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NSC BRIEFING 9 January 1957

YEMEN-ADEN BORDER HOSTILITIES

I. We have no confirmation of Cairo press report (9 Jan) that Yemen has "declared a state of war against Britain." This story appears to be primarily a propaganda move.

A. Yemen claims Aden Protectorate and Colony. Possibility of oil is factor in claim.

B. Ill-defined border region separating two sections Aden Protectorate from Yemen and Saudi Arabia is chronic trouble-spot. Yemeni atacks have increased markedly since late November.

C. This activity has been encouraged and abetted by Egypt, the Soviet Union 25X6

D. The outbreak follows the arrival in Yemen in October of the initial shipload of Soviet Bloc arms.

E. Counteractions--by native Protectorate levies and British forces--have been exaggerated in propaganda from Yemen, Egypt and Moscow.

F. Yemen has protested to the United Nations against British "aggression", has received assurance of Soviet support there. London has repeatedly protested to the Yemeni government.

II. In Western Protectorate, Yemeni incursions have involved raids on frontier villages and outposts and, more recently, on towns further in from border.

A. Protectorate tribesmen have retaliated against Yemeni villages.

B. In several instances, British-led troops of Protectorate Levies, and also detachments of Cameron Highlanders, have chased Yemeni attackers back across border in "hot pursuit."

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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C. RAF jet fighters have also been in action against Yemeni intruders.

III. In Eastern Protectorate, British-led levies have been deployed in widely separated areas where dissident activity is expected.

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VI. British have capability to hold small Colony of Aden.

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A. Given full-scale border warfare from Yemen, the British will probably not be able to hold all areas of the Protectorate,

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B. In addition to tribal forces of the Protectorate sheikdoms, the British maintain about 1,500 native levies under native officers, two battalions of British infantry, and small units of artillery and armored cars (total: 1,900 men).

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C. Yemen's "army" numbers about 26,000 poorly trained and led men deployed in small units throughout the country. Possibly 100,000 tribal irregulars provide additional manpower.

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