the Saudi-Egyptian accord which was to be announced later on the same day. Following his meeting with Nasir, which no one else attended, al-Sallal met with members of his delegation. These included officially authorised decision-makers such as his deputy Abdallah Djuzaylan and the Foreign Minister, Muhammad Sallam, together with certain trusted colleagues such as the Minister for the Economy, Abd al-Ghani Ali, and the Head of National Security, Muhammad al-Salami. No alternative action was considered, since the decision to categorically reject the Egyptian initiative which formed the basis for the proposed agreement had already been made. The only question they had to debate was one of procedure - whether to announce the YAR's position immediately or at a later stage. It was agreed that it was important to make the announcement at once since a silence would be misinterpreted as tacit approval.1 A press release was duly issued and rather unexpectedly was broadcast by Radio Algeria instead of the Egyptian media which usually carried news concerning the YAR. The statement did not explicitly reject the Khartoum Agreement, in deference to the conciliatory atmosphere which was deemed necessary for the success of the summit. Instead it repeated the position previously adopted towards the original Egyptian initiative. It announced that:

"The Yemeni people would reject any plan of mediation designed to encroach on their freedom and the gains of the revolution, but the Yemeni people would welcome measures to strengthen brotherly relations between the Arabs..... Yemen was not a party to the Djedda Agreement of 1965 between the UAR and the Saudi Kingdom and therefore we refuse to return to those

-126-
agreements. Recourse to these agreements would be considered unreasonable, especially as we already rejected those agreements. Any attempt to encroach on the independence and sovereignty of the Yemeni Republic will be considered as blatant interference in the country's internal affairs."

The Implementation

In a sense, rejection by the YAR delegation of the Khartoum Agreement marked the beginning of the implementation process. It must be clear that the Yemeni delegation to the Khartoum summit did not express any objection to the Saudi-Egyptian disengagement from Yemen as that was clearly a matter for the two Arab states to decide. But the Yemeni delegation objected to certain aspects of the Agreement which violated the standard legal norms regulating inter-state relations. The first concerned the contractual obligations entered into by the YAR and the UAR; the other was linked to the sovereignty and independence of the Republic, a founding member of the Arab League. The YAR leaders insisted on the upholding by the UAR of its obligations to help defend the Yemeni Republic, in implementation of the Mutual Pact signed between the two countries on 10 November, 1962 and the Co-ordination Agreement of April 1964. The terms of the Pact allowed for its termination only after each party had given one year's notice. The second, the Agreement, was to remain in force until unity between the two countries was achieved. In his meeting with Nasir on the day the Khartoum Agreement was concluded, al-Sallal explained that withdrawal of Egyptian troops at a time when the Republican army was not ready to take full responsibility for defence would endanger the Republic. He argued for limited Egyptian military aid until the YAR
could rely on its own army. Nasir for his part made it clear he had not alternative but to comply with the terms of his agreement with King Faysal. He suggested that instead of pressing for a continuation of Egyptian aid, al-Sallal should take positive measures to increase the YAR's defence capabilities immediately upon returning from Khartoum, and he promised to instruct the departing Egyptian forces to leave their weapons for the benefit of the Yemeni army.46

Another valid point raised by the YAR in their opposition of the Khartoum Agreement was the illegality of the mandate given to the Tripartite Arab Commission to, among other things, help the Yemeni people decide their future. This clearly cast aspersions on the legitimacy of an established and internationally recognised régime. The YAR delegation to the summit conference vigorously opposed any such interference and Foreign Minister Sallam announced in Khartoum that his government would not allow members of the Commission to enter Yemen in connection with this mission.47

The first practical measure to implement the rejection decision was taken immediately following the delegation's return from Khartoum. On 2 September, 1967, the cabinet held a meeting in which the Khartoum resolutions were briefly examined. The Saudi-Egyptian accord on Yemen was discussed and, although some ministers known for their pro-Egyptian views were receptive to the Agreement, the cabinet unanimously approved the position already adopted by al-Sallal. A new statement elaborating on that position was also approved. The statement was issued in the name of President al-Sallal and, unlike the statement at the summit, it addressed the Khartoum Agreement directly. In the statement, the president referred to the "recent UAR-Saudi joint statement" and declared that:
1. On more than one occasion the Yemeni Government has declared its opposition to the Djedda Agreement.

2. The Yemeni Government and people consider the Djedda Agreement an interference in Yemen's internal affairs.

3. The Yemeni Government and people do not consider themselves bound by the above mentioned joint statement, which they consider a continuation of the interference in Yemen's internal affairs.

4. The statement has been issued at a time when the Yemeni people stand ready to participate in all efforts leading to the removal of the effects of the (Israeli) aggression.... The joint statement came as an attempt to belittle the effects of the aggression.

5. The Yemeni Government appealed to friendly countries to avoid involvement in this attempt.

The month of September was a period used for digesting and reflecting on the Khartoum Agreement and preparing for its consequences. By rejecting the Agreement, al-Sallal knew he would have to bear the full brunt of the fight against the Republic without military support and against the wishes of almost all other Arab states. Already the Foreign Minister had solicited the view of the YAR's close friends, including the Arab revolutionary régimes and the USSR. Except for Syria, all advised acceptance of the Saudi-Egyptian plan. As the issue pertained to the very existence of the Republic, the president undertook wide consultations which included not only the army and
tribal leaders but also representatives of the various other segments of society. The immediate dilemma was whether to co-operate with the Tripartite Arab commission as Nasir was urging or maintain the position already announced at the Khartoum conference and refuse to have anything to do with it. Bearing in mind the need to avoid antagonising Nasir, al-Sallal was hesitant but almost all of those consulted were adamantly against any dealings with the Commission. 50

Notwithstanding the Yemeni opposition, the Tripartite Commission commenced its work by overseeing the implementation of the respective undertakings of the UAR and Saudi Arabia, a task which was merely a formality given the political will that underlined the accord. However, its attempts to carry out its mandate with regard to helping the Yemenis reach settlement of their internal conflict were hampered by the negative approach adopted by the YAR's government. The Commission commenced its operations by first meeting with the Yemeni Republicans detained in Cairo with a view to ascertaining their views on a possible national conference. For the same reason, the commission later met with the dissident Republicans in Beirut, as well as the representatives of the Third Force. 51

The Commission also attempted to obtain al-Sallal's permission to visit Yemen and ascertain the views of the various political forces within the country in preparation for a national conference to be convened later on. Inevitably, al-Sallal was reluctant to co-operate with the Commission. After several unsuccessful attempts, however, the Acting Foreign Minister of Iraq, who was a member of the Commission, announced on 1 October, 1967 that al-Sallal had sent a telegram agreeing to receive the Commission in Sana'a and co-operate with it in pursuance of "a just solution which will bring unity to
Yemen and consolidate the achievements of the revolution". It appears from the vague reference to the "achievements of the revolution" that al-Sallal's agreement to co-operate with the Commission was conditional on any future national reconciliation moves taking place within a Republican framework. Some sources believed that al-Sallal gave way only under strong pressure from the UAR. According to official Yemeni sources, a debate was still going on within al-Sallal's government regarding conditional co-operation with the Commission, when members of the Commission unexpectedly arrived in Sana'a on 3 October on a chartered Egyptian plane, accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the UAR armed forces, Muhammad Fawzi. Many Yemenis were against the Khartoum Agreement and the arrival of the Commission in total disregard of their feelings was seen as provocative. While members of the Commission sheltered in the headquarters of the Egyptian forces in Sana'a, thousands of Yemenis took to the streets of the capital in protest.

During the violence which ensued, around thirty people were killed; unfortunately most of the victims were Egyptian servicemen. There are conflicting stories about al-Sallal's role in these demonstrations. Some suggested that the demonstrations were sanctioned by the president in an attempt to prove that the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces would result in chaos and turmoil in the country. Others blamed the Egyptians for rushing the Commission into Sana'a knowing full well that the Yemeni people were hostile to it. In any event, immediately after its arrival in Sana'a al-Sallal reportedly informed the Commission that for his part he wished to receive them but the army and the police could not ensure their safety.
The decision to reject the Khartoum Agreement had important consequences for both the internal and external environment. Domestically, the decision had clear implications for YAR capabilities, since under the terms of the agreement, the UAR had to terminate not only military aid but also political support in order to assume, with Saudi Arabia, a neutral position. During the implementation of the agreement most of the Egyptian forces, estimated at about 25,000, were recalled from Yemen and by the end of October the remaining 10,000 troops were being hastily withdrawn. This severely restricted the military capability of the YAR since the indigenous army was understaffed, poorly trained and ill-equipped, and it came at a time when the Royalists were massing on the unprecedented scale for an all-out offensive. Additionally, in the aftermath of the killings of the Egyptian soldiers in Sana'a on 3 October, the UAR decided to withdraw all its 1200 teachers and technical experts from Yemen, this badly affected the public services, especially in the educational field.

Politically the decision itself did not harm existing relations between the YAR and the UAR, because the Yemeni leadership realised that President Nasir had been supportive of the Yemeni Republic and had been forced into the agreement. But Egypt's eagerness to impose the Tripartite Commission on the YAR certainly had negative consequences for Nasir's relations with al-Sallal's régime, and the subsequent killing of Egyptian soldiers during the events in Sana'a on 3 October greatly offended Nasir. Some believe that this led Nasir to speed up the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen; others go so far as to suggest that the Egyptian president was so outraged that he
encouraged the return of the Yemeni opposition leaders still detained in Cairo and, thereby, the overthrow of al-Sallal (certainly, al-Sallal suspected as much).\textsuperscript{61}

The decision had other far-reaching consequences for the régime. While it improved the popular support for al-Sallal, it also resulted in important changes in the structure of the government. Many Yemenis who resented the régime's erstwhile submissiveness to the UAR welcomed al-Sallal's patriotic stand, and almost all Republicans supported the government's rejection of an accord which clearly jeopardised the Republican system. The public showed its rejection of the Agreement in various ways. Demonstrations were held in several provincial towns and indicated by their spontaneity that five years after the revolution the Yemeni people still opted for the Republican régime in defiance of hostile propaganda. However, these demonstrations revealed a divergence of views on how best to achieve an effective resistance to the many challenges the Republic was to face as a result of the Khartoum Agreement. The only political party, al-Ittihad al-Sha'abi al-Thawri (the PRU), held a popular rally in Sana'a after which a number of resolutions were adopted. These expressed support for the Government's decision, advocated mass mobilisation to enhance the Republic's defence, and called the people "to be united in a single rank under our President Abdallah al-Sallal and support his reply to the Sudan agreement."\textsuperscript{62} Tribal leaders and representatives of Yemeni youth held separate rallies in Sana'a on 10 October in support of the government position. Unlike the PRU, however, these called in addition for the introduction of political reforms to strengthen the Republic.\textsuperscript{63} A statement issued on behalf of the Yemeni People's Democratic Union, the Yemeni Youth Democratic Union, the Yemeni Workers Federation, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the
Student Federation supported the government's position but also called for political reforms.\textsuperscript{4} Earlier the army had similarly declared its support for President al-Sallal's policy but demanded major reforms, including formation of a new government.\textsuperscript{5} All these pressures led to the formation on 12 October of a new cabinet which included some supporters of the opposition and excluded elements known for their pro-Egyptian views.

Aware of the fact that with the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces the Republic had become more vulnerable to the Royalists than ever before, and conscious of the public demand for political change, al-Sallal felt the time had come to widen the régime's support base by settling his differences with the opposition. On 19 October he appealed to the Republican leaders abroad to return to their country in order to work together in preserving the revolution and the Republic.\textsuperscript{6} Undoubtedly al-Sallal's decision to reject the Khartoum Agreement was also decisive in Nasir's decision to release the jailed moderate Republicans. They were released on 26 October. They met with al-Sallal at Hudaydah and as a result a number of political reforms were agreed upon, with a view to forming a united front. A statement was issued on 30 October affirming that the Yemeni problem was to be solved by the Yemenis themselves, an explicit confirmation of the ongoing boycott of the Arab Tripartite Commission.\textsuperscript{7} But most of the task of coping with the consequences of the Khartoum Agreement was left to al-Iryani and the moderate leadership who replaced al-Sallal's government in the aftermath of the November 1967 coup.
NOTES ON CHAPTER V

1. In his replies to the writer dated July, 1989, al-Sallal said that his rejection of the Khartoum Agreement had caused problems for him and led eventually to the 5 November coup against him.


5. ibid., p.184


7. See SWB, ME/2554/A/16; Al-Hayat, 16 September, 1967.


10. Press reports indicated that pro-Egyptian cabinet ministers were arrested following the 3 October, 1967 events. Reliable Yemeni sources indicated that some of these had left Yemen during these events with the help of the Egyptian army command in Sana'a.

12. The prevailing Yemeni view is that President Nasir was profoundly concerned about the survival of the republican régime in Yemen after the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces. He believed al-Sallal's adamant refusal of the Khartoum Agreement was an unrealistic policy, for al-Sallal in Nasir's view was neither capable of coping with the situation on his own nor was he able to unite all the Republican factions in defence of the Republic. Consequently, Nasir decided to release the moderate Republicans from the Egyptian jails so that they be able to take part in that crucial period of the YAR's history. (See Ahmad Afif, *Al-Harakah*, op. cit., pp.156-157.

13. See text in SWB, ME/2534/A/A.


15. For text of the Agreement see *Arab Political Encyclopedia: Documents and Notes, Sixteenth Year, July-December 1967*, p.55.


19. From Djuzyaylan's interview with the writer in Cairo, April, 1989.


26. From al-Sallal's replies to the writer's questions, February 1990, op. cit.

27. One of al-Sallal's aides told the writer that when the President resumed his seat at the summit conference on the afternoon session of 31 August, he interrupted the debate and angrily told the Arab leaders "You will not be able to achieve anything positive while this (referring to King Faysal) is in your midst". Al-Baydani made a similar claim, Thawrat al-Yaman, op. cit., p.727.


30. Djuzaylan has stated that he was carrying a verbal message from President al-Sallal to President Nasir. In his reply to the writer's enquiries (August, 1989) he also mentioned that he conveyed to President Nasir the feelings of full understanding of the YAR regarding the imperatives for the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen and the confidence in the abilities of the Yemeni people to defend their Republic.


33. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated June 1989, op. cit.


38. SWB, ME/2546/A/6.
39. The Arab and Western press reported this projected visit had taken place. (See al-Hayat, 4 August, 1967; The New York Times, 8 August, 1967). In his interview with the writer, Djuzaylan mentioned that in fact he intended to visit Moscow but the Soviets insisted on having prior knowledge of the requests he would put forward to the Soviet leaders. His refusal to do so led to the indefinite postponement of the visit.


41. From Sallam's replies to the writer's inquiries dated February, 1990, op. cit.

42. Abdallah al-Thawr, Thawrat al-Yaman, op. cit., p.182.

43. Personal interviews.

44. SWB, ME/2558/A/5; Al-Thawr in his book Thawrat al-Yaman, p.182, mentioned that al-Sallal had initially agreed to the Khartoum summit resolutions including the resolution on the formation of the Arab Tripartite Commission to implement the Saudi-Egyptian accord on Yemen. This the writer could not comprehend, especially that the matter was not among the issues debated and decided upon by the conference.


48. A press release issued by the YAR in Beirut, and reported by the Middle East News Agency on 5 September, 1967, al-Ahram's CSS files, Cairo. Also see SWB, ME/2560/A/8,

49. From Sallam's replies to the writer's enquiries, dated July 1990, op. cit.


54. See Ali al-Sallal's article in the weekly 26 September, 5 October, 1989, op. cit., President al-Sallal in his replies to the writer's enquiries dated February, 1990 repeated these same views.


59. All Yemeni sources consulted by the writer agreed that the withdrawing Egyptian troops did not leave their weaponry to the Yemeni army as promised by President Nasir. Djuzyalan told the writer that had the necessary military equipment been available to the Yemeni army, the Khartoum Agreement would not have been implemented.

60. See *Akhir Sa'at*, 11 October, 1967, op. cit. Syria had offered to alleviate the difficulties by providing Yemen with teachers for all secondary schools, but the offer was apparently not taken up by al-Sallal. (see ME/2600/A/6).

61. Sources differ on whether Nasir played a role in the overthrow of al-Sallal. One source suggested Nasir had sought to get rid of al-Sallal because of the latter's adamant refusal to accept the idea contained within the Khartoum Agreement to the effect that a widely-based government was to be established in which all Yemenis (including the Royalists) could participate (see *al-Safa*, 7 November 1967). Al-Sallal has in his above-mentioned replies to the author implicitly suggested this was the case.

62. For the text of the resolution see SWB, ME/2560/A/8-9.

63. See SWB, ME/2592/A/1,2.

64. SWB, ME/2609/A/8-9.
65. SWB, ME/2600/A/6; al-Hayat, October 5, 1967.

66. See SWB, Me/2600/A/6, op. cit.