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Asia-Africa

SAUDI-EGYPTIAN CONFRONTATION IN YEMEN

The danger of a showdown between Egypt and Saudi Arabia will rise when the UN Yemen Observation Mission's term expires on 4 September. Prince Faysal has indicated that he will not pay the Saudi share of its costs any longer because Egypt failed to reduce its force as promised over a year ago.

Faysal probably hopes to wring some concession from Nasir at the Arab summit meeting beginning 5 September. Nevertheless, he is bracing for a showdown, and after the conference may resume aid to the Yemeni royalists. [REDACTED]

Faysal knows that if he resumes sending supplies to the royalists, Egypt probably will retaliate. Without any assurance of US protection against Egyptian attacks, he may try to get a commitment of help from [REDACTED] who seem to be increasingly concerned over Nasir's activities in the South Arabian Federation.

The major Yemeni-Egyptian offensive in northwestern Yemen continues to meet stiff

resistance from royalist tribes, despite Egyptian claims of total victory. Republican forces are having particular difficulty in the Washha and Hajja areas, where the royalists seem capable of holding out indefinitely. The offensive apparently has managed to close off the Saudi border, however, thus placing the Egyptians in a strong position to counter any Saudi attempt to resume sending in substantial amounts of supplies. Imam Badr was forced out of his mountain headquarters and, for at least a few days, took refuge across the border.

In southern Yemen, the republican government is having tribal problems--relating to the historic split between the Zaidi and Shafai religious sects. On 23 August, Yemeni troops of the Zaidi sect demonstrated in Taiz over a pay dispute and attempted to arrest the provincial governor. This angered local Shafai urban and tribal elements who congregated in large numbers in Taiz in opposition to the troops and the Zaidi-dominated republican government. If disorders continue, the government may be forced to draw troops from the northern offensive to maintain its control. [REDACTED]

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