

# Hassan El Amry Runs War-Torn Yemen, Directs All Business

By DAVID BISHAI  
United Press International  
SANA'A, Yemen (UPI) — The man who runs war-torn Yemen today is its small (5 feet, two inches), fierce and paradoxical



**SMALL BUT FIERCE** — Brig. Hassan El Amry, who is the pocket-sized but fierce vice president of Yemen, is shown here in a 1963 photo (UPI)

vice president, 48-year-old Brigadier Hassan El Amry. El Amry is hard to miss in pocket-sized Sana'a where his motorcades are as common as the sand storms. First comes an armored personnel carrier loaded with tribal warriors and ammunition for the carrier's 75-mm machine-gun. Then comes another with a handful of Egyptian troops totting sub-machine guns. Behind them comes El Amry, sitting hawk-eyed and oblivious in a dust-laden (Dodge) convertible sedan. El Amry's motorcade kicks up more dust, and its sirens are noisier, than motorcades transporting President Abdullah Al Sallal himself. But the wily

strongman of Republican Yemen sits back seemingly unaware of the missing crowds and applause. He runs Yemen today almost the same way the overthrown imamate rule ran it for hundreds of years. He tells anyone around, "If you know of a better way, show me." He knows that no one can take up the challenge.

**Long Dedicated**  
When he was a frail, undernourished youth studying wireless communications in Baghdad, El Amry spent his time talking about pulling Yemen out of the dark ages to anyone who cared to listen, including classmate Abdullah Al Sallal. When they returned to Yemen and got their commissions in the Imam's army, El Amry and Sallal continued their discussions about making Yemen a better place. This landed Sallal in a dungeon.

El Amry, more diplomatic by nature, was merely exiled from Sana'a to a mountain outpost. He was nowhere around when in September, 1962, Sallal and two comrades in arms ran their tanks through the walls of Sana'a to drive Imam El Badr from his throne. But he was shrewd enough to rally his command behind the Republicans, and actively support Egyptian troops who came to help keep the Republicans in power. In a few months he became Yemen's vice president and deputy supreme commander of the armed forces.

**Sallal Has Ulcers**  
President Sallal is too handicapped by duodenal ulcer and other health troubles to personally look after everything in Yemen. He spent three months of his first year in power under treatment in Cairo, leaving El Amry as acting president.

In the few months he has been active vice president, El Amry has taken direction of almost every business in Yemen into his own hands. On the dip-

lomatic side he avoids clashes with the Egyptians and with Sallal, whose popularity he knows he cannot match.

But otherwise he dashes about Sana'a, and all of Republican-held Yemen, running everything and ordering everybody around. He deals ruthlessly with enemies of the republic and regards the most loyal of sheikhs with unconcealed suspicion.

At "Qasr El Saada" (Palace of Felicity) in the heart of Sana'a, he keeps the eldest sons of loyal tribal sheikhs as hostages to secure their fathers' continued loyalty. That is exactly what the Imams did, except they kept their hostages

in dungeons while now they live in a palace with good food and entertainment.

**Behead Royalists**  
Last June, Egyptian intelligence informed El Amry that a band of royalists had infiltrated into Sana'a and planned a sabotage campaign to harass the Republicans. El Amry promptly set out to round them up, along with others suspected of harboring infiltrators. A few days later, nine heads were displayed at the Sana'a gate — just the way they were following beheadings ordered by the Imams.

When a loyal tribe reneged against the Republican regime

last April and cut off the Hodeida-Sana'a Road, El Amry personally led a punitive campaign of Republican troops and crushed their revolt — so severely that even today they fly two Republican flags high over their camp in hopes they will keep El Amry away.

He participated in several battles against former Imam El Badr's forces during the early days of the revolution, although El Badr is a distant uncle of his. He even rode Egyptian bombers to guide them to their targets.

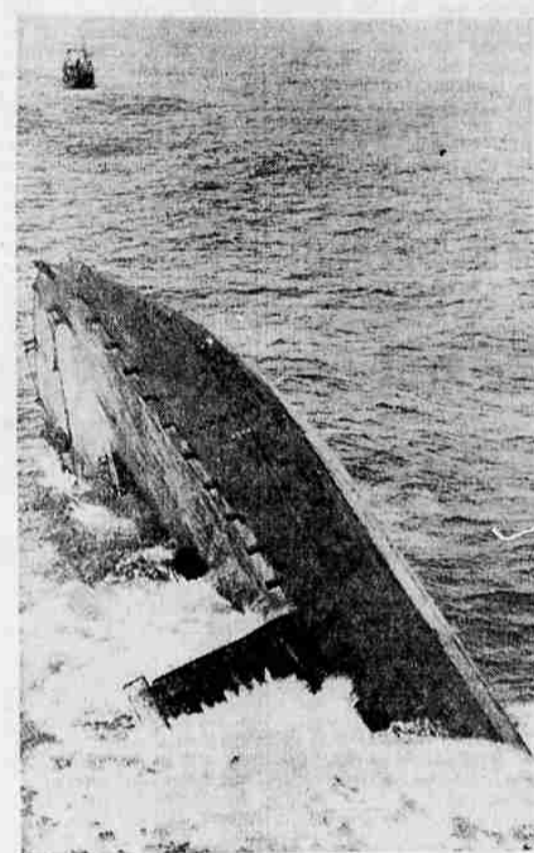
But this all-out aggressive nature turns into elusiveness when it comes to politics. Playing

politics in Yemen is a hazardous game and El Amry stubbornly avoids it.

For the time being he seems satisfied with being Sallal's top executive. He even personally inspects accommodations for visiting dignitaries. He does it with fanfare and pomp.

Those close to events in Yemen, though, are wary of El Amry's outward disinterest in politics. "This little man knows exactly where he is going and how to get there," one Western diplomat told UPI. "He is always so close behind Sallal that if the president should go, El Amry will be in his shoes before you can say Allah."

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