

N-15770A

REPORT ON
OBSERVATIONS OF THE
TECHNICAL MEMBER SPECIAL
DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO THE
KINGDOM OF THE YEMEN
APRIL-JULY 1946

N-1577A

UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~A~~-15770A

15770

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
28 August 1947

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Report, Yemen
TO : Commandant Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1. There is inclosed for inclusion in the archives one copy of the written report and one copy of the album of pictures taken in Yemen during the stay of the Special Diplomatic Mission in 1946.

2. The Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State, has indicated that the written part of the report should be classified "confidential".

Jack N. Nahas
JACK N. NAHAS,
Lt. Col. Signal Corps,
Technical Member of Mission

~~GROUP 3 - Excluded from automatic declassification~~ to-
natically declassified. DOD DIR 5200.10

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

REPORT ON OBSERVATIONS OF
THE TECHNICAL MEMBER
SPECIAL UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC MISSION
TO
THE KINGDOM OF THE YEMEN
APRIL-JULY 1946

GROUP 3 - Downgraded at 12 year intervals; not automatically declassified. DOD DIR 5200.10

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

N
4 Sep 47

No P.O. Reg #

UNCLASSIFIED

REPORT ON OBSERVATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL MEMBER
SPECIAL UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC MISSION
TO THE KINGDOM OF THE YEMEN

The best one sentence description of the Yemen I have heard is one given by Mr. R. H. Sanger a member of the recent Special U. S. Diplomatic Mission. He said, "The Yemen is rushing headlong into the 13th century." To amplify on this sentence would take a library of volumes - volumes which have not as yet been written. There are a few books available written by an occasional traveler fortunate enough to have been allowed to enter the country. Three of these books, written in English are: "A Journey Through the Yemen" by Walter B. Harris, "Arabian Peak and Desert" by Ameen Rihani and "In the High Yemen" by Hugh Scott. Scott's book contains what is probably the most complete bibliography on the Yemen. A book, written in German, by Carl Rathjens and Hermann Von Wissmann is described as being the most comprehensive treatise written about this, one of the few remaining dark spots in the world.

The term dark spot is truly applicable to the country. Not only is little known about it from the outside but like any closed package there is darkness also on the inside. It is thought that the country contains about 85,000 square miles. One boundary, the eastern is indefinitely suspended in desert waste; one the northern, seems fairly well established; yet a third, the southern, which should be the best established of all, seems to be the object of wishful thinking on the part of the Yemen and its neighbors.

Estimates place the population of the Yemen at a figure between three and six million people. The best estimates place the figure at perhaps three and a half to four million, which is the equivalent of the estimated population of the entire remainder of the Arabian peninsula.

Like so many of the Arab peoples the Yemeni is poverty stricken. This does not seem strange to him since everywhere he looks he sees only brothers in poverty except for the headman of the village and a merchant or two. The headman is called a sheik, amil, hakim, or nabob depending on the size of the community. The common people have a variety of other names for the headman not normally used except under their breaths.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Most of the Yemeni are not nomads. They live in well established villages and cities under the absolute rule of their king, administered through the local headman who serves the king faithfully and well - because it is financially profitable for him to do so and also because the king is probably holding one of his sons as a hostage. The headman of a city may be paid 20 to 40 Marie Theresia dollars a month, worth approximately 75 cents in American money each - enough to buy his qat - the rest he gleans from those who have nothing. There seems to be little question of the fact that the economy is based on the policy that "Unto he who hath shall be given and from he who hath not shall be taken, even that which he hath not."

Agricultural pursuits occupy the time of most of the population. Food is produced in excess of the requirements of the country. In spite of this fact the people seem to be underfed, seem to lack stamina, and give the appearance of being extremely poor physical specimens. The average weight of the men is not more than 120 pounds. The women are so well covered and camouflaged it would be difficult to estimate their weight and appearance.

Yemeni laborers outside of the Yemen are exceptionally good. All stevedoring and heavy labor in the Port of Aden is Yemeni. One of the crack Italian Battalions in Ethiopia was composed entirely of Yemeni soldiers with Italian officers. Heavy construction work for the Italian army in the Italian sections of Africa was performed mostly by Yemenis. It was a common sight to see a 120 pound Yemeni trotting up a swaying plank carrying 200 to 300 pound packages on his back. Wages for this labor is low, averaging 50 cents to one dollar a day. The labor is good and is sought after. Within the Yemen, however, it is an entirely different story. The same men who were such good soldiers and laborers on the outside soon lose all interest in working. They return to the time honored Yemeni custom of spending most of their income for qat instead of food. They soon lose the stamina and will to work and place their reliance on Allah and the few scraps they can get together to live on. Qat and a government which apparently does not have any interest in the welfare of any of

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

its subjects seems to have the effect of killing initiative.

Qat chewing is the national pastime of the men, women, and children. Qat is the name of a small tree native to the country. The tender twigs and leaves of this tree are picked and chewed by the Yemenis. It is said that a slight narcotic effect comes over the chewer of qat. It appears that the average Yemeni prefers qat to food and that over half the income of the inhabitants of Sana'a, the capitol, is spent for qat.

Internal transportation is almost entirely by camel of which there are tens of thousands in the Yemen. By contrast, there are less than 50 motor vehicles in running condition. There is one main "road" over which the vehicles move. The road begins in Sana'a, goes to Marbar, Bagil, and Hodeidah, thence to Beit El Faqi, Zabid, Heis, and Taiz and Aden. It is 500 miles from Sana'a to Aden. It is not considered abnormal for a truck carrying a load of about one ton to take one month to cover this distance. At places the road is at sea level, in others it winds and bends through mountain passes as much as 9000 feet high with grades of 20% the rule and as much as 30 to 35% not uncommon. About 150 miles of the road is through loose sand. By hard driving an average speed of ten miles an hour can be maintained with a jeep or four miles an hour with a 2 1/2 ton 6x6 truck. Travel under such conditions is not inviting to the casual voyager. Indeed, the road seems only to have collaborated with the government in denying entry into the Yemen of all strangers and foreigners.

Previous to the entry of the recent Special U. S. Diplomatic Mission to the Yemen there is a record of only 9 Americans who had ever entered the country. Missions of Russians, Italians, English, Dutch, and a few Germans had entered. Of these there remain today only four Italian doctors, one German engineer, and one European machinest.

Approximately five weeks after the arrival of the mission a treaty was signed and all members of the mission except my assistant and I eventually left the Yemen. We remained behind for the purpose of instructing the Yemenis in the use of various pieces of radio apparatus which in the tradition of the Arab world had been given to the king as a gift. It was originally anticipated that we would remain about three weeks after the departure of the

UNCLASSIFIED

rest of the mission. Requests that we stay longer extended our stay in the Yemen to a total of three months. During this time we trained their radio operators in the use of a modern medium powered radio station (SCR 399). We transformed their royal signal corps from a flag waving circus into a relatively well trained communications unit using modern military radio sets (SCR 300, 536, 694, and telephones EE8). I was asked by the King to survey coal deposits and streams and to make recommendations for the utilization of the available power for electrical purposes. I was asked to make a survey of the city of Sana'a for the purpose of electrifying it; I made surveys of several places for the purpose of determining the feasibility of using power equipment for pumping irrigation water. I was called in from time to time by the ministers of finance and commerce, of war, of health and communication for discussions and advice on matters concerning their spheres of activity. In an interview with the prime minister he went into a lengthy discussion on the history of the Yemen, its greatness of the past (it is the land of the Queen of Sheba and the Arabia Felix of Roman times), its present backwardness, and the outlook for a brighter future, since it is well known by them that their country was rich agriculturally, it was well populated, they were certain it had rich mineral deposits and petroleum deposits which they hoped would be developed some day with the aid of Americans whom they knew to be the strongest nation on earth and the only major nation with no colonial aspirations.

Cairo lies on the road back to the United States. Prince Abdallah the second son of the King lives in Cairo where he acts as the only foreign representative of the Yemen. I carried personal greetings to Abdallah from his father and brothers. He received me warmly and spoke to me for over two hours about the problems of the Yemen. He spoke as one, however, who had been out of the country and who could compare the problems of his country with that of others. It developed that in spite of several years residence in Cairo he said he had never visited the American Legation or met any of the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

American officials he might normally have contact with. By mutual agreement of all concerned I arranged to have him meet pertinent American officials and acted as interpreter during these meetings. During two other visits to Prince Abdallah he emphasized the fact that he was ashamed to approach the representatives of the United States with the problems of a country so small and backward as the Yemen whose requirements were so modest as compared to the requirements of others as to appear almost insignificant. He realized that it must seem absurd to Americans who had millions of motor vehicles to hear of a government which would have its transportation facilities greatly relieved if it could only get a hundred trucks. He discussed other supplies, particularly textiles, in the same light.

The Yemen has been ruled almost without interruption for the past 1000 years by members of the same family in power today. They have maintained their independence successfully, except for threats now and then, particularly from Turkey previous to the last war. In the Near East the Yemen is known as the graveyard of the Turks. The present king has established and maintained the undisputed independence of his country, has consolidated it and has established law and order to a degree where major crimes are particularly unheard of. He, and therefore his government, is extremely suspicious of anything foreign; he has managed to keep himself clear of all foreign entanglements and to play one government against the other successfully toward the end that the independence of the Yemen is secured. It is probably realized that maintenance of this isolation indefinitely into the future is going to be more difficult than it was in the past and that some graceful way of bringing the Yemen into a more active role in the family of nations under the sponsorship of Americans is probably the best course of action available to them. They are and will continue to be suspicious of everything foreign and will probably proceed with extreme caution on any undertaking involving foreigners.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

The observations on a variety of subjects which follow were chosen in an attempt to show conditions as they today exist with enough background to show why they may be as they are and indications, if any were found, of what might be expected in the future. Most of the information was gathered by observation. Very few questions were asked. The natural inclination of the Yemeni was to suspect the motive behind any question. It was also soon found that the Yemeni probably didn't know the answer anyway and if he did he was only too glad to give it during the course of a conversation in which no direct questions were asked. In discussing each topic an attempt was made to give enough background without going into excessive detail. Very few specific facts are given simply because detailed information was not available. Very few Yemeni had ever seen a map of their country; no government official ever referred to one; it is doubtful whether a complete map of the country exists within the country. We never referred to one of our maps of the Yemen in the presence of a Yemeni. Our observations indicated that in general topographical detail the map seemed reliable but that in location of villages there was considerable error both in our maps and in the Italian maps. It was not considered expedient to make corrections since the suspicion which might have been created in making the few corrections possible during this survey might have complicated materially the work of future observers.

Many incidents of passing interest are not mentioned in the following report. These incidents include the meeting Prince Motahir called immediately after the treaty was signed. It was the opinion of those who attended that Prince Motahir must have been drunk on qat. The subject he seemed most interested in during an afternoon's formal discussion was how to get an artesian well where the water would not flow. Prince Kassim, Minister of Health and Communication, on one occasion ordered the royal pharmacist to send me a statement for some quinine pills we had obtained. On another occasion he argued with one of the communication students about cutting a piece of our own wire on the basis that eventually we might give it to him and he wanted it in one long piece instead of several short ones. Prince Ismail, the Minister of War,

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

a young dandy only recently given that post often expressed the desire to have us visit him but would never set a time for the visit although he invited my drivers and servants to his home regularly for social visits. My farewell visit to the King lasted an hour and a half during which time he outlined his personal problems and needs including the purchase of ammonia for an obsolete household refrigerator, but never during this entire interview was there the least expression or hint of any appreciation for the work of the mission or any of its members. Only when I gave him the letter conveying the gift of the small radio sets and telephones did he turn one copy of the letter over and write a note of acceptance on the back. The people who had access to radio sets and knew of the first broadcast of Radio Yemen expressed surprise that a broadcast had been agreed to at all and expressed the opinion it would be the first and last. Many others said that they were certain the small plaques we had put on the SCR 399 and the jeep, indicating they were a gift to the government of the Yemen from the government of the United States, would be removed as soon as we left. Indeed we only thought of putting the plaques on the equipment in order to quell the circulating rumor that the mission had sold the equipment to the Yemenis. These incidents and many more should only be considered in their background effect. Each person mentioned had his fine qualities which far outweighed, if properly played upon, the selfish nature which always seemed to come to the front in any crisis, no matter how minor.

The number of subjects covered has been limited and the information on each general. The one definite opinion which I believe can be expressed is that the royal family is apprehensive over its position and in an effort to improve this position, politically and commercially, will welcome any material aid or advice they might be given from the United States or other countries, provided it does not cost anything and provided they do not think it would enlighten the masses.

-7- UNCLASSIFIED

YEMENI PHILOSOPHY

History and time mean nothing to the average Yemeni. He knows he is here today, that there was someone here before him, and that there will probably be someone here following him. Aside from this he has no conception of time. An incident which happened in one of the small villages near Sana'a illustrates the thinking of the natives. Within this village there is a wall which is obviously much older than anything else around. I inquired about the age of this wall from some of the local inhabitants. One of the group gathered around me said, "The wall is at least two hundred years old." Another one said, "No, the wall is at least two hundred and fifty years old." It was then that the wise man of the group came forward and settled the argument. He said, "This wall dates back to the time of Adam. It is at least three hundred and fifty years old." Another minor incident along the same line is worth relating. Near this village high up in a mountain there is a spring. The only installation I saw using water-power was near this spring. The installation was a small flour mill. No one remembered when it had been built. One man, however, remembered that his grandfather had told him that the mill was there when he was a child. During those days it was said that the mill was capable of grinding fifty cans of wheat a day. During the time within the memory of the people now living it was known that the mill used to grind twenty cans of wheat a day. Within the past few years they had tried to fix it with the result that now the mill grinds two cans of wheat a day. I was asked to inspect the mill to see what could be done. Inspection revealed that the water instead of coming out in a solid stream was leaving the jet in a spray. I suggested that perhaps cleaning or renewing the jet might increase the usable power a little. I was told by the operators of the mill that "In sha' Allah" some day they will think of repairing it.

The expression "In sha' Allah" is a favorite one of the Yemeni. With it he will answer every question and find a solution for every situation. Nothing daunts him for he can always fortify himself behind this phrase "If God wills," and leave things for posterity to take care of.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The basis for law in the Yemen is the Koranic code. By it the Yemeni governs his religious as well as his social behaviour. Interpretation of the law and dispensation of justice seems to be in the hands of the King and through him in the hands of the head man of each village and city.

Major crimes are almost unknown in the country but from the number of prisoners we heard of and the number of men to be seen wearing leg irons, petty crime must be fairly common. It isn't uncommon to see school boys wearing leg irons because they played hockey or because they didn't know their lessons. If the perpetrator of some wrong is not known but several people are suspected it isn't uncommon to put all of them in leg irons until the culprit is found. The law, such as it is, is administered impartially and strictly. At least one of the King's sons has been put in jail for owning and playing a phonograph. Our cook was put in irons for two days once when we found and mentioned that there was some hair in our soup. One of the soldiers detailed to the guard at the guest house was put in jail for a couple of days for slapping a spectator who was in a restricted zone. Many of the people who came to the guest house uninvited to see the 16-mm cinema we had were put in jail when they left the house. The keeper of the mosque who let some members of our mission into the mosque to look around was put in jail. One man whom we knew to be an extremely good friend of one of the princes fled the country to keep from going to jail because of some displeasure he had brought on himself. The range of reasons for which a man might be placed in confinement seemed endless and varied from acts which could be classed as criminal to acts which might be simple, unintentional oversights. The sentences varied also from a day or two in leg irons to years in jail. It seems that sentences are summary. A defendant is brought before the head man of the village or his authorized representative. His case is heard and he is sentenced in a matter of a few minutes. Ability to pay seems to be a factor in reducing severity of punishment. No one except the King himself seemed to be immune from this process of law which worked arbitrarily, surely, and swiftly.

SCHOOLS

There are reported to be nearly one thousand schools in the Yemen. Almost every community of any size has a school where the Koran is taught. Most male adults can read a little even though their reading might be restricted to familiar passages from the Koran; most would have difficulty reading the ordinary handwriting of a letter. The Yemenis themselves belittle their own school system and probably are not wrong when they say it is just an empty shell in which the students go through a few years of sing song Koranic training, at the conclusion of which they do not know much more than they did at the beginning. In some families there is a decided reluctance on the part of parents to send their children to school. This seems to stem from the mistaken idea that schooling is just a preparatory step toward compulsory entry into the Army, which it in fact is not. The range of schools varies from elementary rural schools in the smaller villages to the University of Sana'a where law, theology, and very elementary and rudimentary forms of business are taught. Judging from the level of knowledge of the teachers, a few of whom I came to know quite well, the work could not have been very comprehensive in nature except for the teachings of the Koran.

There are in addition within Sana'a secondary schools, a normal school used for training teachers, a military school used for training future officers of the Yemeni Army, and schools for orphans. The value of the knowledge gained in any of these schools may be questioned, by the Yemenis or by others, but it remains a fact that there exists a comprehensive framework of schools in the country and that it is possible in time that the academic standards of this school system may rise to higher levels.

LIBRARIES

In line with the policy of those in power to keep the masses in ignorance there exists the paradox of an extensive school system and no public libraries, newspapers, or periodicals. There is not a single printing press in the country. As far as could be determined the only libraries in existence were privately owned and not available to the general public. Most of the books seem to be either handwritten volumes or more recent works imported from Egypt. The visible library of the Crown Prince in Taiz consisted of four shelves of books, each shelf about 10 feet long with perhaps as many more books scattered in various places. The grand mosque in Sana'a is reported to have a large library consisting mostly of handwritten volumes. It is reported that at one time this library was open to the public and any citizen could by leaving a small deposit take a book from the library. Books began disappearing from the library at such alarming rates that the practice had to be discontinued. It is reported that the largest collections of Yemeni volumes outside the Yemen exist in the Vatican Libraries and in London Museums.

It is probable that the King's private library has never been seen by a stranger. I was fortunate in finding who the "librarian" was and in obtaining a description. The librarian himself had only been allowed to go to the library for a long enough period to make a partial list of books and authors, tie a piece of cord around each book and place it on a shelf. He described the library as being a room about 40 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet high. There are shelves around all four walls of the room. The shelves begin at the floor and go to the ceiling with a shelf about each 18 inches. The entire shelf space is filled with handwritten volumes some over a thousand years old. From what little he was allowed to read the librarian guessed that most of the books were histories or chronicles of the exploits of the royal family. The library is in the palace at Sana'a. It is situated in a back room, access to which is had by passing through the harem. It is not surprising that so few have seen it. I do not believe that the King would allow any interested outside libraries to make microfilm records of the library.

UNCLASSIFIED
UNCLASSIFIED
UNCLASSIFIED

QAT

Abdallah, Ben Mohamed Tahir, was by far the most capable student assigned to us. He was the best operator and the only one of the operators we had who could read a few words in a foreign language, French. The hold that qat had on Abdallah is probably typical of its effect on Yemenis generally. In contrast, Moukhtar, Ben Mohamed El Agine, our next best student did not chew qat at all. This story will be about Abdallah.

When these two operators first reported to us for instruction, we arranged a schedule of lessons which would not interfere with their regular radio schedules or ours. This usually consisted of a class of about an hour's duration in the morning, about two hours in the afternoon and an hour and a half in the evening.

We noticed that Abdallah reported for the first time with a cheek full of qat. We said nothing until it became apparent that he not only chewed the qat but that from time to time he also spit it unconsciously on those with whom he was speaking or on the equipment with which he was working. After this had gone on for about an hour, I stopped instruction and explained to Abdallah that during the time we were having our lessons neither Cpl. McClure nor I would smoke (neither of us smoked anyway) in turn we expected him to put aside his qat during the period of instruction. He looked at me rather funny and didn't say anything. So I repeated the statement. He still did not say anything, so I told him to leave the room, get rid of his qat and when he got rid of it to come back. He left rather reluctantly and came back a few minutes later without it. He moped the rest of the afternoon. The following day he came back for his lesson again with a cheekful of qat. We again asked him to get rid of it, but this time instead of leaving, he answered, "I understand that you would rather have me study without the qat, but to me that is impossible. Without qat my head is not clear. I cannot concentrate, I cannot think, nor is my mind retentive. I must have it if I am to do anything. If you insist upon my leaving my qat behind, then I too will

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

not come anymore." Considering the fact that Abdallah was being given the opportunity of a lifetime to receive instruction in radio and that he would give up this opportunity rather than give up qat, we decided that perhaps it was best to subjugate our feelings in the matter and make the best of the situation with Abdallah and his qat.

As time went on, we learned more about this typical example of qat chewer. This man was certainly far above average in intelligence. He was married and had two wives, his salary was \$40.00 per month. He maintained his household on \$10.00 plus what was contributed by his father and a brother living with him while he used \$30.00 of the \$40.00 to buy qat.

UNCLASSIFIED

DWEIDAR ALLAH TAREEK

Dweidar Allah Tareek -- these three words in many respects are symbolic of the key words to the secrets of the Yemen. Dweidar is a title given to very small boys who are employed as pages in the palace of the King and in some of the homes of the very rich. The boy is usually five to ten years old. His main duty seems to be to escort visitors through the courtyard to the doorway of the palace and to make certain that none of the women are around at the time the strangers are entering. The routine followed in every visit we made to the King's palace was invariably the same. We alighted from the car at the gate to the courtyard. The guard at the gate would open it wide enough so that he could stick his head inside and yell at the top of his voice D-w-e-i-d-a-r. Eventually a little ragged dirty urchin would come to the gate and escort us across the courtyard to the door of the palace where we were again told to wait. Prince Motahir, the King's Aide de Camp would meet us at the door of the palace and escort us up to the King's chamber. As in most of the other buildings of the Yemen, the stairway in the palace consisted of about ten steps then a right angle turn, then about ten more steps and another turn. Before each turn, Prince Motahir would say quite audibly, "A-l-l-a-h T-a-r-e-e-k" as a warning to any female who might be around to get out of the way.

The "Dweidar" was only a feature of the very wealthy homes, but "Allah Tareek" was a feature of every home. The words "Allah Tareek" (give way - get under cover) at each turn of the stairway to make certain that we did not see anything which was not intended for us to see was indicative of the efforts of the Yemeni to keep visitors from seeing the members of the household just as they had for centuries past made every effort to keep strangers from seeing their country.

UNCLASSIFIED

THE YEMENI ARMY

The Yemeni Army consists of between 20 and 25 thousand regulars who enlist for life. In addition there is compulsory military training for a period of three to six months for most men. It is estimated that between five and seven thousand troops are stationed in and near Sana'a. The rest are stationed in garrisons varying in number from a half dozen or so soldiers in some villages to an estimated 400 soldiers at Hodeida. These outlying garrisons are apparently under the authority of the headman of the community in which they are stationed and serve him in the performance of his duties acting particularly as guards, tax collectors, subpoena servers, and general errand boys. From this duty the soldier gleans extra pay. In tax collecting he receives gifts and bribes, in serving a subpoena and hauling some unfortunate before the headman of the village he receives a fee from the unfortunate who may know nothing about what is going on, be entirely innocent of all accusations, and be released after being brought before the headman - released that is from everything except the fee to the soldier who brought him to court. Most of the soldiers seem to prefer service away from the main garrison at Sana'a.

There is a large garrison stationed in Taiz, the seat of the Crown Prince. There seem to be at least a thousand soldiers stationed in and near the city itself. It is probable that throughout the province there are three or four thousand more. During the Crown Prince's visit to Aden it is said he advertised for additional recruits for the army. These factors might be considerations in the succession to the throne should it come to a showdown fight. These soldiers are directly under the Crown Prince's authority whereas no other contender is actually in charge of any troops at the present time, although he might be in days to come.

Basic pay for a Yemeni soldier is 5 Maria Theresa dollars a month plus an allowance of grain. It is believed that the average soldier

UNCLASSIFIED

augments this by 50 to 100 dollars a year in outside income from fees, tips, bribes, and gifts.

Each soldier is equipped with a rifle, a bandolier of shells, and a gambiyah - the native knife. These articles he keeps with him at all times. The only other item of equipment which some of the soldiers carried was a small leather sack. This sack is usually 4 to 6 inches in diameter and 12 to 16 inches long. In it they carry a loaf of bread or more usually a bundle of qat.

Travelling is a relatively simple matter for the Yemeni Army. A soldier or group of soldiers are told to go somewhere so they start off - walking. They do not carry rations or equipment but eat off the country as they go. A Yemeni soldier will not of his own accord sleep out in the open. He will stop and billet himself in any village he is passing through.

Most Yemeni officers in the Sana'a garrison have the appearance of being old men. Quite a few of them are Turks who remained after 1918. Salaries range from 20 to 60 dollars a month plus whatever can be gleaned from outside sources. There are several Iraqi officers (perhaps six) in the Yemeni Army, one of whom is recognized as being the most capable soldier in the Army. It is probable that the Iraqi officers while in Iraq were affiliated with organizations sympathetic to the Axis powers and that these officers will probably find it convenient to stay in the Yemen rather than return to Iraq.

There exists in Sana'a a military academy where future army officers are trained. I was never invited to visit this school which is in one section of a large caserne but had occasion to pass by the place quite often. There was no indication of what was being taught but it seems probable that any military subjects were quite elementary. The enrollment seemed to consist of about 50 cadets. These cadets all seemed to be 20 years or more old. They wore a distinctive brown uniform.

The formations and titles of rank in the Yemeni Army apparently follow those in the Iraqi Army. No one of my students, consisting of captains and lieutenants, was able to give me even an approximate outline

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

of the organization of the army. The Sana'a garrison consists mainly of infantry. There are in addition about 20 machine guns of various makes and models and about 20 assorted pieces of artillery in evidence. The artillery consists of items varying from 75 mm pack howitzers to a battery of four guns about 4 1/2 inches bore, with barrels about 6 feet long. It is probable that most of this artillery was left behind by the Turks in 1918. There are supposed to be a few artillery pieces in Hodeida; there probably are a few pieces in Taiz.

There is no transport of any kind in the army except pack animals. The Engineering equipment is non-existent except for some black powder and caps which could be used for blasting. There is no medical service. The troops live off the land. Communications are carried on chiefly by means of messengers, flags, or lights. Flags consist of a single white semaphore flag about one yard square which is used to make the characters of the alphabet. There are a few signal lights and some reflectors. No other equipment besides the above mentioned was in evidence previous to our gift of 1 radio set, SCR 694, 2 SCR 536, 8 SCR 300, and 4 telephones REG.

A small, well-trained army properly used in the mountains of the Yemen could fight successfully against a superior enemy similarly equipped. Unless there were some motive such as a religious war or the prospect of obtaining quantities of loot to give driving force to the individual, I do not believe the Yemeni Army today is capable of fighting a determined armed adversary. It is probable that almost all the officers could be bought off and that a few dollars apiece would convince the soldiers they had more important business than getting in a fight in which someone might get hurt.

These same soldiers if taken out of the country and given basic modern equipment with instruction in modern methods of fighting are excellent soldiers. Some of the best soldiers the Italians had in the Ethiopian campaign were Yemenis. One battalion under Italian officers distinguished itself time and again, yet the same individuals upon

UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

returning home reverted to the lazy attitude of the Yemen and were soon as shiftless and lethargic as ever.

It is doubtful whether there is any honest loyalty in the army. Within limits the army will perform any peace time duties assigned to it by the present king. Its actions on his death are unpredictable. Most of the soldiers and officers would probably like to continue on as they did in the past. If it comes to a question of internal strife to determine the succession it might just be a question of who pays the most. If it is a question of an uprising by an unarmed and unorganized civil population, the army would probably stand solidly behind the government (whether the present king or his successor) provided they were being paid regularly. If it is a question of invasion by a reasonably strong aggressor, a few well placed bribes would probably be the best spearhead of attack. This state of doubtful loyalty seems to be quite well known to the king who is said to demand from each influential civil servant, such as the governor of a province or headman of an important community, a son to be kept in the citadel at Sana'a as hostage to guarantee faithful performance of duties by the father.

UNCLASSIFIED

SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

According to the rules any qualified Yemeni may succeed to the throne whether or not he is a member of the present royal family. As a matter of fact, barring political upheaval or revolution, the choice of contenders is limited to a very few individuals, both from the royal family and from other families.

Generally the contenders fall into three classes:

1. Those who as king would continue the present policies of government, including oppression of the people, isolation, and no attempt at any improvements which were not mandatory because of outside events.
2. Those who as king would institute a regime still more fanatic than this one under which the people would be oppressed still more than they are at present.
3. Those who as king would have the good of the common people at heart, and might institute reforms, political and social, for the common good of all.

The known aspirants to the throne as far as I could find out are:

Crown Prince Ahmed

Prince Hussein

El Wazir Abdallah (Note: Not Prince Abdallah, second son of the King)

There are others but their names were never mentioned nor did I consider it advisable to inquire.

Prince Abdallah, the second son of the king, is not thought to aspire to the throne although it seems he is liked perhaps better than either Ahmed or Hussein. Of the other princes in power it is thought that Kassim, Motahir and Ismail do not aspire to the throne, do not think they have a chance of becoming king, and would probably leave the country rather than become involved in any contest of contenders for the throne.

Of the three contenders whose names are known, Crown Prince Ahmed is at present the king's choice and the peoples' anathema. A review of the Intelligence Reports (American and British) concerning his actions on the occasion of his visit to Aden in May 1946 would probably give

basis for the expressed confidential opinion of the people of the Yemen that it would be best for all concerned if Ahmed were not king. It is probable that conditions would be worse under Ahmed than they are at present and that they would grow progressively worse as time went on. I met no one who spoke a good word for Ahmed. Those who spoke at all dislike him. There was one incident which might infer that the king was concerned with the actions and apparent shortcomings of his oldest son. Ahmed went to Aden with his father's permission ostensibly to obtain medical attention. As interpreter for the American doctors on the mission I saw several, perhaps all, the letters Ahmed sent his father concerning the reports of the doctors who examined him. The king was extremely anxious that the American doctors explain and advise him on everything contained in the reports. The final reports recommended simple treatment rather than an operation. This relieved the king considerably. (According to the Crown Prince's personal physician there was nothing particularly wrong with Ahmed. It is thought his trip to Aden was perhaps a whimsey of his own mind based on political considerations. Ahmed probably speculated that he would play up to the British at the time the American Mission was in Sana'a and thus gain support for himself at the time of the succession.) Toward the end of his visit in Aden, Ahmed is said to have written his father and asked permission to go to Egypt. His father is said to have answered in effect, my son it has been several years since you have come to Sana'a to visit me. If you are well enough to visit in Egypt you are well enough to come to Sana'a. Ahmed did not go to Egypt, neither did he come to Sana'a, nor as far as I could find out did he ever plan on visiting Sana'a at any time soon. It is possible that the king is aware of the dangers which might befall the country should the Crown Prince succeed him and that he may as a protection to the future of the family make some adjustments and changes. There is no indication what these adjustments or changes might be, if any, but the incentive to make them, the pressure to make them, and the knowledge that the reforms should be made exist.

Prince Hussein, the third son of the king is the other prince with apparently definite aspirations and chances to the throne. With the possible exception of Abdallah, Hussein is the most able and most widely experienced of the princes. He has travelled a little in England, France, Italy and Japan. He can sometimes understand the meaning of very simple English sentences if they are spoken slowly. He is described as being extremely fanatical on religious matters. Within my own experience I know that at prayer time he asks to be excused, regardless of what is being done at the moment, and going to a corner of the room performs the appropriate prayer ritual, then returns to the business at hand. Within the limits of his restricted experience he is shrewd; he assimilates new ideas readily; he is sensitive to the mood and intentions of those with whom he is speaking. In spite of his travels and his position as minister of finance and commerce and personal representative of the King, his knowledge of how to conduct even the simplest of business matters involving foreigners is limited to the point of being almost non-existent. For example, in reporting to Prince Hussein on the merits of a stream I had surveyed at his request for hydro electric development, I went into the subject of fixed costs of the installation. The idea of fixed costs and interest on investment were new to him. In fact he did not even know the Arabic word for interest.

It is believed that should circumstances be such that Hussein ascends to the throne, conditions will remain essentially as they are with the possibility that pressure might bring slight improvement.

I do not know El Wazir Abdallah personally. It seems though that he and his brother are two of the wealthiest and most powerful men in the Yemen outside the royal family. His brother it seems is the logical contender for the throne but because of a physical imperfection is not eligible. The brother therefore has thrown his influence behind El Wazir Abdallah with the object of obtaining power for the family. It appears that the king is aware of this threat to the succession within his own family and as a consequence keeps El Wazir Abdallah close to the court, apparently in the role of advisor, but actually so that his movements may be watched closely.

UNCLASSIFIED

As far as I could find out El Wazir Abdallah would, as far as welfare of the people and the country are concerned, be the worst possible choice as successor to the present king. It is the concensus of opinion that his rule would be considered cruel and oppressive even when compared to conditions as they now exist.

In any discussion of the future of the Yemen there is one person who, in spite of his present position must be taken into account, even though he is not a contender for the throne, Kadi Ragib Bey. For over 20 years he has been foreign minister for the Yemen. It is probable that his knowledge of European politics and his ability as a diplomat, coupled with the apparent confidence the king had in him, was as large a factor as any in the successful conduct of the foreign policy of the Yemen. During the negotiations for a treaty of friendship and commerce (see "The Treaty of Sana'a" by Mr. R. H. Sanger in "The American Foreign Service Journal" for August 1946) Kadi Ragib Bey resigned from his post as foreign minister and went to the extreme of donning European clothes and saying that he was through with Yemeni affairs. About a month later he was back in native attire. It became apparent that he had been asked to resume his post as foreign minister. About this time he became slightly ill and sent for Dr. Merucci who later told me of the visit. Kadi Ragib was apparently in a talkative mood and spoke at length on the future of the Yemen and on his own position. Bey's background, observations, and contacts through the years gave him ample opportunity with respect to other independent countries. He knew the people were by and large dissatisfied and that conditions were intolerable to a point such that the status quo could only be maintained by force. Enemies of the state existed both inside the Yemen and outside but fortunately they were unorganized and lacked any strength or power. It was unlikely that any uprising would occur during the lifetime of the present king. It was problematical as to whether the common people could muster together enough power to better their lot even after the king died but it could be only a matter of time until an attempt would be made. It was doubtful if the attempt would be successful without the outside help of another

UNCLASSIFIED

country. The attempt at an uprising if unsupported would probably be quelled by force and the lot of the people become worse; if, however, the uprising showed sufficient power a few changes might be made in the existing system. Kadi Bey said he had been asked to resume his former post as foreign minister but had not as yet accepted nor would he accept until he was assured of the full powers normally associated with the office. He would then accept the office and continue to attempt to influence the king to institute reforms which would in time make the government of the Yemen a constitutional monarchy with a king at its head and elected representatives of the people as a legislature. He realized that this was a radical change from the absolute monarchy and feudal system which exists now but eventually the change was coming and it might be better for those now in power if the change were made voluntarily on their part rather than have it happen by force at some time in the future.

Whether Kadi Ragib Bey actually is in power or not, he has been in the service of the Yemeni government too long to be overlooked as a major factor in influencing any great decision of that government. He probably sees more clearly than any other man the possible future paths which circumstances and destiny may lay out for the Yemen. It would be a mistake to assume he is no longer in a position to influence the destiny of this country. Any large scale operation which did not take into account his influence would be overlooking a factor which might be a help or a hinderance to its success. If Bey's ideas are accepted in part or in total by the king it may have an effect on the succession as well as the future of the Yemen.

It is known that there are other aspirants to the throne, some of whom have the welfare of the nation and its people at heart and would if chosen make good rulers for the country. Characteristically enough, the names of these benevolent candidates were never mentioned. It is apparent that barring unforeseen circumstances, none of them are powerful or influential enough to ascend to the throne.

The three main contenders at the present time are Crown Prince

UNCLASSIFIED

Ahmed, Prince Hussein, and El Wazir Abdallah. Should Ahmed die before his father and everything else remain as is, there seems little doubt that Hussein would be next king. If Hussein supports Ahmed there is little doubt that Ahmed would ascend the throne. If Ahmed and Hussein disagree then El Wazir Abdallah has his greater opportunity of displacing the present ruling family. In this instance it would become a multisided slugging match in which the contestant having overwhelming power would take over the whole country, or if no contestant had power enough to eliminate the others the country might be divided into several autonomous provinces, each ruled by a separate king. The opportunity for a dark horse to enter the contest and eliminate the known contenders during the free for all exists.

If no contest develops between Hussein and Ahmed and it is decided that Ahmed shall have the throne then it is possible that the death of the king, when it occurs, and should it occur suddenly, will be kept a secret long enough for Ahmed to come from Taiz to Sana'a (a minimum of 30 hours continuous travel time under present conditions). Then the death of the king and the ascension of Ahmed to the throne would be announced simultaneously. It is probable that under these conditions the accomplished fact of having a king on the throne would keep any rival contenders from being successful as they might have a chance of being should there be a lapse of time between the death of the present king and the choosing of his successor.

UNCLASSIFIED

SEIF EL ISLAM ABDALLAH

Seif el Islam (Prince) Abdallah, the second son of the King is the only foreign representative of the Yemen. Prince Abdallah lives in Cairo where he maintains contact between the Yemen and the outside world and where he seems to be extremely active in Arab League functions. He has recently been joined by a full brother, Prince Yahyah, who is one of the minor Princes. It seems that Abdallah prefers to be outside of the Yemen where he could carry on the business of his Father's country. It is he who is hiring the Lebanese, who acts as foreign trade representative in buying what is needed by the Yemen and in selling what there is to offer to the outside, as well as to represent the country in the meetings of the Arab League.

Prince Abdallah is like his brothers in many respects. He is different mainly in one respect. The man is smart enough to see the difference between his country and the other countries of the world. In my contacts with him he repeated time and again the thought that it must seem absurd to a great country like the United States to deal with a country so backward as the Yemen. He spoke of the needs of the Yemen and in the same breath indicated that in quantity the needs of the Yemen were so modest as compared with the enormous quantities of goods needed by others as to appear insignificant. Nevertheless the needs were urgent and he asked for all the help that could be given in obtaining these goods. He is apparently thought of quite highly by the Yemeni masses.

It is my impression that Prince Abdallah would much prefer remaining in Egypt and keep himself aloof from internal politics of the Yemen.

FREE YEMEN PARTY

A telegram from the Free Yemen party signed "Norman and Zobari" was received in Washington a few weeks before the mission left the states. This message called attention to the fact that in the opinion of the writers the present government of the Yemen was an oppressive government, did not have the best interests of the people at heart, and left the definite impression that the people were dissatisfied with the administration and its policies.

During the eight days we were in Aden unloading and assembling our equipment we had contact with many Yemenis, mostly laborers. Everyone of them who expressed an opinion at all voiced the same thought "Imam no good." Along the route into Sana's I had occasion to speak to many natives, farmers, laborers, soldiers, merchants, teachers, government officials, again those who expressed an opinion at all spoke disapprovingly of the king and the harshness of the rule.

In Sana's it was the same story. I came to know many people from all stations of life, varying from beggars on the street to high government officials; if an opinion was expressed it was always against the government. Many of these people spoke quite freely to me. I made it a point always to listen but never to comment or express an opinion of my own except to leave one thought with them. I would point out to them that they were one of the few Arab nations which had national independence; they had the best school system of any Arab country I knew of; they were rich in natural resources. I pointed out to them that they should be thankful for these blessings and grateful that theirs was a government strong enough and wise enough to have maintained their independence through the years when most small countries were losing theirs.

The main complaints of the people fell into a few well defined categories which, after they are studied, sum themselves up fairly well in the evils which our own Bill of Rights protects us against.

[REDACTED]

It is no exaggeration to say that no one is satisfied with the present government and that everyone including the king knows it. I could find no evidence of an internal opposition party or society or of any organized plan of any kind with enough support and power to give it any chance of success. As conditions stand today I do not believe that the Yemeni people are capable of revolting successfully against an oppression they all hate. If the improbable happened and they were successful in a revolution then I believe that the government which might be established after the revolution would be as bad or worse than the one they now have - unless a plan and organization not at present in evidence guides the efforts and sets definite aims and objectives for the people to reach, maintain, and improve on.

The Free Yemeni Party might be the basis for an organized plan. Norman and Zobari seem to be the leaders of this unorganized organization. These men came to see me while we were in Aden preparing to go into the Yemen. I made believe I did not know them; they in turn did not mention the Free Yemen Party or say why they had come to see me. We spent a half hour or so talking about things in general. They expressed great interest in the equipment we were assembling and several times expressed the hope that our mission would result in benefit to the common people of the Yemen. Not one time did they bring up a controversial thought or ask a leading question. Had I not known who these men were and what their background was I would have taken it for granted that they were just two of the better class Yemeni residing in Aden who had come down to get acquainted.

Among the many people who spoke of the oppressiveness of the government there was evidence of knowledge of the existence of the nucleus of the Free Yemeni Party. From various statements made it was also evident that correspondence was carried on between members in the Yemen and those in Aden. Once during our stay in Sana'a a few handbills denouncing the government were scattered in the street. No government official mentioned these handbills to me but several citizens did. I never saw one. I am under the impression they were printed sheets brought into the country and scattered

UNCLASSIFIED

about the streets at night. (There is not a single printing press in the Yemen of which I was able to find evidence.) It is possible that the handbills were written by hand. I am under the impression there were not more than 200 of them distributed.

At the moment it seems that the activity of the Free Yemen Party and any other organizations which might exist is limited to a few press articles outside the Yemen (there is no press or any other method of expression inside the Yemen), an occasional distribution of handbills thrown in the streets at night, and an ineffective smouldering fire in the hearts of many Yemeni which is useless as long as there is no organization or plan. If left entirely to themselves it is improbable that the members of the Free Yemen Party will at any time in the foreseeable future become a factor in determining future Yemeni history. If given outside help this party could easily become the minority faction capable of dominating the country.

Norman and Zobari seem to be the leaders recognized as such from within and from without the Yemen. Neither of these men appear to be the strong leader type. Their background is school teaching. Their chief value to the opposition is symbolic. It appears that the British in Aden are more than aware of their presence and may in fact be giving them just enough personal assistance to keep them under control for future use should the need arise. During the Crown Prince's visit to Aden he had his scouts out looking for these men but neither of them could be found. I do not believe any individual could hide successfully in Aden without official help, particularly if the Crown Prince in his desire to return these men to the Yemen was willing to pay for information concerning their whereabouts had they hidden on their own.

It is improbable that any Yemeni inside or out of the Yemen has any friendly feeling for Russia at the present time. Those who know anything at all about present day events think of Russia as being an oppressor of personal liberties; these people want freedom from personal oppression. The people also remember an unsuccessful Russian business mission which came to

- 3 - **UNCLASSIFIED**

UNCLASSIFIED

the Yemen, stayed awhile and returned, so they say, in disgrace and at considerable financial loss. I do not believe Russia would be first choice amongst these people as a source of outside help but he could be second or third or could be used as a threat to force others to help.

The French Mission which visited Sana'a while I was there gave the impression they would like to gobble up this juicy morsel of potential colonial material. In time to come the French might be a source of outside help.

England's strategic and commercial stake in the Yemen is greater than that of any other nation. At the present time practically all of the commerce of the Yemen is carried on through the British Port of Aden and forms a fair percentage of the commerce of that port. There is no doubt that the British keep very close watch over all developments in the Yemen and that any move by a foreign power would be duly noted and proper steps taken to preserve British interests. As time goes on if the Yemeni attempt to gain commercial independence from Aden I do not believe the British will attempt to stand forcefully in their way. I do not, however, believe the British will allow events to happen in the Yemen which might peril the British life line through the Red Sea.

Conversations with Major Seager, the British Political Agent for the Eastern Aden Protectorate and Western Aden Protectorate, leave no doubt of the fact that a close watch is being kept on developments in the Yemen. It is quite apparent that there are probably paid native observers in the country in high positions and low. Major Seager by reputation is a capable man of action and not of boasts. In my presence he has left the thought - "I could start a revolution and overthrow the present government of the Yemen in two weeks". I have every reason to believe that Major Seager could foment a revolt and that perhaps the Free Yemen Party was one of the Aces he was holding up his sleeve for future use should it become necessary. Any successful uprising in the Yemen must have outside armed help or must have the support or approval of the army at home. I question whether the British could afford publicity of supporting a revolutionary army from the outside or of shipping

UNCLASSIFIED

enough arms into the Yemen to equip a citizen army. I do not know if they have done the necessary ground work to buy off the Army and arrange to have the whole job appear to be a bona fide internal rising. (In Sana'a I was asked on two occasions by members of the Royal Family how well I knew Seager and whether I had visited him or his assistant, a Lebanese whose name I do not remember. I answered that I had met Major Seager during the time we were assembling our equipment in Aden and he had given me many valuable hints on driving in sand but that I had never visited him otherwise. This seemed to satisfy the inquiry since it was actually the case.)

Jews

It is estimated that there are about 30,000 Jews in the Yemen. Most of these live in the Jewish quarters of the larger cities. The Jewish community in Sana'a numbers about 5,000 and is the largest single Jewish group. At the present time these people occupy a favored position. It is reputed that the king, within limits, is tolerant and holds them in high regard. This favored position is evidenced for instance in the tax system. A Jew is taxed 1 to 5 dollars a year for each member of his family and that is all, whereas a Moslem is, it seems, taxed everything that can be taken away from him.

Restrictions are placed on the Jews but these seem to be traditional and as often as not work to the benefit of the Jew. Many of the restrictions have been relaxed with the years. For instance, a Jew may now ride a donkey where formerly he was not permitted to do so. The leading Jew in the Sana'a community is allowed to own and use an automobile. The Sana'a Jews are noticeably cleaner than the Arabs so that their segregation in one part of town could be an advantage. The traditional dress of the Jews is a little more somber than that of the Moslem. He may not wear the gambiyah but instead wears two scalp locks one extending down each side of his face just in front of the ears.

As a group, the Jews seem to be better businessmen and craftsmen than the Moslems. While he must live in the part of the city reserved for him, he may have his business in other parts of the town and may apparently also associate with Moslems in business enterprises.

I did not find a single instance during my three months in the Yemen of a Jew being mistreated more than the Moslems mistreated each other. There are known rules and so long as these are not broken all seems to go well.

In spite of this tolerance for Jews at home the Moslem Yemenis have a very strong feeling concerning the Palestine situation and are wholeheartedly opposed to any plan which permits any furtherance of the Jewish cause in Palestine.

FOREIGN COMMERCE

Foreign commerce like almost everything else in the Yemen is a paradox. From time immemorial the caravan routes from East to West have crossed the Yemen. In spite of this background and in spite of its strategic location on the Red Sea, the Yemen is as nearly isolated as any country could possibly be. There is not a single point along its 400 mile coast line. Mocca the ancient port of the Yemen fell into disuse about 80 years ago. Hodeida the only coastal town through which any seagoing traffic is handled cannot merit designation as a port since even the smallest native dhows of only 20 to 50 tons capacity must anchor away from shore in the open sea and be loaded and unloaded with row boats used as lighters.

Within recent times the import-export trade of the Yemen has been handled almost entirely through the Port of Aden. It is not a true import-export business in the sense that Yemeni merchants deal with merchants of foreign countries, rather it is simply that the Yemenis buy from and sell to the merchants in Aden who in turn perform the actual functions of importing and exporting.

There are no banking facilities of any kind in the Yemen. The merchants with only one or two exceptions are inexperienced and have not the least conception of how to carry on even the simplest foreign correspondence.

The chief exports to the United States consist of coffee and hides having a value of about \$500,000 a year. Its chief imports consist of textiles, some food products not produced locally and some machinery.

AGRICULTURE

The wide variation in climatic, rainfall and soil conditions found in the Yemen is such as to favor the growth of almost every crop normally found in the United States. Climatic variations are caused by differences in elevation varying from the Tahama, a coastal plane near sea level, to high plateaus and valleys as much as 10,000 feet above sea level. The yearly rainfall in the high altitudes is about 10 inches. In some areas this annual rainfall is concentrated in a few hard rains; in others it is spread out into as many as 60 or 70 precipitations. There is little rainfall in the Tahama, nevertheless there seems to be plenty of water in what appears to be a desert waste. This water is supplied by the runoff from the foothills and mountains. Most of the runoff is wasted as it reaches the sea in the form of flash floods; enough of it is stored in permeable sands so that practically everywhere one finds wells which native use for irrigating small plantings. At the present time no system of conserving the rainfall and using it economically for irrigation exists. There is evidence of an extensive system of irrigation projects which were in existence in ancient times.

Just as there is a wide variation in the climate, so also is there wide variation in the physical appearance of the plantings. These in places are many square miles in extent along level ground. In other places the plantings are in terraces on sides of steep hills with some plots as small as 100 square feet. There is a vast amount of undeveloped land suitable for agricultural purposes, both along the banks of streams, in the Tahama and in the mountains. During the past 400 years little has been done to improve any of this land. In fact, it is probable that more land has been abandoned during this time than has been claimed. Some of the reasons are apparent: the natural inclination of the uneducated Moslem to pass everything off with the expression, "If Allah wills," instead of doing the necessary amount of work to claim a bit of land for himself; the insecurity which existed during the 400 years of Turkish occupation; the poverty of the common people which does not allow them to take the time away from what little work they might have in order to claim a piece of land which would be theirs for the improving, and their inability to think far enough ahead to work in cooperative

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

groups, some working to improve land while others supported them by their regular labor; the lack of faith in the government which seems to kill any incentive which the people might have; the reluctance on the part of the present government to undertake any project which might mean a present expenditure regardless of any long term profit which might result. It might be said that the Yemeni of today is living on the toil of his ancestors who worked, terraced, and improved the land he is still living from.

Selection, care, and breeding of animals is as backward as is everything else. There is nothing which could be classed as fine stock. The grains, fruits and other agricultural products are almost all of very poor quality. Not even the most basic improvements have been introduced.

It is believed that with proper conservation and utilization of the available rainfall, development of usable land and improvement in agricultural methods, the country could support several times the population it now has.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

MINERALS

Today the Yemenis feel their helplessness in coping with the problems of a world about which they know nothing. The war cut off their normal channels of commerce, it upset their way of life, and now they find it difficult to return to their old routine of doing business through the Port of Aden and maintaining their complete isolation. They look at their neighbor Saudi Arabia and see that it has gained a position of world importance through its development by Americans. They look back on history and long for the position the Yemen occupied in ancient times, Arabia Felix, the garden spot of the Arab world.

On the political side it is realized that the position of the royal family is assured as long as the present king lives. Who will succeed the Imam and whether it will even be a member of the same family are problems they are concerned with. They are concerned with the predatory characteristics of all world powers except the United States. They see the value of maintaining their isolation but wonder how long they might be able to maintain it. They know that one way of gracefully opening the shell of isolation is to grant concessions for petroleum and other minerals, which they are convinced exist in commercial quantities in their country, to foreign companies. If they would consider any concessions at all it is believed they would prefer dealing with American companies rather than those of any other country.

The exact reactions of the royal family toward granting mineral concessions is not known nor can their answer be anticipated until an actual trial is made at obtaining concessions. The known factors are:

1. The Yemen is badly in need of American dollars in order to buy the few things they are accustomed to importing. The need for some of these imports, particularly textiles, is so acute that it can be inferred to have political significance as well as commercial significance for the royal family.

2. It is believed that the Crown Prince without his father's knowledge is attempting to hire two geologists to make surveys.

3. The Yemeni government is contracting for the services of Lebanese professional men including doctors, medical laboratory technicians, pharmacists, civil engineers, agricultural engineers, educators and perhaps others. This indicates a desire for an attempt at cautious advancement and might be the forerunner of things to come.

4. There seems to be a relaxation of their restrictions on entry of selected foreigners such as the French doctors and French veterinarians.

5. It can be taken for granted that before they give a final answer to any proposal, they will examine it minutely and with suspicion and that the final decision, if actually a grant of concession, would only be reached after long drawn out negotiations.

It would be difficult to speculate on the existence of minerals in commercial quantities in the Yemen. It is known that there are salt deposits along the coast. There is a "mountain of salt" near Marab about 400 miles inland. Much of the country is suitable for exploration by geophysical methods. Natives have brought me samples of what seemed to be iron and lead which they said they melted from local ores. The government at one time asked me to survey and appraise a coal deposit near Sana'a. They never followed through on this request but in speaking to one who said he knew the place and the coal I gathered it must be an extremely poor grade of fuel, probably peat mixed with rock if that combination is possible. Mica deposits are known to exist. Gold is spoken of. Whether these minerals and perhaps others exist in commercial quantities can only be guessed at until the time actual exploration and evaluation takes place.

UNCLASSIFIED

HYDRO ELECTRIC SURVEYS

On request of the Yemeni government I visited two streams for the purpose of evaluating their potentiality as sources of hydro electric power. Both surveys were disappointing from the viewpoint of power development. One at El Hagir was nothing more than a little mountain spring with a flow of one cubic foot per second and sufficient head to develop about 50 horsepower. The other at El Harid was little more than a brook which might develop 35 horsepower of all the water could be used and the total drop over a distance of two miles utilized. The value of both streams to the farming lands around was greater than the value of any power which could be obtained from them even if they were situated right at the load center, which they were not.

These surveys did afford an opportunity to visit places outside Sana'a and furnished observations and background.

In both cases complete reports were given to the Yemeni government on the economics of the hydro electric site surveyed and a recommendation that the development would not be economically feasible was made.

UNCLASSIFIED

ARCHEOLOGY

There are many known sites of ancient Himyaritic ruins in the Yemen. As a rule those ruins remain untouched by the natives. There seems to be a superstition and fear which keeps most of the natives from digging in these ruins and which also makes them hostile to anyone else who might wish to excavate and explore them. In line with the government's policy of isolation, it also has shown an almost impenetrable reluctance to allow anyone to see the remains of ancient civilization. A few foreigners have been allowed to make limited explorations however. The best collection of Himyaritic items that I know of is locked in one room of the guest house at Sana'a. After asking four different times I was allowed to see this collection and to take pictures. If the few items in this room are indicative of the things still undiscovered, the Yemen must be a storehouse of archeological treasure.

I was able to buy from various merchants about a half dozen small statues supposedly Himyaritic. I bought all of these in one week, then in spite of all inquiries and attempts to find more I was always told there were no more available. On two occasions merchants promised to bring me some but both times the merchants sent word they could not find any for sale.

POPULATION

The population of the Yemen according to the best available estimates is about 3,500,000, a figure roughly equal to the population of the rest of the Arabian peninsula. There is a distinct and noticeable difference between the people along the coast, many of whom have negroid features, and the people of the inland, most of whom have the typical white Arab appearance. The coastal population generally seems to be healthier and have more stamina and larger bodies than the inland people. They are better workers and walkers. They seem to get a little more food and much less qat which may account for their superior appearance. They probably average 10 to 15 pounds more in weight per man than the inland men. The men of the interior were seldom taller than five foot six or seven inches; they were slender and small boned; averaged perhaps 120 pounds in weight. A fat Yemeni is a rarity.

In spite of the complete absence of statistical figures it is believed that the population is relatively stable with no noticeable increase or decrease in recent years. The apparently high birth rate is balanced by a high infant mortality rate which is estimated at between 80 and 85 per cent. There is not a single qualified doctor available to the common people in the entire country and even if doctors were available it would take a long and extensive program of education; to train the people to seek medical aid and follow the instructions given. Diseases of every kind abound for which the people have their local cures such as circling a sore limb, finger, or toe with a piece of black yarn to keep the inflammation from spreading.

UNCLASSIFIED

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Almost without exception everything in the Yemen having any claim to being a part of the 19th or 20th Century was either left by the Turks after 1918 or given as a gift to the king since then. The telegraph system which connects the major cities of the Yemen was left by the Turks. Except for deterioration it exists today in essentially the same form as it did when installed probably back before 1900. All circuits consist of a single wire with ground return. Poles are make shift. In some places for miles on end there are no insulators - the wire being tied to the wooden part of the pole (where poles consist of a length of pipe with a piece of wood in the top end). The equipment in the central offices consists of two or three sounders and some hay wire. Telegraph communication with the outside world is available via Aden. The attached rate schedule was in effect June 1946.

There were two radio transmitters in the Yemen prior to our arrival. One a 50 watt British transmitter installation of which was not completed because of the war. The second is a 50 watt transmitter presented to the King by the Italian government. The description given this transmitter by the Yemeni operator is very appropriate: "This radio station was built by Marconi's grandfather." It has the decided advantage of simple construction, however, so that the Yemeni operator can repair it. The only repairs necessary during the past seven years consisted of changing the one radio tube.

Daily schedules are worked with Aden, Arabia, Mecca and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In SCR 399 radio set was given to the government of the Yemen in the name of the Government of the United States during the visit of the mission. Two Yemeni operators were trained in the operation of this station. One of these men is capable of changing tubes and of making simple changes of parts where visual inspection showed a defect.

After acceptance of the SCR 399, the Yemeni Government expressed a desire and asked for help in obtaining the necessary information so that they might join radio networks, giving them radio communication with other countries. They were particularly interested in making contact with the capitals of the other Arab countries of the Near East, either by direct contact or through relay stations. Information necessary to realize these desires was compiled

UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

by Mr. Donald R. MacQuivey, State Department Telecommunications Section, and sent to the American Consul at Aden, Arabia for transmittal to the Yemen.

Normal operating frequency for radio Yemen is 7300 KC, call letters are OC6.

The Yemen is a member of the Postal Union. Only first class surface mail is handled, however. Mail is carried by donkey, mule, horse, and camel from Sanaa throughout the country. There is one mail service a week to Aden and two a week to Hodeida. Mail from Sanaa reaches Aden in 8 days (mail route approximately 300 miles). There is no official parcel post service.

In addition to the official internal telegraph and mail service, special messengers are used by the government and by private individuals when the occasion demands. In the Tahama, the messenger will usually travel on foot. The stamina of the men here is greater than that of the highland people. Travelling in the cool of the night it is not uncommon for one of these natives to cover 30 or 35 miles and then return the following night.

There is no long distance telephone service. It is said that at the time the second son of the King, Mohamed, was drowned in Hodeida a telephone was placed at each end of the telegraph line from Sanaa to Hodeida and conversation carried on. During the course of communication instruction we gave the Yemenis we placed in service an experimental long distance telephone circuit between Sanaa and Sheban, a distance of approximately 20 miles. For this circuit we used the existing telegraph line with ground return and a telephone EES operating on 3 volt local battery at each end. Transmission was excellent.

The Yemeni telegraph and radio operators are capable of handling either the Latin or Arabic alphabets. Code messages in the Latin alphabet are likely to be garbled because most operators are not intimately familiar with the Latin alphabet and often receive a single letter, i.e., ..-. (F) ., ..- (E,R) as a two letters or two letters as a single letter. These errors can be corrected ordinarily, but not always by the receiver of a message.

UNCLASSIFIED

Cable Rates from Sanaa, Yemen to

Place	Dollars and Centimes
Aden, Arabia	1.00
Mecca, Saudi Arabia	2.82
Jidda, Saudi Arabia	2.67
Medina, Saudi Arabia and vicinity	2.72
Syria and Lebanon	2.50
Palestine	2.25
Kameron Island	2.90
Iraq	3.00
France	2.97
Russia	3.52
England	2.35
Poland	3.25
Greece	2.95
Germany	3.10
Yugoslavia	
Belgium	2.90
Holland	3.08
Italy	2.95
Switzerland	3.02
Turkey	3.10
Cairo	2.40
Sudan	2.40
Ethiopia	3.45
Eretria	2.00
Djebouti	2.20
California	4.55
New York	3.85

The above prices are in Maria Theresa dollars worth approximately 0.75 dollars each. The decimals are hundredths of a Maria Theresa dollar. The government of the Yemen receives thirty per cent of the revenue from either incoming or outgoing messages. There is a tax amounting to about 0.1 MT dollars per word additional for outgoing messages. All messages are sent to Aden where British commercial cable service takes over. The above rates are for fast service.

LC takes one half rate.

DLT takes one third rate.

STUDENTS

At my suggestion and invitation seven communication students in addition to the two whom we were teaching operation of the radio set SCR 399 were assigned to us for training. These men were officers with the rank of Captain or First Lieutenant. They were members of a group who as boys had been sent to Iraq for training at the invitation of the Iraqi government. They had spent about two years in Iraq then returned to the Yemen. Since their return they had had no further opportunity either to use what they had learned or to learn any more. These men were among the very few Yemeni who had had the opportunity of obtaining a look at the outside world, only to be snatched back into the Yemen and have the door closed on them. When they first reported they were quite skeptical. They didn't know what to make of the idea and frankly wondered if it wasn't going to be just a waste of their time in order to satisfy the government's whim. After the first two days everyone of them relaxed; they saw that we had something to teach them, equipment to teach them with, and the desire to work with them. They were all better than average in intelligence and had a desire to learn. From then until our departure from the Yemen our daily contacts with these officers were quite friendly and pleasant. They learned quite a bit about simple, modern military communication and I learned quite a bit about the Yemen from them. The relationship was mutually profitable.

Before leaving the Yemen I wrote two letters to the king - one a letter through Prince Kassim, Minister of Communication, commending the students, and a second letter directly to the king presenting to him the equipment with which the students had worked.

The English version of both letters as well as the translation of his note of acceptance and thanks follows:

UNCLASSIFIED

Sana'a, Yemen
29 June 1946

TO: His Majesty El Imam Yahya Bin Mohamed
Hamid El Din

THROUGH: His Royal Highness Prince Kassim,
Minister of Communications

As we are on the eve of departure, it becomes my extreme pleasure to report to your majesty that the nine students whom you so graciously assigned to me have completed all the studies possible within the time limits available. By name they are as follows:

1. Chief of Radio Communications - Abdullah Taher
2. Ass't Chief of Radio Communications - Mokhtar Alagemy
3. First Lieutenant Hassan Alanry
4. First Lieutenant Mohammed Arridy
5. Captain Assaied Ahmed Almarwany
6. Captain Abdullah Assallal
7. Captain Ahmed Alhiemy
8. First Lieutenant Ahmed Tahir
9. Chief Electrician Mohamed Alghiel

And I would like for your majesty to know the order in which their name appears bears no relationship to relative merit of the men. I must report that all were studious, alert, and capable; all applied themselves with the diligence expected of men in the positions of responsibility in which they are placed; all showed the attitude of true scholars and a capacity for learning which was a marvel to behold. It was indeed a pleasure to work with them individually and as a group. My assistant, Corporal William P. McClure, and I have a feeling of warm friendship for these officials and also a slight pang of regret that the time for parting seems to have rushed upon us so quickly. In parting we wish to commend each and everyone of these men highly to your majesty.

JACK N. NAHAS
Lt. Col., Signal Corps

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Sana'a, Yemen
29 June 1946

TO: His Majesty El Imam Yahya Bin Mohamed Hamid El Din

During the past month it has been my great pleasure to work with the communications students so graciously assigned to me by your majesty. These students have worked diligently and well and have learned to operate and make simple repairs on the equipment with which we have acquainted them. In order that they may continue their studies and make use of the knowledge already gained, I would like to present to your majesty's government, in the name of the government of the United States, for use in your army, the equipment with which the students have been training.

This equipment consists of:

8 Radio Sets SCR 300

2 Radio Sets SCR 536

4 Telephones KES

together with accessories and spare parts. In addition there is a stock of batteries for use with this equipment stored at present in the customs house in Hodeida. This stock of batteries is sufficient for a year or more of normal use. They will be delivered to your designated representative in Hodeida when I pass through that city on my departure from Sana'a.

JACK N. NAHAS
Lt. Col., Signal Corps

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Peace Be With You:

May Allah grant you health. We thank your great government and we also thank you - and we shall order receipt of that which is here by El Jahdari and that which is in Hodeida by the governor of Hodeida, El Kadi El Siagi - and we ask Allah to give you success and assistance and to you our great respects.

Salih Rageb 1365 (June 1946)

Translation of note received from His Majesty El Imam Yahya Bin Mohamed Hamid El Din, King of the Yemen, on the occasion of my farewell visit to him on 29 June 1946. Neither address nor signature appear on the note since it was handed to me personally by the king and since the idiomatic expression "Peace Be With You" is apparently used only by the king.

J. N. Nahas

RADIO BUILDING

In accordance with the traditional custom of exchanging gifts when visiting an Arab ruler, the Mission gave to his Majesty, the King of the Yemen, an SCR 399 radio set complete with power unit and enough spare parts to keep the set running almost indefinitely. Prince Kassim, the Minister of Health and Communications, received the set. I do not remember that he ever said a single word of thanks for the gift. Instead, he almost immediately asked for a list of the parts, spares and extras, which were with the set so that he might have them for his files. From time to time as he visited us in our quarters in the Guest House, he would spy a piece of equipment such as a typewriter, a telephone, some tools or other things normally found in an establishment such as we had in Sanaa. Invariably, he would ask, "Is this a part of the radio set?" Sometimes we told him it was and sometimes we told him no, that it was not. The list of equipment was not given to him until shortly before the time of our departure.

The day following the formal presentation of the radio station, Prince Kassim sent word that he would like to have me draw up the plans for a communications building to house the new radio station and such other of the national communication offices as I thought should be incorporated in the new setup. I sent word that I should be glad to help them with the design of any building they wished, but, that as we had told them previously the radio station was complete including the hut which made it a self-contained unit, which, if necessary, could be placed on the ground without the necessity of a permanent structure. If it was their desire, however, to construct a building anyway, then any building they desired, so long as it was waterproof and so long as it was physically large enough to hold the station would be sufficient, provided, it was located in a place where radio interference was at a minimum. Prince Kassim indicated that it was their desire to construct and that he wished me to make recommendations.

A simple plan for a suitable building was drawn up. Interference tests with radio receivers were made on several sites to determine their

[REDACTED]

suitability, finally a site was chosen. The foundation for the building was under construction the morning after the final recommendations were made. According to the Yemenis, no building in Sanaa had ever been built as quickly as this one. Prince Kassim seemed to want to make certain that the building was as nearly complete as possible before our departure. All went well until it rained. For two days after the rain no work was done. We asked why, and were told that all the animals that were used to haul rocks for the building were now being used to plow after the rains. We offered the use of a six by six 2½-ton truck to haul rocks and our suggestion was immediately accepted. Considering the fact that a camel could carry eight rocks and make one trip from the quarry a day and that the trucks carried two hundred and fifty rocks and could make several trips a day, progress on the building was speeded up, and at no time from then on did work cease for any reason, including lack of material.

One incident happened during the construction of this building worthy of note. Since we stayed in the Yemen a longer time than had been planned, our reserves of gasoline reached the point where we had in stock only enough to get us out of the country. When this point was reached, I sent word to the Yemenis that our vehicles were at their disposal now as in the past but that I had no more gasoline to furnish so that any request for a vehicle must be accompanied with gasoline to perform the service desired. The following day the messenger came as usual asking for a truck to go to the quarry for rocks. He had with him three one quart bottles of gasoline for a 6 x 6 to go ten miles to the quarry and back again. Fortunately, the tank was still about a quarter full.

In spite of many minor incidents, work on the building progressed rapidly. At the time we left, the roof was being put on.

UNCLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

BUILDINGS

The external appearance of most buildings in Sana'a and most of the villages of the high plateaus give one the impression of tall, rather graceful structures. Most of the structures are from three to seven stories high. The practice of using double windows, one above the other, gives the phenomenon of buildings with nearly twice their actual number of stories. The lower window of each set is the utility window, the upper one ornamental.

About one quarter to one-third of the cross sectional area of most buildings is taken up in a stairway. This stairway generally is in the form of a square shaft. Each flight consists usually of a series of five to ten steps, then a landing and right angle turn followed by an approximately equal number of steps before a second landing and right angle turn. This pattern usually repeats itself all the way up the shaft. Doors from this main stairway may lead off into rooms, other stairways or halls. There is little apparent rhyme or reason to the location of doors or rooms within a building. In many buildings there are no two rooms on the same level.

Material consists primarily of cut stones supplemented with bricks made of a mixture of mud and straw and also with bricks quite similar to conventional bricks found here in the U. S. Beams to support the ceilings and roofs are of rough hewn timbers placed between walls. The width of a room is ordinarily limited to a span of four meters which under exceptional cases can be stretched to five meters. This limit is dictated by the length and strength of available timbers which seem to be four meters or less. If wider spans are desired arch construction is resorted to. Roofs are usually made of dirt placed over a lattice work resting on the beams.

The cost of cut stones in Sana'a is 8 Maria Theresa dollars a hundred delivered on the job. Seven dollars of this goes to the quarry - one dollar is for delivery. Bricks cost 11 Maria Theresa dollars per thousand, divided into eight dollars for the bricks and three for delivery. Mud and stone bricks are usually made right on the owner's land so cost is limited to labor and straw. A master mason received about 1.50 M.T. dollars a day. His helpers receive from 0.50 to 1.00 M.T. dollars daily. Skilled labor of other categories receives comparable wages.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

LEBANESE MISSION

A Lebanese Mission consisting of four men arrived in Sana'a about a week before our departure. The members of the mission are:

Dr. Adnan Tarcici, Ph.D. in Philosophy, with several years background as a journalist in Europe, head of mission.

Dr. Ahmed Ramadan, MD, a doctor of medicine in the Lebanese Army.

Mr. Mustafa Zaidan, an agricultural engineer.

Mr. Mouhamed Dougan, a civil engineer specializing apparently in road building.

All of these men are graduates of the University of Beirut. From their conversation it appeared that they came to the Yemen with the intention of staying about two years. During our first visit to them, two days after their arrival, they were quite enthusiastic about their assignments. A week later there was already an apparent let-down in their aims and ambitions. During this very short period of time they had become thoroughly acquainted with the Yemeni spirit of procrastination and putting everything off with the expression "In sha' Allah," "If God wills." The circumstances surrounding the arrival of these men into the Yemen was such that they spoke quite freely to me and as a result I obtained an insight on their thoughts as concerned the Yemen. On the way between Hodeidah and Sana'a, the vehicle which the Yemeni government furnished them for the trip broke down. At the request of the King, I sent a jeep and trailer to bring the mission to Sana'a, which favor the Lebanese seemed to appreciate quite a bit. We also did a few favors like putting their radio set into good condition, getting their batteries charged and a few other little things. We were therefore on very friendly terms.

Later as we passed through Cairo, I found that Prince Abdallah had procured five or six more Lebanese to go into the Yemen. Still later in Lebanon, I found that offers had been made to several Lebanese professional men for one or two year contracts to work in the Yemen. Many of those who

UNCLASSIFIED

went apparently took a leave of absence with the approval of their employers to accept the Yemeni job. Wages being offered these men were apparently four hundred Maria Theresa dollars a month and expenses. It was also apparent that at least in case of the doctors a supply of medicines and laboratory equipment had been ordered by Prince Abdallah in Egypt for use in the Yemen. I believe that two of the Lebanese still in Cairo awaiting transportation are pharmacists or laboratory technicians and one is a doctor.

GIFT OF THE KING OF THE YEMEN
TO THE MISSION

Before the departure of the diplomatic members of the mission Prince Motahir asked me one day if I thought that a gift of horses would be suitable for the members of the mission. I answered that horses would not be a suitable gift because it would be impossible to ship them to the United States and even if it were possible to ship them none of us had any use for a horse and, being city dwellers, we could not keep animals. If there was originally any doubt in the minds of the royal family about horses for the mission they somehow came to the conclusion we were going to get horses in spite of ourselves.

Soon after the final departure of Mr. Harlan Clark I was asked if I would go to the royal stables to help choose two horses which were to be shipped to him in Jidda. I went to the king's stables with his representative, there from about ten horses one was chosen as being good enough to ship. About two weeks later I was asked to see a second horse which had been picked. These two horses were probably as good as any horses available in Sana'a but did not have the appearance of being worth the shipping costs for any great distance. About two weeks before our departure from the Yemen the stable master visited me and said he had received orders to take the two horses to Hodeida. He intimated that he would certainly like to make the trip to Jidda and would I ask that he be assigned to accompany the horses all the way to Jidda. I made it plain to him that I had nothing to do with the delivery of the animals, that I knew nothing about the plans, and was not in a position to ask for anything. He went away and three days later came back with the same request. It was quite obvious to me from the conversation that he had probably been sent in an attempt to obtain a commitment which would obligate us to stand the costs of delivering the king's gift. I again made it plain to him that I knew nothing about the arrangements for delivery of the animals.

We left Sana'a without any further comment on the two horses for Jidda. When we arrived in Bajil there was the stable master waiting for us. He said he had arrived the day before, the horses were lame from the rocky trails, he had no money, and how was I going to get them to Jidda. We sympathized with the man without making any commitments and continued on to Hodeida. He arrived the following morning with the horses. I saw him only once, congratulated him on his arrival and expressed the hope that his trip hadn't been too difficult.

It seems that the Yemeni were making every effort to deliver the gift FOB Sana'a or at most FOB Hodeida. They had started the man and animals off from Sana'a with no money, no instructions beyond Hodeida, and had timed his trip simultaneously with our departure, probably in the hope that I would commit myself and take over responsibility for the delivery.

A day or so after the second visit of the stable master we received a visit from the king's representative who informed us that the other four horses - a gift from his majesty - were now in Taiz and would be sent on to Aden. I told the representative whom I knew quite well that I could not afford the cost of shipping horses to the states and would he therefore please ask his majesty to keep the horses in the Yemen for us until such a time as proper disposal could be made of them. This he promised to do. A day or so later I saw Prince Kassim who again mentioned the gift of the horses. Kassim I know and can speak to quite freely. I explained in detail why we could not take the horses, leaving out only the one detail - the horses were not worth taking. He listened but I knew he would not do anything about it so I wrote the following letter to the king and translated it into Arabic.

[REDACTED]

To His Majesty El Imam Yahya Bin Mohamed Hamid El Din:

It is with the greatest of pleasure and thankfulness that I acknowledge receipt of the news that you have ordered four of your finest horses given to me as a gift. The fame of Arabian horses is known throughout the world and to be in possession of one Arabian horse is considered quite a rarity, to have four fine Arabian horses a dream almost beyond realization, and to have the combination of four fine Arabian horses presented personally to me by your Majesty is a distinction quite beyond my fondest hopes. But, as your royal highness knows, my acceptance of this gift would place upon me personally the responsibility of transporting these horses to the United States. The distance from the Yemen to my home is over 10,000 miles (17,500 kilometers) and the cost of shipping them this distance by land and sea is quite beyond my ability personally to bear. I must therefore ask your gracious indulgence in accepting from me my fullest thanks for your most generous gesture and at the same time ask that your Majesty understand my position and inability to bear personally the expense which would be thrown upon me by the acceptance of these fine animals.

JACK N. NAHAS
Lt. Col., Signal Corps

I showed this letter to the king's representative and impressed on him the impossible situation I was being placed in and asked his advice, making it plain that as a final recourse I would, if necessary, send the letter to the king. He considered a few moments and then said: "The letter is a good one and I am sure his majesty would understand but the gift has been made and should be accepted. Take the horses and when you get to Aden give them to your friends there." I explained I didn't have any friends in Aden to whom I could give horses. He thought again and said, "All right, the horses are now in Taiz. When you call on the Crown Prince as you go through Taiz, explain the situation to him and ask him to keep them for you."

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

this seemed to be a reasonable solution so we agreed and did not send the letter. Later in Taiz the Crown Prince agreed to keep them. I found out through the grapevine the following morning that he had sent a message to the king asking about the matter. A few days after returning to the states I received a letter from the American Consul saying that about a week after our departure the horses had been brought to him in Aden.

I took pictures of the horses in Taiz and showed these pictures to an Army Veterinarian after our return to the states. His opinion justified our observation that the horses were not worth the shipping charges.

In addition to the horses, three sacks of coffee and six 5 gallon cans of raisins were given to us delivered in Aden.

UNCLASSIFIED

DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY OF THE MISSION

The major items of equipment furnished from War Department stocks and delivered to Aden, Arabia for use of the mission consisted of:

1 Radio Set SCR 399 complete with spare parts

1 Radio Set SCR 694 complete with spare parts

2 Radio Sets SCR 536

8 Radio Sets SCR 300

6 Radio Receivers R 100 U

1 Radio Receiver Hallicrafters 5 x 28

1 Radio Receiver

1 Sound Recorder AN/UHQ 1

Photographic Equipment

2 GMC 6x6 2½-ton trucks

4 Trucks 1/4 ton 4x4

2 1-ton 2 wheel trailers

4 1/4 ton 2 wheel trailers

Disposition of this equipment at the conclusion of the mission fell into four categories:

Category I consisted of:

1 Radio Set SCR 399

1 Radio Set SCR 694

2 Radio Sets SCR 536

8 Radio Sets SCR 300

6 Radio Receivers R 100 U

1 Radio Receiver Hallicrafters 5 x 28

1 Radio Receiver

1 Truck 1/4 ton 4 x 4

1 Trailer 2 wheel 1/4 ton

together with spare parts and accessories for the equipment listed.

This equipment after serving its primary purpose of furnishing communication for the mission was presented to the government of the Yemen by the government of the United States, both to satisfy the traditional custom of exchange of gifts and because it was physically impractical to do anything else with it. This equipment has all been declared surplus to the Federal Liquidation Commission which is preparing to sell it to the State Department for a nominal sum, the State Department in turn plans to pay this nominal sum from funds allotted the mission. It is understood the purchase of gifts from these funds is authorized.

Category II consisted of:

2 GMC 6x6 2½-ton trucks

2 1-ton 2 wheel trailers

together with spare parts and accessories.

It was physically and economically impractical to remove this equipment from the Yemen. The one item of gasoline alone would cost between \$300 and \$350 per truck to move them to Aden. The trucks and trailers were therefore left in Sana'a in custody of the Government of the Yemen and a receipt obtained. They were to be kept in dead storage until receipt of disposition instructions. This equipment was declared surplus to the Federal Liquidation Commission with a recommendation that they be given as a gift to the Government of the Yemen. This recommendation was based on the poor condition of the vehicles and the fact that their sales value was probably not much more than the cost of getting them to a market. After obtaining the concurrence of the American Legation at Jidda, FLC authorized the Jidda Legation to notify the Government of the Yemen of the gift of this equipment.

Category III consisted of:

3 trucks 1/4 ton 4x4

3 trailers 1/4 ton, 2 wheel

This equipment was used for transportation in returning to Aden where it was left in custody of the American Consul. It was later declared surplus to FLC which authorized the consul to act as its agent in disposing of it.

Category IV consisted of:

Camera Equipment

This equipment was left in the custody of the American Consul in Aden. It was declared surplus to FLC. After a thorough check with the legal department of FLC it was determined that there was no objection to my buying the equipment from FLC, which I did on a negotiated sale. The equipment is presumably in transit somewhere between Aden, Arabia and the United States. I am sending a letter to the Inspector General, Washington, D.C., through channels to inquire as to the propriety of my having purchased equipment which I had declared surplus.

SITES FOR AIRFIELDS

The geography of the Yemen is such that it would be possible to build modern airfields almost anywhere within the country. The country is divided roughly into three parts, a low, sandy, coastal plain along the Red Sea called the Tahama. This plain is approximately twenty to forty miles wide. Back from the plain there are high mountains and plateaus which extend north and east until lost in the wastes of the Arabian Desert. Supply of any airfield built along any coastal strip or anywhere else in the Yemen would be a special problem. The closest port suitable for use by ocean-going vessels is Aden, Arabia. Neither roads nor railroads exist anywhere in this part of the Arabian peninsula. With conditions as they exist at the moment, supply would almost have to be by steamship anchored off the coast of the Yemen in the relatively quiet Red Sea. Lighters and DUKWS could transport cargo to landing beaches. The distance from the beaches to the fields would in most cases be less than fifty miles. Fairly good labor is relatively abundant and cheap. The supply of any airfields built in the mountains would constitute the same problem as that of supplying fields along the coastal strip with the added problem of overland transportation to the site of the field. Roads would have to be built to accomplish this. It would be found that labor in the mountainous regions is not as good as that along the coastal plain. All supplies and equipment as well as rations for any installation contemplated in the Yemen would have to be imported at least initially since nothing but water and a questionable amount of food could be obtained from the country. The problems and conditions encountered in building the fields would probably be similar to those found in building other airfields in Arabia, Egypt, or the desert wastes of Africa with the exception that water in reasonable quantities is available in most places.

WATER

The annual rainfall in the Yemen approximates ten inches a year. There are numerous small streams which flow perennially. Practically everywhere there are wells. Most wells seem to be 30 to 150 feet deep. There seems to be water enough to support agriculture in almost all parts of the Yemen. It must be assumed that all water must be chlorinated before it is fit for drinking. The natives drink the water as is with no apparent ill effects. Even they, however, recognize that there are places where the water is not as good as in other places; for instance, when we left Hodeidah, we were cautioned not to drink any water found between Hodeidah and Bagil or for several miles beyond Bagil. We were assured by the natives that even the halizone tablets we were using were not sufficient to kill all the microbes present in this water. We were unable to find out just what made this water any worse than water anywhere else we had been, but nevertheless we followed their admonition.

On the trip back from Sana'a, I noticed that in spite of my instructions my native drivers drank water in this supposedly ultra-contaminated area and suffered no apparent ill-effects.

Everywhere I went in the Yemen there were villages, seldom more than ten miles apart. Even those in the middle of the deserts have a supply of water invariably from wells, which, according to the natives were fed by underground streams.

DISTANCES ADEN TO SANA'A

<u>Station</u>	<u>Increment Mileage</u>	<u>Accumulated Mileage</u>
1. Aden	0	0
2. Laheg	30	30
3. Rahida (Yemen)	62	92
4. Taiz	42	134
5. Heis	60	194
6. Zabid	30	224
7. Beit El Faqi	25	249
8. Hodeida	40	289
9. Bajil	45	334
10. Marbar	118	352
11. Sana'a	46	498

Aden British Crown Colony to Laheg in Western Aden Protectorate, tarvia road through the desert; as often as not this road is covered with sand either over its entire length or in parts.

Laheg to Rahida, Yemen, fairly well defined trail; very little sand, terrain very rocky; several wadis with associated possibilities of flash floods which could delay a traveller up to 12 or 14 hours but are not dangerous if reasonable precautions are taken.

Rahida to Taiz - there are two roads between these points. The old road is best in dry weather. It lies in a valley and for the most part has only small differences in elevations. The new road was built by the Crown Prince especially for the U. S. Mission's visit. It goes over and around the hills and doesn't miss any of them. It is best in wet weather or with light short wheel-base vehicles.

Taiz to Heis - mostly open rocky plain; beginning of sand.

Heis to Zabid to Beit El Faqi - almost all sand or rocky plain.

[REDACTED]

Beit El Faqi to Hodeida to Bajil - all sand. Over most of the distance this sand is as fine as flour. During the daytime it is extremely hot, at night it is cool. There are several places where one can lose the trail along this stretch of the way.

Bajil to Marbar. There is no more sand from Bajil to Marbar. After leaving Bajil there is a well defined trail along a rocky plain. There are several deep wadis with steep sides to cross. The road in places follows wadi beds for several miles. The danger of flash floods is present. From the plain the trail goes into the foothills then into the mountains. Grades of 20 per cent are the rule and 30 per cent or more not uncommon. Rains can wash the road out or cause land slides, which besides their inherent danger, can render the road impassable. The final pass near Marbar is over 9,000 feet high.

Marbar to Sana'a. Flat mountain plateau, well defined route, no sand.

Modern stock model passenger cars are not suitable for use anywhere along this route unless specially equipped with oversize tires giving more clearance and greater road contact area. The 900 x 13 sand tire or a tire of about the same size should give the added clearance and footing necessary and also should give added protection against rock bruising.

Stock model jeeps are suitable for this area if driven with care. Oversize tires up to 7:50 x 16 are recommended for jeeps in order to give better footing and to reduce rock bruising.

Long wheel-base trucks are difficult to maneuver on the many sharp bends but with proper handling can be taken over this route even though heavily overloaded. Trailers are not recommended for use behind trucks unless equipped with tires making them suitable for use in sand and unless loaded lightly. Dual tires are unsuited to this terrain, in sand they dig in and on the plains they pick up rocks. Single sand type tires are best for use in terrain of this kind. Sand tracks should be carried at all times over this route.

UNCLASSIFIED

A stock of spare parts including at least a clutch, fuel pump, carbureator, ignition parts, fan belts as well as tools should be carried for each vehicle in addition to spare tires, tubes and hot patching equipment. During the trip we twisted off two right rear axels on jeeps. An extra can of water for the vehicles should be carried at all times. Gasoline consumption for a light passenger car or jeep should be calculated on a basis of 10 miles or less per gallon; for a 2 1/2-ton 6 x 6, two and one-half miles to the gallon is the maximum to be expected. No gasoline is available between Aden and Hodeida except by special arrangement with the Crown Prince at Taiz. Gasoline in Hodeida is available for about \$1.00 a gallon and in Sana'a for about \$1.50.

With a jeep or a modified passenger car it is possible to average 10 miles an hour over this route. An average speed of 4 miles an hour is possible in a 2 1/2-ton 6x6.

UNCLASSIFIED

THE FRENCH MISSION

It took the three members of the French mission four days to come from Hodeida to Sana'a in the Yemeni car furnished them. The roads had been badly washed away by heavy rains and the wadis were full of water. During two full days they had no food at all on the way. To say the least they were tired when they arrived in Sana'a.

During the preparations to receive the French mission the Yemenis become quite concerned about what the personal relations might be between the French and the Americans. At first they prepared a house into which to move my assistant and me, leaving the guest house clear for the French. The servants at the guest house let me know of all the preparations, perhaps hoping I would say something to open up the conversation, but I was never officially asked to move or whether I wanted to move or whether I thought the French and Americans could get along in the same guest house nor was I ever approached on the subject, so I went on with our work with no suggestions or comment.

McClure and I were occupying one corner of the living quarters in the guest house. The main parlor, bedroom and half the remainder of the house we were not using so the Yemenis prepared these for use. They also set up a second dining room on this side of the house.

The mission arrived about 11 o'clock the morning of the 19th of May 1946. That afternoon when it was obvious they were up and about, after having rested, I sent word asking if I might come to visit them a few minutes. An affirmative answer was received and I went. The members of the mission were:

Rageot, Ministre de France, a

Djeddah (Saudi, Arabia)

Home Address:

[REDACTED],
[REDACTED]).

Mr. R. Lescot

Consul de France

Direction Afrique, Levant

Ministere Des Affaires Etrangeres, Paris

Hadj Hamdi Bel Kacem

Vice Consul a Djeddah

An Algerian in the diplomatic service of the French.

He seems to be wealthy in his own account and seems to have a thorough and complete French viewpoint on all matters.

We spent a very pleasant half hour discussing their trip from Hodeida to Sana'a, the war, and things in general. It was the first of many visits we had. Usually the French would come to our room in the evening, listen to the radio and carry on conversations during most of which we listened and let them talk. We had many meals together but found it would be best to continue to maintain two dining rooms because of the difference in meal times; McClure and I preferred eating dinner at noon and supper at 1800 whereas they liked lunch about 1230 or 1300 and dinner about 2000. The Yemenis heaved a sigh of relief that the Americans and French got along so well together and expressed surprise that we were not in the least antagonistic. Later when Mr. Harlan Clark, First Secretary of the Legation at Jidda, returned to Sana'a and the cordial atmosphere continued the Yemeni were still more surprised. It seemed that they had expected the French and Americans to dislike each other.

In the several conversations with me M. Lescot almost invariably spoke only of obvious facts and apparent things. He seldom ventured an opinion concerning anything Yemeni. M. Rageot was not quite as careful with his conversation and often commented on the incredible nature of things as they existed in this rich backward country. Hadj Hamdi spoke more freely when he was alone with me and sometimes commented on various observations of existing conditions and compared them to "improved conditions" which existed in many other parts of the Arab world. One could almost infer from the various bits of conversation that these men seemed surprised and sorry that France hadn't taken a more active interest in the Yemen and that they would try to see that a more active cultural

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

and economic interest would be taken in the future.

The French mission departed at 1700 on the 20th of May. Apparently they had promised to send help to the Yemen in the form of doctors and perhaps later professional men also.

About three weeks after their departure Dr. Suzanne Serin (11 Blvd de Port Royal, Paris) arrived in the Yemen. One of the king's daughters was sick and needed a serious operation which they had been thinking about for several years. This matter was apparently discussed with the members of the French mission who promised to help by sending a doctor (female) to make an examination of the patient. Dr. Serin was to make that examination and recommend a course of action. Dr. Serin's first stop in the Yemen was Taiz where she examined the members of the Crown Prince's harem. After a weeks stay in Taiz she came on to Sana'a accompanied by Dr. Toffolon. Here she apparently made the requested examination and rendered the desired professional advice. She was then asked to examine one or two other women. Here she ran into a familiar medical pattern for several days on end - on arriving at the designated home she would find not only one patient but from three to four to as many as ten women from the various branches of the royal family and other high official families all wanting to be examined, apparently more out of curiosity than because of any desire to obtain medical assistance. Dr. Serin about a week after her arrival in Sana'a let it be known she would see no more patients and that she must return at once to her work in Paris from which she had only been granted one months leave of absence. She was thoroughly disgusted with the place and the people. At the time of her departure it was not known whether the French of Yemen government would pay her expenses.

Another French doctor and his wife (who is a midwife) are apparently on the way to the Yemen (July 1946) under a two year contract to the Crown Prince at Taiz.

After I left the Yemen, and while waiting for passage from Aden, I was invited to a dinner by the American Naval Attache in Aden. The dinner was on 14 July and was apparently a regular meeting of a local club called "The Elmer Club." Comdr. Miller, the Naval Attache, told me that the French Consul would be there and he would have with him a French Army Captain who was said to be a

- 3 - ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

veterinary doctor going to the Yemen. Miller arranged for the Captain and I to eat next to each other. The captain spoke very little English. Only one of the others at the dinner admitted speaking any French so the captain and I spoke to each other most of the afternoon in his broken English and my still more broken French. He told me he did not know whether he was going to Sana'a or Taiz or what his duties would be. (In my study of the Yemen and its problems I do not believe that proper care of animals was a concern of immediate interest to them nor do I believe they would ask for veterinary assistance. I therefore question, subject to being corrected, this man's status as being primarily a veterinarian.)

It seems that based on the French Missions' recommendations the French are attempting to create friendly relationship with the Yemen. It can be anticipated that so long as the help is free of the cost of the help only nominal, the Yemeni government will welcome it whether or not they utilize the services offered or act on any recommendations which might be made.