SOUTH YEMEN AND THE USSR: PROSPECTS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP

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Given that the Popular Democratic Republic of Yemen, or South Yemen, is ruled by a Marxist regime, it is not surprising that its relations with the Soviet Union are closer than those of any other Arab state. The nature and extent of the Soviet presence and influence there are such that there is real doubt whether South Yemen will ever be able to follow Egypt's example and veer away from Moscow.

There has been considerable interpenetration between the internal politics of South Yemen and its relations with the USSR. The relationship between Moscow and Aden has developed in phases, and as South Yemen's domestic system has become more radical, links with Moscow have become closer. In turn, relations with Moscow have been a continuing factor in furthering South Yemen along the path to Socialism.

Although Moscow established diplomatic relations with South Yemen on December 1, 1967, the day after the latter had become independent from Great Britain, the USSR—perhaps out of deference to Nasser's predominant interests in South Arabia—had not played a role in the preceding four-year long insurgency or in the National Liberation Front (NLF) which eventually emerged victorious over less radical rival nationalists.[1]

1. For accounts of South Yemen's political development see Fred Halliday, "Yemen's Unfinished Revolution: Socialism in the South", *MERIP Reports* (New York), Oct. 1979; Robert W. Stookey, *South Yemen: A Marxist Republic in Arabia* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1982); Laurie Mylroie, *Politics and the Soviet Presence in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: Internal Vulnerabilities and Regional Challenges,* (Santa Monica, Calif., RAND, 1983); John Peterson, "Nation-building and Political Development in the Two Yemens", in B. R. Pridham, ed. *Contemporary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background,* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1984), pps. 85–101; and John Duke Anthony, "The Communist Party of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: an Analysis of its Strengths and Weaknesses", *ibid,* pps. 232–239.

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The initial South Yemen regime, under Qahtan Al-Sha'bi, was overthrown in 1969 by the more radical wing of the NLF. Over the next decade, leftist forces consolidated their influence. In 1971, the moderate Marxist Prime Minister, Muhammad Ali Haytham, who had succeeded Al-Sha'bi, was in turn ousted. Under his successor, Salim Rubayyi' Ali, South Yemen was jolted further to the left. By 1978, the hardline Marxists under 'Abd al-Fattah Ismail had become strong enough to challenge and overthrow Rubayyi' Ali. This heralded a still more radical phase in the country's internal development, including the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party—the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). While there has since been some vacillation under the country's current strongman, the more pragmatic Ali Nasir Muhammad (in power since 1980), the basic direction has not been altered.

The growth of the Soviet presence and commitment has reflected this general pattern of development. The first Soviet naval visit to Aden took place in June 1968 and a military aid agreement was signed in August of that year.[2] In the post-June War period, however, Soviet interest was focused elsewhere in the Middle East. Moreover, Qahtan Al-Sha'bi was reputed to be a populist radical not always amenable to the Soviets, while Chinese influence competed with that of the USSR. After his ouster in 1969, the Soviet presence began to grow incrementally. The momentum accelerated in the late 1970s. For one thing, the changing regional situation stimulated greater Soviet interest in South Yemen. The British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, the reopening of the Suez Canal in 1975 and the increased Soviet presence in the Red Sea area—particularly after the Ethiopian Revolution—and in the Indian Ocean, as well as the increased US military presence in the region following the fall of the Shah in February 1979, served to increase South Yemen's importance. Moreover, at this time the Soviets were developing an interest in Third World radical regimes known as those "oriented toward Socialism" or those of "a new type". These were a small number of states (e.g., Angola, Mozambique and Afghanistan) that, like South Yemen, had taken major steps to remold their systems according to a Marxist pattern and offered the best prospects for Socialism to take root. Indicative of the growing relationship between Aden and Moscow after Ismail took power was the 20-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1979.

Likewise, the ascendancy of the Marxist wing of the NLF and the Aden regime's reliance on a Marxist-Leninist framework of analysis have predisposed

2. The Soviets underlined the strategic importance of South Yemen early on, even in what was otherwise a tepid evaluation of the country's potential: "The military base in Aden—located at the junction of important military, strategic and commercial lines of communications—had a special significance for British imperialism", E. Pozdnyakov, "Narodnaya Respublika Yuzhnogo Iemena; pervye shagi molodogo gosudarstva," in *Mezhdunarodnyi Ezhegodnik* (Moscow, Politizdat, 1968), p. 229. For a chronology and analysis of the development of this relationship since 1967, see Stephen Page, *The Soviet Union and the Yemens,* (New York, Praeger, 1985), and Fred Halliday, "Soviet Relations with South Yemen", in Pridham, *op. cit.*, pps. 208–231.

it to links with fellow-radical states and movements—and with the USSR in particular. These are said to be striving toward the same goals of "peace, justice, and Socialism" and to share common "class" enemies.[3] The West as a whole is viewed with mistrust, with the US being the greatest of the perceived enemies. Washington is accused of being the principal threat to "progressive forces", the main supporter of Israel and of "reactionary" Arab regimes, and to be bent on expanding its military influence in the Middle East.

Although South Yemen styles itself a non-aligned state, its conception of nonalignment is not one of neutralism between East and West. According to Ali Nasir, in his first major statement on foreign policy after coming to power in 1980, "one cannot put our country's friend and ally, the Soviet Union, on the same scale as our principal enemy, US imperialism".[4] This is still valid today. Thus, the question of US and Soviet military facilities in the region is approached from a "class" perspective. That is, those of the US are viewed as harmful and to be removed, while those of the USSR are beneficial, given the two countries' perceived opposition to and support of progressive forces, respectively.

In fact, Aden is anxious to portray itself as a good Socialist regime, and as relying on Moscow, hoping to reinforce a Soviet commitment and assure the tangible benefits which accrue.

THE SOVIET PRESENCE

The Soviets have sought to establish their presence in South Yemen in as many sectors as possible: the military, economy, media, education, arts, security, etc. Their presence has allowed them to gain strategic assets and to influence South Yemen's development. Other Eastern bloc countries complement Moscow's activities and help the latter to carry the financial and personnel burden this entails.

The Military

Virtually all of South Yemen's arms come from the USSR. These sales have amounted to more than $2.2 billion since 1967.* Approximately 1000 Soviet

*Alert readers will note discrepancy between this and figures in the preceding article. We presume this is due to different time spans and different criteria being used, but the difference is impressive. Ed.

3. According to Ali Nasir, for example: "We don't consider ourselves merely friends of the USSR. Rather, we are partners in the same principles, in the path of the great ideas of scientific Socialism and proletarian internationalism . . . We consider this a fundamental path for our own Yemini Socialist Party, which is linked to the great party of Lenin by very close and powerful intellectual bonds which embody the greatness of the cause of international class revolution which struggles toward the same goal, i.e. the liberation of the workers", *14 Uktubir* (Aden), Feb. 18, 1985.

4. *Al-Mu'tamar al-istithna'i li-l-hizb al-ishtiraki al-yamani* (proceedings of the Extraordinary YSP Congress), (Beirut, Dar Ibn Khaldun, 1980), p. 102.

advisers are present at all levels of the South Yemeni military, including with maneuver units and in essential logistic and technical positions. Soviets and East Europeans also teach at the Military Academy. The South Yemeni military establishment, moreover, is structured along Soviet lines. This includes the presence of political officers within units to exercise party control. The Soviets appear to be involved in this as well. The Komsomol, the Soviet party youth organization, for example, helps its South Yemeni counterpart—the Union of Democratic Yemeni Youth (ISHID)—to direct lectures and meetings, and provides "advice" within the Army.[5] In addition, 500 Cubans advise the YSP's People's Militia, the military, and the People's Defense Committees—an urban neighborhood security and administrative organization borrowed from Cuba. The training program for the South Yemeni party militia is borrowed from a Soviet model. The East Germans provide advisers for the internal security system and teach at the Police Academy. According to *al-Haris,* the South Yemeni police journal, "a substantial number" of police commanders are graduates of East Germany's Higher People's Police Academy in Berlin.

The Economy

Moscow's participation in the economy is also extensive. The Soviet bloc, for example, provided over 2/3 of foreign investments for the 1980–85 Plan, with the USSR giving the bulk of that. The Soviets apparently had considerable input in formulating the 1980–85 Plan, which was tied to COMECON plans.[6] Moscow is South Yemen's single largest creditor in what is a relatively large total foreign debt of $761 m (1982), equivalent to 80.2% of South Yemen's GNP. At the most recent meeting of the Joint Soviet–South Yemeni Economic Committee in January 1985, a new economic agreement was signed which reportedly includes a new loan of 384 m. Rubles.[7] There are currently more than 1000 Soviet experts working on over 50 joint economic projects in the high-priority area of oil exploration and elsewhere. In agriculture, for example, the Soviets have helped to build dams and canals, have reclaimed lands, and have helped to set up state farms, where they continue to act as advisers. Other Socialist countries are also represented. Bulgaria, for example, cooperates in running tourist hotels and in agriculture, Cuba in poultry farms, and East Germany in construction. The intent of both Aden and Moscow is to develop closer economic links. Thus, although 56% of South Yemen's foreign trade in 1983 was still with the non-Communist

5. *Al-Raya* (Aden), Jan. 27, 1985.
6. See A. S. Guskov, *Demokraticheskii Iemen: 20 let revolyutsii,* (Moscow, Mysl, 1983), p. 48.
7. *14 Uktubir Al-Usbu'i* (Aden), February 8, 1985.

world, this was a decline from 70% in 1980 and conforms to the stated goal of both parties to shift Aden's trade to the Soviet bloc as quickly as feasible.

Communications

South Yemen's Media Institute, founded in 1980, adopted in toto a curriculum drawn up by Moscow University. The Institute, where many Soviets teach, is still affiliated with a number of East European institutions.[8] The Soviets are now also building an earth station in South Yemen to link the latter to the Soviet Intersputnik satellite communications network, which will facilitate direct communications between the two countries and provide direct broadcasts to Aden.[9] East German experts have set up and continue to work in Aden's TV system and telephone centers.[10]

Culture

In the field of culture, the Soviet bloc provides personnel—such as the East German adviser for South Yemen's theater—, frequent expert delegations, visiting troupes, films, and TV programs.[11] A multi-team Soviet research mission is also conducting fieldwork within the framework of a cultural exchange program. Part of the mission's activities consists of compiling a tribal and ethnographic map of the Hadramawt and of Socotra Island.[12]

Education

The Soviets also have a major presence in South Yemen's educational system. Curricula are based on Soviet models[13] and for a time at least there was even an East German adviser for the country's kindergarten system, which is modeled on "the socialist system".[14] Numerous Soviet and East Europeans teach in South Yemen, including the University. They account for nearly half the

8. *Al-Raya,* Apr. 29, 1984.
9. *14 Uktubir,* Aug. 2, 1984.
10. *14 Uktubir Al-Usbu'i,* Jan. 25, 1985.
11. The reception afforded to Soviet materials, however, is not always encouraging. For example, a journalist chided the young Adeni audience for their inattention, loud conversations, and animal calls during the screening of a Soviet documentary on Lenin's life at the government-run Cinema Club, *14 Uktubir,* Apr. 12, 1982.
12. *14 Uktubir,* Apr. 9, 1984. This can provide the researchers with first-hand knowledge of Who's Who in the tribal system and how it functions, as well as facilitate the establishment of contacts. Given the continuing importance of tribal politics in South Yemen, this knowledge could be of considerable importance to those who possess it.
13. For example, the secondary-school curriculum, organized on a "scientific Socialist basis," was implemented gradually, beginning in 1975 and reportedly being completed in the 1983/84 school year, *14 Uktubir,* Dec. 1, 1983.
14. *14 Uktubir,* June 4, 1982.

faculty at Aden's Law School. In addition, many South Yemenis have studied in the Soviet bloc. At present, there are over 1200 South Yemenis students in the USSR alone. Recently, moreover, Havana and Aden University signed a protocol to allow South Yemenis to continue their graduate studies in Cuba.[15]

Administration

Soviet advisers are also present in key government ministries and otherwise monitor administrative activities.[16] Soviets and other East Europeans likewise provide advisers to South Yemen's mass organizations, such as the youth organization, the Yemeni General Women's Union, and The Confederation of Democratic Yemeni Unions (INID), to form their cadres and direct their activities. Foreign personnel are also active in social services. The Cubans, for example, are central in Aden's Medical School and are found in hospitals and rural medical teams.

The Party

Perhaps of greatest significance is the Soviet role in the Yemeni Socialist Party, which was established in 1978 with the encouragement, if not insistence, of Moscow.[17] In 1979, Moscow and Aden signed a protocol for wideranging Soviet help with YSP activities. According to the Soviets, this called for "a regular exchange of party delegations with the goal of informing each other on mutual experiences with party-organizational work, party control of economic construction and political-educational activity with the masses and to cooperate in developing contacts between trade unions, youth, women's, and other social organizations, friendship societies, and peace and solidarity committees." The Soviets have also set up the Higher Party School in Aden, with branches in the provinces, which has provided the cadre for the vanguard party, while the Komsomol have set up the Higher School for Youth Cadres. Soviet instructors still teach at both schools and over 20,000 South Yemenis have attended courses there. Others have studied in party schools in the Eastern bloc. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other East European parties are now building a new headquarters for the YSP Central Committee, scheduled to be completed in time

15. *14 Uktubir,* June 20, 1984.

16. This monitoring can be quite close at times. In 1984, for example, the Soviets reportedly directed South Yemeni diplomatic posts abroad to furnish copies of cable traffic to them, *Al-Wahda* (Cairo), June 15, 1984.

17. A Soviet commentary in 1978, for example, provided this prescriptive assessment for South Yemen: "When the left wing gained power [ie. in 1969] its immediate tasks in the national-liberation revolution were unification of the country's national and patriotic forces and *the creation of a vanguard party of the working people*", V. Naumkin, "Southern Yemen: The Road to Progress", *International Affairs* (Moscow), January 1978, p. 65 (emphasis added).

for the upcoming YSP Congress in October, 1985. Moreover, Soviet bloc party delegations frequently visit Aden and "exchange experiences" with the YSP.

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One can therefore conclude that ties between Moscow and Aden are numerous and close, and that the Soviet presence in South Yemen is extensive. In fact, the term that would best describe this presence is perhaps *penetration*.[18] There is hardly a sector that does not have a significant Soviet presence. This permits the Soviets to monitor events closely and to develop contacts at all levels in the country's power structure and society. Moreover, the Soviet presence in so many sectors is likely to have a cumulative inhibiting effect.

SOVIET BENEFITS

The USSR derives a number of benefits from its relationship with Aden.

Military

Perhaps the most evident tangible benefit is the access Moscow has to military facilities in South Yemen, which is strategically located astride the narrow strait of Bab Al-Mandab, between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. South Yemen provides valuable support facilities and anchorages to the Soviet Navy—including nuclear submarines. Aden, in fact, is the port most frequently visited by the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean. Since November, 1978, Soviet IL-38/MAY aircraft have also flown reconnaissance and antisubmarine warfare missions—initially from Aden and subsequently from Al-Anad airfields—to monitor Western naval operations in the region. Moreover, Aden airport's runway is now being extended to 3500 meters. This could accommodate the longer-range TU-95 BEAR D reconnaissance aircraft which, if deployed, would extend Soviet coverage to Diego Garcia for the first time. Soviet operational forces and an air squadron are also based in South Yemen. The Soviets also have communications and intelligence collection facilities, including a naval communications center at Bir Fuqum. In addition, they have held maneuvers in the area, including naval and amphibious landing exercises.

The Soviets also use South Yemeni facilities to transship arms to African states and movements.[19] A new port is being developed at Nishtun, in Mahra, the

18. An official from the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Valerii Sukhin, in an interview with the YSP's *Al-Thawri* (Aden), (Sept. 22, 1984), captured aptly the pervasive character of Soviet-South Yemeni relations: "Our relations are not merely multifaceted. They are characterized by their completeness, by their 'totality'. Do you understand what I mean? They are all-embracing."

19. For summaries of Soviet access to facilities and operations see *Soviet Military Power 1984* (Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 125 and *Soviet Military Power 1985* (Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., 1985), pps. 102, 104, 118, 128.

easternmost region of the country. Nishtun is often mentioned by South Yemeni sources in tandem with the upgrading of the nearby airfield of Al-Ghayza. Should the Soviets receive access to this complex as well, it would improve considerably their air and naval deployments in the Indian Ocean. The Soviets, moreover, could presumably rely on the air, naval, and air defense assets they have transferred to South Yemeni forces to help monitor and affect Western military operations in the area.

Diplomatic Support

Aden also provides diplomatic support to Moscow in regional and international fora. While South Yemen can do little of a tangible nature and has limited weight in such circles, it is nevertheless the only Arab country, and one of the few in the Third World, upon which Moscow can rely so thoroughly for support. Aden, for example, has supported unreservedly Moscow's 1984 Middle East peace initiative and other regional Soviet proposals such as those for the "Indian Ocean peace zone" and the complete removal of the West's military presence in the Middle East.[20] Aden has even been willing to defy the regional consensus by backing, for example, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and strongly supporting the Karmal regime since then.

Moreover, South Yemen sees its relationship with the Soviet Union as a "strategic alliance" and provides broad backing to Moscow accordingly, whether at the UN and other international bodies or by supporting diplomatically such regimes as that of Nicaragua or Grenada under Bishop. Issues on which Aden has supported Moscow vocally and which are more salient to the latter than to Aden have included those of the neutron bomb, the Strategic Defense Initiative, the shooting down of the Korean airliner, Cambodia, and the boycott of the 1984 Olympics.[21] South Yemen's stand in the Non-Aligned Movement, with its tilt toward Moscow, also benefits the Soviet Union.

Ideological Model

As the only Arab state with a Marxist regime, South Yemen also represents an ideological victory for the Soviet Union, validating Soviet pronouncements that this is the trend for the region and that Soviet theory and practice are correct.

20. In practical terms, South Yemen has tried to marshal the support of regional states for Soviet initiatives, calling, for example, for a regional conference to study "the elimination of all foreign bases", and by holding a conference in Aden in February 1982 on "The Middle East problem and the dangers of the imperialist military buildup."

21. Most recently, South Yemen has backed the Soviet position on the Papal plot trial and, in late 1984, the South Yemeni Lawyer's Union petitioned the Italian government on behalf of the Bulgarian defendants.

Moscow hopes that South Yemen is only the first of the Arab states to embark on this path and views it as a model for the others to follow.[22] As mentioned earlier, South Yemen is one of a very small number of Third World countries which the Soviets have labelled as "oriented toward Socialism." South Yemen, in fact, has gone further along this path than other states in this category and can serve as "an example" for how others should proceed in the Third World in general.[23] South Yemen, moreover, can serve as a "laboratory" for the Soviets' strategy of promoting their system. As noted, the Soviets did not participate in the initial seizure of power by the NLF so that aspect of South Yemen's experience may not be replicable elsewhere in the Third World. However, the Soviet role in the regime's subsequent radicalization, building of a Socialist system, and strengthening of ties with Moscow may be. Because of this role as a model, it is presumably important for Moscow that South Yemen retain its present orientation.

Realistically, however, the ideological influence of the South Yemeni model elsewhere is rather limited. Aden's media, for example, are unable to cover even all of South Yemen, much less compete with the more developed electronic and print media from elsewhere in the region. Moreover, it is unlikely that the thousands of South Yemeni migrant workers in the Gulf will act as agents for Aden's ideology. Given South Yemen's lackluster record in development, it is more likely that dissidents in the Gulf—as well as South Yemenis—will be drawn to militant Islam rather than to Aden's experiment.

Regional Lever: Extent and Limits

South Yemen, however, represents a foothold and potential lever which Moscow could use should it one day feel that more active destabilization of the conservative regional states, particularly Aden's neighbors on the Peninsula, are called for.

This is not to suggest that South Yemen is necessarily, or even can act as, a military proxy, to be used by the Soviets. There are, in fact, significant limitations to Aden's playing an effective role even on the Peninsula. First of all, South Yemen is one of the world's poorest countries, with an annual per capita income of $323 (1984) and a population of just over 2 million, most of whom are still illiterate. Moreover, the military balance increasingly favors the other Peninsula

22. One Soviet study from 1978 noted that South Yemen's "experience . . . exerts a revolutionizing influence on the entire Arab national liberation movement and facilitates its activation," Valerii Vorobyov, *Politicheskaya i gosudarstvennaya sistema NDRI* (Moscow, Nauka, 1978), p. 5. Indeed, more recently, Aden's experience has been seen as germane even beyond the Arab world: "it exerts significant influence on the activities of the revolutionary-democratic forces in other liberated countries which have embarked on the path of Socialist orientation", Guskov, p. 68.

23. Guskov, pp. 3, 15.

states. Coupled with the geographical barriers which separate South US.Yemen from the surrounding countries, this makes it unlikely—barring major Soviet support—that Aden will pose a major conventional military threat to its neighbors, with the possible exception of the YAR.

Perhaps of most significance is that, under present circumstances, an openly aggressive foreign policy by South Yemen would probably run counter to other, more important, Soviet interests in the region, and it is not likely that Moscow would encourage Aden in that direction. The Gulf states, the YAR, and above all Saudi Arabia, are greater prizes than South Yemen and are the probable long-term objectives of Soviet policy. Overt moves against them by Aden are not likely to be successful in any case and, if perceived as being supported by Moscow, would serve to drive them closer to the US. Only in the case of the YAR might a threat from Aden increase Soviet influence, as the Soviets are already present there in the form of arms and advisers with which Sanaa hopes to thwart its southern neighbor.

South Yemen's unconventional capabilities, on the other hand, could pose a more credible threat. In the past, Aden has provided backing for international terrorism (Red Brigades, Baader Meinhof, IRA) and for insurgencies, including those against the YAR and Oman, in the form of training, safehaven, arms, advice, and logistics support, and on occasion "volunteers". Although Ali Nasir has largely shut this down as part of his policy of rapprochement with Aden's neighbors, it would likely be revived if the hardliners regain power. Given the potentially destabilizing effect this could have in the region, this could be a benefit for the Soviets in pursuing wider regional goals. Dissident movements such as the anti-Sanaa regime National Democratic Front (NDF), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO), and the Saudi and Sudanese Communist Parties have retained at least an organizational presence in South Yemen. Should internal instability develop in nearby states at some time in the future, South Yemeni support for these movements could be reactivated and become significant in exploiting the situation.[24] While pursuing improved official relations with states in the area, the Soviets, in fact, have recently also reasserted their support for regional Marxist subversive movements.[25]

24. Since Numayri's overthrow in April 1985 and the subsequent political turmoil, in fact, Aden has given considerable support, verbally at least, to the Sudanese Communist Party.

25. For example, among the participants of a conference of Middle East leftist parties and movements, held in January 1985 in Cyprus and publicized by *Pravda* (Jan. 22, 1985), and thus apparently sanctioned by Moscow, were the Saudi Communist Party and the Bahrain National Liberation Front.

THE IMPACT ON SOUTH YEMEN

South Yemen can also point to a number of benefits which accrue thanks to its relationship with the USSR. By the same token, however, this also creates a marked dependence on Moscow and places considerable leverage in the hands of the latter.

Security

Perhaps the most significant benefit is the security which the USSR can provide to the Aden regime against both internal and external threats, through its provision of arms, training, security personnel, and advice.[26] The Soviets also serve Aden as a counterbalance to the Saudis and North Yemenis. Even if South Yemen had a different regime, it is likely there would be friction with its neighbors along the undemarcated borders. The Soviets have a substantial military presence and a proven ability to deploy forces rapidly to South Yemen.[27] Of course, this is not an unmixed blessing for the Adenis, as it can also be used by the Soviets as a lever in the internal political balance, particularly given the Aden regime's endemic factionalization and the likelihood that one or more factions could be found to ask for direct Soviet support. The threat of such an intervention—though a measure of last resort—is nevertheless a real one and is likely to influence the calculations of South Yemenis.

Economic Aid

In addition, as seen above, the USSR and its allies have provided significant economic and technological aid. While the amounts may be less than Aden had hoped for, this nevertheless represents an important input in the context of South Yemen's weak economy. Soviet terms have been quite favorable, with a reported maximum of 3% interest.[28] The other side of the coin, however, is that the USSR has become a dominant factor in the local economy and its aid has engendered a real dependence on Moscow.

26. For example, while visiting East Germany, Ali Nasir remarked that "Our friendship with the USSR and the other Socialist countries is a decisive factor for the consolidation of a progressive system in our country", *14 Uktubir,* Nov. 11, 1984. Moscow's willingness to shore up the regimes of Ethiopia and Angola must be encouraging to Aden.

27. In late 1979, for example, the Soviets in 36 hours airlifted elements of seven divisions, equivalent to two full divisions to South Yemen, Colin Legum, Haim Shaked, and Daniel Dishon, eds., *Middle East Contemporary Survey, 1978–79,* (New York, Holmes & Meier, 1980), p. 65.

28. *14 Uktubir Al-Usbu'i,* Feb. 8, 1985. After the devastating 1982 floods, moreover, the Soviets agreed to refinance South Yemen's repayments. From time to time, Moscow also grants other dollops of aid, such as the agreement in January 1985 to supply 47 tons of sugar to South Yemen—37 tons as a "loan" and 10 tons for free.

Finally, Moscow provides the Aden regime a ready-made, cohesive, ideological blueprint and symbols for the overall development and restructuring of the state, while at the same time reassuring the regime that it can retain its power in the process. The orthodox hardliners in Aden, such as Ali Ba Dhib, in particular look to Moscow as the main source of ideological guidance.[29] Moreover, South Yemen's continuing relationship with the USSR and its allies provides the Aden regime with a sense of acceptance, moral support, and international legitimacy. The regime can feel that it is not isolated, and is instead part of a broader ideological movement and grouping of nations. It also receives reassurance that it is following a correct and successful path. In fact, the South Yemeni media presents the Soviet experience in glowing terms, in part at least to validate to its domestic public and regime's own adherence to similar policies.

The Soviets, of course, have actively promoted South Yemen's adoption of their model. In great part, this has stemmed from Moscow's disappointment with earlier "progressive" Third World regimes. Some had fallen to military coups (Ghana, Ben Bella's Algeria, Indonesia). Others had simply veered away from Moscow (Egypt, Somalia, Peru). With this in mind, Soviets have seen stability as possible only if there is a thorough remolding of each country's society. In this case the Soviets have urged a state-controlled economy—including the nationalization of land—, the destruction of traditional loyalties and values, the mobilization of the population on the basis of socio-economic loyalties, and the formation of a Marxist-Leninist state system and a vanguard party.[30] Indeed, it appears that South Yemen has followed Soviet advice in broad terms on how to restructure its economy, society, and government. Thus, central planning was introduced and a dominant state sector developed through nationalization. Although the public sector still accounted for only 51.3% of the country's GDP in

29. Ali Ba Dhib, in fact, has criticized "some" who see the USSR only as a source of arms and economic aid, *Al-Thawri,* Jan. 27, 1984. Likewise, according to Salim Salih, a member of the YSP Politburo, speaking of the goal of establishing a Socialist society: "its living ideal is embodied in our world today in the USSR and other countries in the Socialist family. We in the PDRY look for inspiration to the experience of building Socialism in these countries", *Al-Thawri,* Feb. 16, 1985.

30. One Soviet observer, writing in 1978, underlined the imperative for restructuring South Yemen's society:

"The ideological function—consisting of the liquidation of the colonial heritage in the fields of education and culture, and the inculcation of a world view of the ruling classes or social groups in the consciousness of all members of society—is a vitally important activity for a government having a socialist orientation", (Vorobyov, *op. cit.* p. 74).

According to a Soviet expert on the country, V. Naumkin, in fact, "it is said that one of the most important conditions for the success of the revolution in South Yemen was the utilization of the experience of the Socialist countries", in "Demokraticheskii Iemen na puti sotsyalisticheskoi orientatsii", in *Noveyshaya Istoriya Iemena, 1917–1982, g.g.*, (Moscow, Nauka, 1984), p. 205.

On the restructuring of society, see N. Cigar, "State and Society in South Yemen," *Problems of Communism,* May–June 1985, pps. 41–58.

1982, this was an increase from 38.7% in 1973. Likewise, much of the agricultural land has been nationalized, although this sector accounted for only 41.4% of the agricultural product in 1982, as compared to 39.5% in 1973. Of significance, however, is that some of the land, as noted, is organized on the model of the Soviet *kolkhoz* or collective farm. Moreover, the Aden regime hopes to reduce and eventually eliminate the private sector altogether.

Aden's implementation of this strategy has led to the presence of Soviets in virtually every sphere of society. The fact that the South Yemeni state system, at least formally, is based on a Soviet model—with a centralized, hierarchical structure and a similar process of relations among the Presidium, Council of Ministers, Supreme People's Assembly, mass organizations, and Party—also means that the Soviets are familiar with its functions and symbols. This makes it easier for them to operate in South Yemeni politics and to know how and where to exert leverage. This includes the YSP, a Marxist-Leninist cadre party, which is central to decision-making in South Yemen, and in which the Soviets have played a considerable role.

MOSCOW AND ALI NASIR MUHAMMAD

Does the Soviet presence and South Yemeni dependence, however, translate into Soviet influence on South Yemeni policies?

For example, one could maintain, with arguable plausibility, that the Aden regime would have undertaken the same changes in the country's economy or society even without Soviet prompting, due to its own evaluation of the merits of the measures. To gauge the extent of influence, therefore, it would be more fruitful to examine an area of conflict rather than one of plausible congruent interest. Perhaps Moscow's relations with Aden under current strongman Ali Nasir Muhammad can serve to highlight the link which exists between Soviet-South Yemeni bilateral relations and domestic politics. This relationship also illustrates what policies the USSR would like South Yemen to follow and what influence it can exert to achieve that end.

The pro-Moscow hardliner Abd al-Fattah Ismail, who ruled South Yemen from 1978 to 1980, had come to power through a coup involving the ouster and execution of his predecessor, Salim Rubayyi' Ali. Ali, a populist radical, leaned toward China rather than toward the USSR and had come increasingly to favor nonalignment for South Yemen. Since the mid-70s, moreover, he had begun to improve relations rapidly with Aden's neighbors and the West. It appears, in fact, that in his quest for union with the YAR he was prepared to make concessions in South Yemen's domestic system, including blocking the formation of a vanguard party as desired by the radicals and Moscow. In the fighting between Ali and his rivals during the 1978 coup, Soviet and Cuban forces apparently intervened

directly on the side of the latter, facilitating Ismail's victory. His short rule was to lead to a significantly closer relationship between Aden and Moscow.

When Ismail and his supporters were ousted by the more pragmatic Ali Nasir Muhammad in a coup within the YSP in 1980, the Soviets were apparently willing to accept the new regime. One can surmise that Moscow felt that Ali Nasir would not contradict key Soviet interests, even though his Marxism was tempered by Yemeni nationalism and he was not as close to Moscow ideologically as Ismail.

Ali Nasir's coup occurred in February 1980, just as the Soviets were becoming preoccupied in Afghanistan and were anxious to allay the recently heightened anti-Soviet mood of Saudi Arabia and other states of the region which this invasion had aroused. This factor probably helped him obtain Moscow's consent—even if reluctant—to his takeover. Moreover, the program adopted by the YSP under Ali Nasir's leadership at the Extraordinary Party Congress in July 1980, just after the coup, stressed ideological continuity and his intention to preserve Aden's existing ties to Moscow.

One of Ali Nasir's principal goals, however, has been to mobilize new financial and technical resources from abroad in order to carry out the country's development plans and to help consolidate the regime's position. Since the main untapped sources of potential aid—the oil-rich Arab states and the West—were unlikely to be forthcoming without signs of "good faith", Ali Nasir toned down his predecessor's rhetoric and confrontational policy vis-a-vis South Yemen's neighbors.[31]

Domestically, the Arab states have urged a more tolerant policy toward religion and the private sector in South Yemen. In part in response to this, the application of Socialist measures became more relaxed under Ali Nasir than had been the case under Ismail, and there has been greater foreign paticipation in the economy.

Ali Nasir's rapprochement with his neighbors and the accompanying moderating trends at home seem to have aroused doubts in Moscow about the general trends in South Yemen and of Ali Nasir's ability to withstand foreign blandishments. The USSR apparently did not oppose Aden's search for aid abroad as such, provided it did not lead to a weakening of South Yemen's ties with Moscow or affect the country's internal system to make it less Socialist. In 1984, however, Moscow began to feel that ties between Aden and its neighbors were threatening to become too close—with possibly adverse effects on South Yemeni-Soviet ties—and expressed its displeasure publicly.[32] We can assume that it also did so

31. Since 1982, for example, Ali Nasir has drawn down South Yemen's support for the NDF and PFLO, thus improving previously tense relations with the YAR and Saudi Arabia and establishing relations even with Oman—formerly a particular target of Aden's ire—for the first time.

32. A major *Pravda* article in 1984, for example, reminded readers of Saudi Arabia's allegedly continuing role in training South Yemeni emigres opposed to the Aden regime (Apr. 2, 1984), indicating that the latter should be cautious in its dealings with Riyadh. Similar warnings of the dangers

officially in its contacts with the South Yemen government.

Likewise, the relaxation of Socialist measures gave Moscow cause to worry whether a "blurring" of South Yemen's domestic system and a retreat from its commitment to Socialism were in process. In particular, Moscow soon began to express its disapproval of the increased freedom allowed to the private sector. A Soviet journalist visiting Aden, for example, noted that "hawkers ply their simple wares right on the sidewalk,"[33] hinting that the regime was lax in its enforcement of its ideological duties vis-à-vis the private sector. Evaluating Aden's policy of allowing returning workers to open a small business, one Soviet expert expressed his scepticism that this would have a positive result: "Naturally this [ie. its utility] will depend on the effectiveness of state control, the state sector's strength, the strength of party influence on the state apparatus and, ultimately, on whether the party implements its leading role in society."[34] The Soviets have been particularly sensitive to a foreign economic presence, warning that this could "undermine the progressive transformations in the country, support elements of local capital in the form of the private sector, and deepen the financial and technical dependence of democratic Yemen."[35]

The Soviets have also been critical of Ali Nasir's lax commitment to the YSP's development and the YSP, for example, was reminded of the need to pay greater attention to "the consolidation [of its] ideological, political, and organizational unity."[36] Indicative of the USSR's disappointment with Ali Nasir was the relatively low-key welcome accorded to him when he visited Moscow in October 1984, and which contrasted with the considerable publicity given to the YAR president whose visit followed shortly thereafter.

To counter these trends, however, Moscow has been able to benefit from, and to actively exploit, the existing factionalism within the YSP. Both the pro-Moscow hardline ideological faction (led by the two Ba Dhib brothers, Abu Bakr and Ali) and opportunists (such as the Defense Minister Salih Muslih Qasim and YSP Central Committee member Ali Antar) have been opposed to Ali Nasir and his pragmatic faction for different reasons. This has given rise to a power struggle which has still not been resolved. Although the opposition to Ali Nasir has tribal and personal as well as ideological causes, the USSR has benefitted from its consequences. Ali Antar, for example, whose power base is tribal and is probably even less committed to Marxism than Ali Nasir, has apparently sought Soviet support against the latter.[37] Soviet delegations are reported to have met

posed by South Yemen's neighbors have continued by the Soviets, *eg. Pravda,* June 13, 1985.

33. *Izvestiya,* Nov. 19, 1983.

34. Naumkin, *Noveyshaya istoriya, op. cit.*, p. 212.

35. Guskov, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

36. *Pravda,* Nov. 14, 1983. The Soviet press has also reported that in Hadramawt (the second most populous governorate), the YSP is "still relatively small", another implicit criticism of Ali Nasir, its General Secretary, *Pravda,* Mar. 31, 1985.

37. During one meeting, Ali Antar (along with Abu Bakr Ba Dhib) reportedly offered Moscow

with Ali Antar, Abu Bakr Ba Dhib, and Qasim, at various times, including when Ali Nasir was out of the country in 1984.

The pro-Moscow faction has represented the USSR's complaints openly. Ali Ba Dhib, for example, took a thinly-veiled swipe at Ali Nasir's attempted policy of greater balance between the two blocs, when he criticized "those who would place the USSR and the US in the same basket or on the same plane", and asked pointedly "What is this pragmatism which these days is being called for in more than one form and under more than one screen?"[38] In early 1984, at a meeting of the YSP Central Committee, Ali Nasir was accused of being "impotent from an ideological point of view" and calls were heard for the return of Ismail.[39] That basic questions of domestic development were at stake is suggested by Ali Nasir's admission that "the question of the development of new forms of property, that is the public and the cooperative sectors, played a big role in the debates of the Central Committee". Perhaps indicative of the YSP's unsettled state was its failure to attend a major meeting of Middle East leftist parties held in Cyprus in January 1985.

Moreover, recent shifts in power within the government have been to the detriment of Ali Nasir. In 1984 and 1985, a number of pro-Ismail hardliners who had been ousted in 1980 have been rehabilitated and reacquired official positions, including some on the YSP Politburo and Central Committee. In the February 1985 government shakeup, Ali Nasir himself "resigned" one of his three posts—that of Prime Minister, which he had held for fourteen years. Ismail, who had been appointed in late 1984 as head of the Preparatory Committee for the YSP Congress scheduled for October 1985 (normally a function of the YSP's General Secretary) returned to Aden in March 1985, despite Ali Nasir's opposition. The jockeying for power is likely to intensify as the Congress approaches. Indicative of the gravity of the challenge to Ali Nasir is the fact that he has tried to rehabilitate Salim Rubayyi' Ali's defeated partisans as a counterweight to the resurgent radicals. The power struggle, in fact, has degenerated into violence at times, with attempted (and some successful) assassinations of the protagonists and armed clashes among their supporters, including in the military.[40]

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increased military access in South Yemen, *Al-Wahda,* June 15, 1984. This runs explicitly counter to Ali Nasir's reluctance to honor Soviet requests for such access. Ali Antar seems to be continuing in this vein, going out of his way to compliment Moscow at a recent military ceremony by noting that "the USSR does not differentiate between Al-Anad or Al-Ibar [South Yemeni military bases] and Soviet Kirghizia", and thus suggesting he is seeking to draw the Soviets in deeper, *Al-Raya,* Mar. 10, 1985. It is unlikely, however, that Ali Antar ultimately wants the hardline faction to come out on top either, as tribally-based leaders like himself would be eliminated.

38. *14 Uktubir Al-Usbu'i,* Jan. 27, 1984.

39. *Al-Siyasah* (Kuwait), June 28, 1984; *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Middle East and Africa,* July 2, 1984, p. C/6. Interviewed shortly thereafter about rumors of splits within the YSP leadership, Ali Nasir acknowledged that "it is natural if there are contradictions or conflicts", but he reassured his readers that "the minority will submit to the majority", *14 Uktubir,* June 21, 1984.

40. Most of the reporting of this violence is found in the emigre press. However, there are

Although Moscow seems willing to cooperate with tribally-based leaders such as Ali Antar, it is improbable that the Soviets would be in favor of their consolidation in the long run. For the present, however, they serve a useful purpose in the anti-Nasir coalition. The Soviets are probably willing to see Ali Nasir remain in power—provided they can ensure he follows policies more in line with their strategic interests. This would have the advantage of continuity and avoid the uncertainties involved in a coup. Ali Nasir may be expected to try to consolidate his own power at the October YSP Congress by eliminating his rivals. It is not clear whether the Soviets would view this as an unacceptable challenge to their own influence in South Yemen or if they would accept this, provided their own interests were guaranteed.

Among the consequences of the struggle so far has been a marked increase of ideological material in the South Yemeni media, particularly on the Soviet experience of building Socialism. The more radical YSP ideologues likewise have gained in visibility. The regime has also put additional emphasis on the role of mass organizations and the Party. Emigre sources, moreover, claim that training for dissidents, such as the NDF, has been resumed.[41] Ali Nasir himself, probably enjoying less room for maneuver, and anxious to refurbish his credentials with the USSR and to preempt his rivals, has adopted a more radical pose. In a speech in December 1984, for example, he portrayed the foreign threat to South Yemen in more menacing terms than had been done the last few years.[42] He has also gone out of his way to reassure the Soviets that he has no intention of distancing himself from Moscow.[43] In fact, he was apparently willing to offend Arab sensibilities by formally recognizing the Afghan regime in September 1984. Similarly, in the domestic arena, Ali Nasir's rhetoric has become more radical. In the working paper he presented at the 14th Plenum of the YSP Central Committee in February 1985, for example, he lashed out in uncharacteristic language against "middle and rich peasants" and proposed measures to deal with them.[44]

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occasional confirmations on this in South Yemeni sources as well. For example, an obituary of a political officer "killed in the line of duty", appeared in *Al-Raya,* the official military newspaper, Apr. 8, 1984.

41. *Sawt Al-Janub Al-Yamani* (Cairo), Sept. 30, 1984. *Al-Wahda,* May 15, 1985, claims that Ismail has been personally involved in sponsoring their activities since his return. Reportedly, before his return to Aden, Ismail had met with Salih Muslih Qasim (a strong supporter of the NDF) and had promised him that the NDF would be reactivated if he returned; *Al-Alam* (London), July 14, 1984.

42. Speaking to the Army commanders, Ali Nasir noted that "developments in the regions neighboring our country confirmed and still confirm that the imperialist and reactionary circles are continuing to strengthen their aggressive military capabilities for aggressive intentions which are a secret to no one", *14 Uktubir,* Dec. 30, 1984.

43. "We will continue along the path of consolidating the strategic alliance with the USSR and the other Socialist countries", *14 Uktubir,* Feb. 18, 1985 or "We are an inseparable part of. . . . the camp of democracy, peace, and Socialism", interview with *Al-Nahj* magazine (Aden), found as supplement to *Al-Thawri,* May 5, 1984, p. 56.

44. *14 Uktubir,* May 12, 1985.

While the USSR's precise involvement in the current power struggle is not yet clear, Moscow has benefitted from its results so far and has played an active role, whether directly or through its clients and allies. As indicated already, Soviet envoys apparently have met with anti-Nasir elements in Aden. Moreover, Moscow encouraged Ismail—the key player in the anti-Nasir movement within the YSP—who had been in exile in the Soviet Union for several years, to become more active, for example by having him reemerge in public in 1984, and allowing him to meet with Arab politicians visiting Moscow[45] and eventually to return to Aden. Given the fact that Soviet influence in the YSP is probably greater than in other arenas, it is perhaps not coincidental that this has been one of the principal foci of the anti-Nasir movement.

What this suggests is that Moscow does not have complete control over South Yemeni affairs. There is, in fact, some give-and-take in the relationship between the two countries, and it is reasonable to assume that Ali Nasir, or other potential South Yemeni leaders, would want to retain as much independence as feasible. By the same token, it is doubtful whether Moscow seeks or needs day-to-day oversight and blatant, overt control over Ali Nasir, or any South Yemeni leader, on every issue. In some instances, Soviet and South Yemeni policy interests are already congruous. The system adopted by Aden, as noted, also orients South Yemen toward Moscow. However, even when interests are not shared and key issues are involved, the Soviets can rely on existing ties—such as the arms supply or economic aid—to narrow Aden's policy options, or it can intervene more directly. As seen from the modification of Ali Nasir's policy of moderation—which had been his central policy initiative—at Soviet behest, Moscow apparently can generate sufficient leverage to get its way.

OUTLOOK

What are the prospects for the Soviet-South Yemeni relationship? A break by the Aden regime with the USSR is unlikely at this time. On the one hand, both sides derive significant benefits from the relationship. Finding another source willing to supply arms in the quantity and at the level of sophistication received from the Soviets would be a major consideration for Aden. Neither the West nor Saudi Arabia, which has shown reluctance about arming the non-Marxist YAR for geopolitical reasons, would be realistic options. Similarly, no other country is likely to be willing to commit itself to guarantee the Aden regime's security against domestic challenges to the extent the USSR would. If anything, this need will probably intensify, particularly if the Islamic revival, of which there are

45. *Al-Alam,* July 14, 1984.

numerous signs, continues to expand and provides the framework for opposition to the regime.

Moreover, Aden will have difficulty finding another source willing to provide it with equivalent amounts of economic aid. Although Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states could do so, they would likely require in return that Aden further relax its control over the private sector and allow greater religious freedom, which could prove unsettling to the regime's political control. While in the early days after independence South Yemen also obtained assistance from China, and still continues to receive some, the latter's means are extremely limited and cannot in any way be considered a viable alternative to Soviet aid.

South Yemen's political system will also continue to be a significant factor in its orientation toward Moscow. Given the regime's interest in retaining its internal cohesion and monopoly over power, it is unlikely to shed its Marxist-Leninist ideology and open the political system to other forces. The retention of this ideological framework of reference will be a significant factor in the continuation of the Soviet-South Yemeni relationship.

To be sure, there are indications that the average South Yemeni does not particularly like the Soviets and their allies stationed in his country. Moreover, the quality of Soviet aid has at times engendered complaints by South Yemeni officials and, in fact, even in government ministries university degrees from Socialist countries apparently are treated as being worth less than those obtained elsewhere. Anti-Soviet sentiments may become more intense among the population if the Islamic revival movement continues to expand. Moreover, one can surmise that at least some in the regime may be sensitive to propaganda from neighboring states and emigres to the effect that Aden is too pliant to the Soviets. While all this may lead to more limited visibility of the Soviets in South Yemen, it is less likely to have a major effect on their actual presence or influence, given the overall context of the bilateral relationship.

Even if it wanted to, it is unlikely that Aden could veer away from Moscow. As seen above, the latter has developed such an extensive presence in South Yemen and has penetrated its system so thoroughly that it would be extremely difficult to throw the Soviets out. The parallel with the situation in Egypt under Nasser and Sadat is misleading. The Soviet presence in Egypt was never as pervasive as it is in South Yemen. There is also a qualitative difference in that the Egyptian socio-political system was never remolded on a Marxist-Leninist pattern and no Marxist-Leninist vanguard party was ever established, so that Moscow was never able to develop the leverage that it enjoys in South Yemen.

Neither is it likely that Aden could move even as far as Algeria has under Benjedid toward a more genuine nonalignment. First, by harping on a supposedly imminent US threat, Aden finds it easier to legitimate its close ties to the USSR, which contribute to the regime's internal security. Moreover, Salim Rubayyi' Ali's intention in this direction, in part, led to his overthrow in 1978. Even Ali

Nasir's limited initiative of a more pragmatic, less confrontational, approach to South Yemen's neighbors and the West quickly caused concern in Moscow. The latter has been able to place strict limits on, if not derail, this initiative. In fact, it appears that Moscow in this case did not have to use all of the levers of influence available.

To be sure, other Marxist regimes—Yugoslavia, Albania, and China—have been able to distance themselves sharply from Moscow, even when the latter's influence had been strong at one time. However, in all these cases the regime had come to power and consolidated its control largely through its own efforts, with the USSR playing a secondary role. While it is true that the NLF achieved power in South Yemen on its own, without Soviet support, the regime of today is not the same as the NLF in 1967, especially so after the coups of 1969 and 1978, in which more moderate factions were jettisoned. The development of the regime as it exists today has certainly been aided and guided by the USSR. Indeed, as noted, direct Soviet and Cuban intervention helped Ismail to overthrow Salim Rubayyi' Ali in 1978, leading to a more radical and more pro-Moscow regime. In addition, Soviet participation and advice have been instrumental for the regime's consolidation. In that perspective, one cannot consider it in the same category as the other Marxist regimes which eventually broke with Moscow, and one can conclude that Aden's prospects for independence are not as good as in the other cases noted here.

South Yemen has pinned great hopes on finding oil to solve its economic problems and the recent oil discoveries in North Yemen have no doubt encouraged Aden. Should oil also be found in the South, this would likely facilitate the regime's consolidation efforts, but its effect on Aden's relations with the USSR is less clear. What is probable is that the Soviets would seek to be involved in that sector and, indeed, signed a new oil exploration agreement with Aden in January 1985. Moreover, while a new source of wealth could free South Yemen from its concerns about eliminating all prospects of Gulf state aid—and from the accompanying pressures for moderation—the Aden regime would still have to look to the USSR for the arms and internal security support it requires. South Yemen, in fact, could then afford to absorb even larger amounts of Soviet arms and, overall, Moscow probably would view the retention of its influence in the country as of even greater importance than now.

How will the current power struggle in South Yemen affect the relationship? Should Ismail and the hardliners eclipse or replace Ali Nasir, this would likely have a significant impact on Aden's relations with the USSR. Given Ismail's ideological leanings, he is likely to be more energetic than Ali Nasir in his implementation of a Socialist system at home. Moreover, Ismail would be unlikely to engage in even the modest sort of flirtations with his neighbors which Ali Nasir has carried out and which have worried the Soviets. Instead, based on his past performance, Ismail could be expected to intensify Aden's anti-Western stance

and to strengthen its ties to Moscow.[46] One result could be expanded Soviet access to facilities in South Yemen and even formal basing rights.

On the question of Yemeni unity, both the radicals and the moderates in Aden would avoid union with North Yemen until the present regime in Sanaa also became "democratic" or until the balance of power had shifted to South Yemen. Ali Nasir, despite lip service to unity, has arrived at a modus vivendi with the Sanaa regime. Ismail, on the other hand, would probably return to a more aggressive policy, as he and many of his coterie are originally from the North and an emphasis on the unity of the Yemens serves to legitimize their position in the South Yemeni power structure. Even if Ali Nasir remains in power, he may feel compelled to make greater gestures of support for the anti-Sanaa NDF and the hardliners are likely to have more input into policy. His room for maneuver is likely to diminish and he is likely to become more radical and more accommodating toward the Soviets in order to outflank his domestic rivals and to allay Moscow's doubts. There is likely to be a legacy of resentment in the Ali Nasir camp toward the USSR for its support of his rivals, whatever the outcome of the current struggle. However, given the combination of congruous interests and pervasive Soviet presence, a major realignment in the current Soviet-South Yemeni relationship is unlikely in the near future.

46. Ismail's rise to power in 1978, for example, quickly led to closer Soviet-South Yemeni relations. That same year, inter alia, he signed a protocol with Moscow to help build the new vanguard party, and expanded Soviet access to facilities. The following year, he signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and gained observer status for Aden in COMECON. The Soviet presence in the civilian sector also expanded rapidly.