

Yemen Military Situation Reaches Stalemate

(Editor's Note: The war in Yemen that began with a coup in September, 1962, sending the ruling Imam fleeing his capital of Sanaa to assemble a loyal army — and drawing Egyptian military help for the rebels—has just gone into its second year. Here is an up to date report from the scene.)

By DAVID BISHAI
 United Press International
 SAADA, NORTHERN YEMEN (UPI) —The military situation in Yemen has reached a stalemate that only a political solution can end.
 According to authoritative military observers, fighting has been reduced to decreasing skirmishes in the northwestern mountain range separating Yemen from Saudi Arabia. There, tribes opposing the Republican

regime are entrenched. Egyptian troops have set up a tight ring all around to keep them from invading the plains.
 Neither side seems any longer anxious to do battle with the other. The anti-Republicans are apparently secure in their impregnable mountain abode, going about their traditional terrace cultivation.
 Kept on Alert
 Occasionally, sometimes apparently just to satisfy their warring nature, they set up ambushes, or simply open fire at objects at random. It no longer does great harm, but is sufficient to keep the Egyptians and Republicans on the alert.
 Those anti-Republican tribes are not Royalists. Many of them are by tradition opposed to whoever rules Sanaa. The Turks who occupied Yemen less than a

century ago, and the Imams who followed, were never able to suppress them.
 They are pint-sized but tough and ruthless. Their loyalty is to their tribe alone. Their women are unveiled, wear black velvet slacks and carry slingshots which they skillfully use to hunt mountain rats and rabbits or to gouge the eyes of an attacker. Both men and women roam their rugged land with animal agility.
 Mountains Are Infested
 The northern mountains are infested with small bands of these little warriors. They shoot at any one who is not their kin. Their captured enemies are beheaded by one swift stroke of their Saracen daggers. And they are equally skilled with a rifle.
 The Egyptians and Republicans are quite satisfied now to keep them marooned in their mountain domain. They have apparently realized it was impossible, and futile, to try to flush them out. To them, it is not worth the lives of men such a battle would cost.
 The Royalist tribes supporting Imam El Badr have found sanc-

tuary in those mountains. But they are often disturbed by frequent raids by Egyptian Yak fighters. They are trying to rally more followers by buying the support of uncommitted mountain tribes, after most of their manpower was lost in the battles of the plains.
 Strategic Mistake
 The Royalists committed their worst strategic mistake by challenging the Egyptians in the open. When El-Badr escaped from Sanaa at the end of September, 1962, following the coup d'etat of Abdullah Al Sallal, he rallied an army of almost 40,000 men, with the assistance of Saudi Arabia and the Sherif (ruler) of Bejjan.
 They greatly outnumbered the Egyptians and Republicans. They sought to crush them and regain control. Early in the year they descended from the mountains to attack Sanaa, Ta'ez and Hodeida and were thoroughly defeated.
 They stood on the plains, unshielded and unprotected under the pounding of Egyptian tanks, field rockets, flame-throwers and

air bombing and strafing. The entire thing was over in less than a week.
 Start Conducting Raids
 The shattered Royalists regained the mountains and began conducting harassing raids from there. Their number had been greatly reduced, but there were aid and supplies from Saudi Arabia and Bejjan. Last June 9, they tried another march on Sanaa, with about 10,000 warriors, and suffered the same fate as in their earlier attempt.
 Then the Egyptians launched their summer offensive and sealed off all Yemen's borders except for the impassable northwestern mountain range.
 Mopping-up operations followed, largely by bombers and mortars against trapped Royalist pockets. The fighting gradually receded until it reached a stalemate.
 The long, difficult and thorny search for a political solution acceptable to all has begun, so far with nothing very promising in sight. It is easier to realize in Southern Yemen, where tribes are mainly Shafei Moslems—an agrarian, largely peaceful people whose proximity to Aden has

afforded them a certain degree of education and reason. But up north are the Zaidis—the tough mountain nomads, who have little or no education and who have managed to keep themselves sealed off from the rest of the world.
 Discontent Prevails
 President Sallal is a Zaidi, but that did not serve to bring all Zaidis in line. The executive council and other top positions are carefully divided among Zaidis and Shafeis, with the Zaidis favored. And discontent prevails among the tribes.
 If there is a way of bringing all Yemenis under one flag and one central government, that way is yet to be found.
 The stench of death and gunpowder is gradually receding from the mountains of Yemen. The rebel tribes are farming and Egyptian troops are largely employed on road construction, building schools and hospitals.
 But an occasional outburst of machine-gun fire, the sudden roar of a low-flying Yak fighter or the glimpse of a wounded man on a stretcher are reminders that the gun still rules over Yemen.

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The Collector's Corner

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 Our Food for Freedom stamp has topped all records for cancellations of first day of issue with 696,185 covers postmarked June 4.
 Hungary has issued a large diamond shaped stamp. This is a pretty stamp.
 I have received a letter franked with the attractive golf stamp from Cape Verde.
 What I find most interesting concerning cover collecting is mailing the envelopes myself for first day of issue or other cachets. This way I know that every cover in my collection has passed through the national or international mail, and has not been made strictly to order for selling to collectors. Cultivate a pen-friend in all countries, then you know your covers and envelopes are bona fide. There will be six new stamps issued in October. This keeps cover collectors that service their own busy. Our second Christmas stamp will be issued Nov. 1.

The Harris Freedom album picturing the United States and the United Nations stamps has historical information for the beginner and also the advanced collector. This is a fine book for \$1.50.
 An interesting collection for the do-it-yourself collector can be made with little cost, much work and historical research concerning battlefields, dates and named towns, post office cancellations for Civil War events. Over 40 events took place and all can be had with special slogans, stamps and cachets. Such a collection from Nov. 7, 1961 to the end of 1963 makes a real historical record of those troubled times.
 Malaysia has issued the most beautiful flower stamps in honor of the World Orchid conference held in Singapore Oct. 3 to 12.
 Another fine stamp "catalog" book that any stamp collector can afford to own is the new 10th Birthday for Minkus "American" catalog book priced at \$3 at any stamp or book shop.
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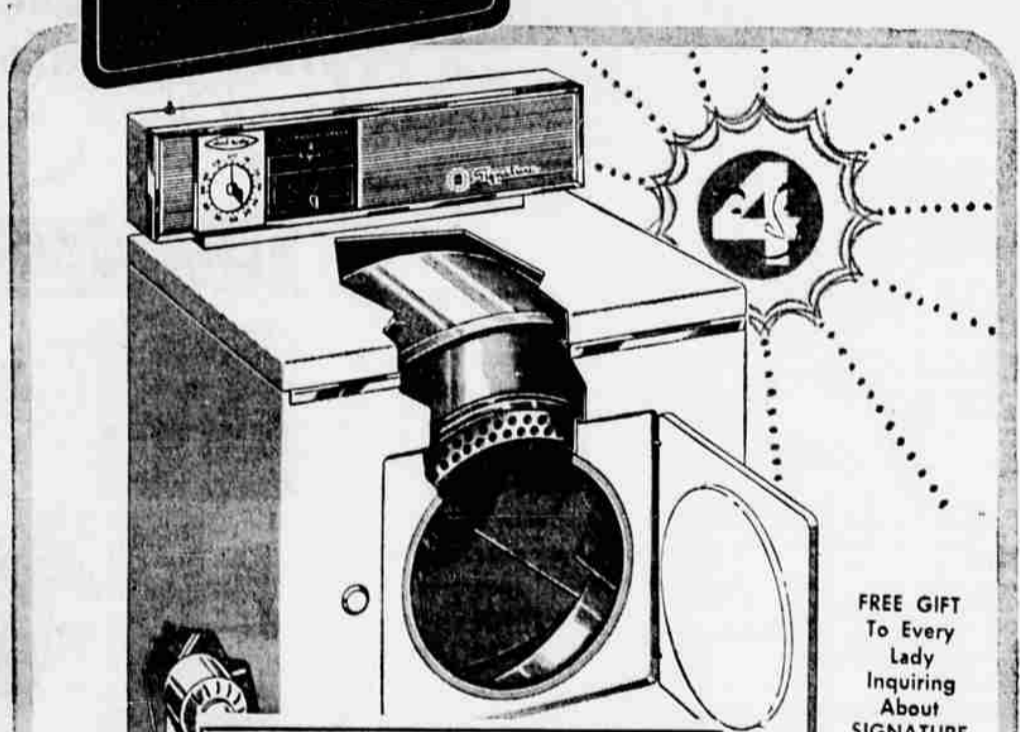
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