

2. Dept will be undertaking in coming months extensive review of South Arabian question in framework IRG. Would hope be better able to discuss SAFG problems early 1967. End FYI.

3. You should inform Farid we sympathize with SAFG efforts in view of many problems posed by forthcoming independence. We would of course be happy to receive him and exchange views if he desires to visit Washington but feel talks at this time would have little to offer him as regards SAFG aid needs or security concerns. Assume SAFG will continue to look to HMG, as South Arabia's long-time friend, for primary assistance in both fields. USG would hope possibly be in better position to discuss South Arabian situation in coming year.

4. Dept informing British Emb Farid proposal visit US and substance para 3 above. Emb London should convey same to FonOff.

Rusk

**Memorandum From Harold H. Saunders of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostow)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, August 8, 1966.

WR:

Since it might cause a little noise, you ought to have the background on the latest UAR-UK clash in South Arabia. The UN Security Council is meeting on it this afternoon.

The British claim that two Egyptian MIGs last week bombed a town (Nuqub) well within South Arabian borders. They have Soviet-made shell casings to show as evidence but nothing else except eyewitness reports. Our intelligence indicates that two planes were in a position to make this raid but can't produce tracking. Cairo denies that any of its planes were in the area. New Zealand may try to break the deadlock by proposing a UN investigation, but the UAR opposes.

Motives are hard to assess. The UAR may be trying to intimidate some of the local tribal leaders to swing to their side by demonstrating British inability to protect them. To prove their mettle, both to the locals and to their own Parliament, the British had to do something. They

went to the UN in hopes they could avoid retaliating. However, if they don't get results there, they may still feel compelled to strike back.

There is no planned relationship between this incident and the longer range British problem of getting the UN to lay down satisfactory terms for a UN group to monitor the process of setting South Arabia free. However, they are coincidentally negotiating with U Thant to put together a responsible observer team. So their resorting to the UN is partly to establish good faith there.<sup>2</sup>

Hal

<sup>2</sup> The UN Security Council met August 4-16 to consider the British complaint concerning an "unprovoked and indefensible attack" on the town of Nuqub in the South Arabian Federation. The United Kingdom stated the evidence showed the attack was carried out by two MIG aircraft belonging to the United Arab Republic and operating out of an airfield in Yemen. UAR and Yemeni representatives categorically denied the charges. On August 16 the President of the Security Council read a consensus statement noting that the Council had not been able to produce a constructive solution and asking the parties concerned to contribute to lessening the tension in the region and to invite the Secretary-General to continue his good offices. For text, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1966*, pp. 543-544.

**76. Paper Prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, August 9, 1966.

**US MILITARY INTERESTS IN SOUTH ARABIA AND ADEN**

US security interests in the area are:

- a. Access to Aden facilities.
- b. An adequate flow of Persian Gulf oil to Europe.
- c. Denial of the area of the Soviets and the ChiComs.
- d. Availability of British forces for operations with the area.
- e. Prevention of a UAR-Saudi Arabia confrontation.

Periodic bunkering for COMIDEASTFOR ships (there are three), periodic fueling and logistic support of trans-Indian Ocean ships and

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL MUSCAT & OMAN. Secret. Attached to a note from Sober to Ambassador Hare, Deputy Assistant Secretary Davies, and NEA/ARP that reads: "The attached assessment by the JCS of *US Military Interests in South Arabia and Aden* has been forwarded to me by Brig. Gen. Sibley, JCS member of the IRG/NEA, at my request in anticipation of IRG consideration of the South Arabian situation."

<sup>1</sup> Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Name File, Saunders Memos. Secret.

aircraft and a few other flights constitute the US cold war needs. In limited war and area evacuation plans, Aden is an area of primary importance, although there are alternates which are somewhat less acceptable. The Gemini/Apollo plan for forcible recovery of astronauts and capsules designates Aden as a primary staging area for MEAFSA.

The loss of the availability of Aden for US military operations will:

- a. Require revision of current plans.
- b. Hamper but not prevent attainment of objectives envisioned in present plans by means of alternate and, in some cases, not quite as convenient routes and facilities.
- c. Lend emphasis to expeditious construction of alternative US/UK military facilities in the Indian Ocean area.

The appendix to this paper sets forth a discussion of the more important US military interests in Aden, oil for Europe, communist penetration, the availability of British forces and the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concerning Aden and support of US military operations in the area.

It is concluded that Aden serves as a useful US military enroute and staging area but US military interests can be met by other alternatives.

[Apparent omission] British to remain as long as possible. From an operational point of view, the loss of the availability of Aden for US operations will:

- a. Require revision to current plans.
- b. Hamper but not prevent attainment of objectives envisioned in present plans by means of alternate and, in some cases, not quite as convenient routes and facilities.
- c. Lend emphasis to expeditious construction of alternative US/UK military facilities in the Indian Ocean area.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have addressed the problem of US security interests in the midst of continuing instability in the Near East and Africa in connection with contingency planning in the area. They conclude that the instability will continue notwithstanding all the efforts to prevent it and that rights of any sort will probably be more difficult to obtain and, if obtained, of uncertain tenure over the coming years because of this instability. Instability would be present with or without Soviet influence, but is often aggravated by Soviet support. Thus, the US ability to project forces into the area should focus on more reliable alternatives than "rights" which one day may be granted and the next denied. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have provided guidance to CINC-STRIKE/USCINCEAFSA in this regard concerning the development of contingency plans which involve operations through or in the area.

Over the years Aden has lost much of its strategic importance except in case of general war. Ships rely less upon enroute support facilities. Development of the French port of Djibouti, but a few hours from Aden, has further reduced Aden's importance to shipping. The

increasing number of ships which cannot be accommodated by the Suez Canal (the largest US carriers and the newer super tankers of 79 feet draft) reduces further Aden's importance.

From the standpoint of air traffic, longer range, faster and larger aircraft have lessened Aden's importance. US access to air facilities in Ethiopia, Dhahran, Bahrain, and Sharjah, Masirah as well as planned facilities in the British Indian Ocean Territory when developed will lessen still further the impact of the British withdrawal from Aden upon US military interests.

[Here follows the body of the paper.]

## 77. National Intelligence Estimate<sup>1</sup>

NIE 30-1-66

Washington, September 8, 1966.

### THE OUTLOOK FOR SOUTH ARABIA

#### Conclusions

A. The British-sponsored Federation of South Arabia, comprising the prosperous port of Aden and the backward states of the Protectorate, is opposed by many Adeni politicians and by many sheikhs of the hinterland. Nonetheless, the UK has stated publicly that it will grant South Arabia its independence by the end of 1968, at the same time closing its base in Aden and ending its obligation to defend the area. London will almost certainly pull out by the appointed date, and may even do so earlier.

B. The British withdrawal will end the ten-year boom in Aden that has greatly increased the economic activity of that port and swollen its population by 50 percent. Closing the British base will cause a decrease of at least 25 percent in Aden's income. Political unrest could further reduce the use of Aden's port, leading to the loss of another quarter of Aden's income. There is likely to be little change in economic conditions in the hinterland of South Arabia.

C. Local political forces are now jockeying for power and seeking the backing of other Arab states. Saudi Arabia is giving some help to

<sup>1</sup>Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, NIEs, 30, Middle East. Secret; Controlled Dissem. According to a note on the cover sheet, the estimate was submitted by Helms and concurred in by the U.S. Intelligence Board on September 8.