

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

Britain stirs unrest on Saudi border

The travels of U.K. Defense Minister John Nott coincided with South Yemeni intrigues.

Kept in a state of controlled tension since the Yemeni civil war in the early 1960s, the Yemeni region on Saudi Arabia's southwest border appears to be headed for another blowout, of even bigger dimensions. The instigator is the Marxist regime in South Yemen (the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen), a longstanding enclave of British intelligence covert operations.

A major turn within the regime of North Yemen was signaled last week when its Radio Sanaa announced that a number of parliamentarians and political leaders, closely allied with Saudi Arabia had been placed under house arrest.

North Yemen's more conservative regime has close links to the Saudi ruling family, historically opposed to any unification of the two Yemens for fear that the renegade regime in Aden would dominate a reunified state and destabilize Saudi Arabia.

South Yemen has been actively organizing liberation movements throughout the Arabian peninsula and the Persian Gulf to confront "pro-American" regimes, most importantly Oman, for cooperating with the controversial Rapid Deployment Force.

The day that British Defense Minister John Nott arrived in Oman last week, a border conflict reportedly erupted briefly between South Yemen and Oman. South Yemenese President Mohammed Ali Nasser is said to have been dis-

satisfied with efforts of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman, based in South Yemen, to destabilize the Omani regime, and envisions a military challenge of the Omani regime of Sultan Qaboos.

For ordinary political observers the Yemens have remained an enigma, as they are one of the most backward areas of the Third World, a status enforced by British colonial policy.

Since the civil war the Yemens have been cultivated by Britain and the notorious British triple agent, Soviet KGB General Kim Philby. Before defecting to the Soviet Union, Philby was in the Yemens, manipulating the civil war that produced the original division between the moderate North Yemeni regime and the ultra-Marxist regime in South Yemen.

Behind the current unrest, London is also running a protection racket with the Arab regimes of the Gulf. As rumors spread about the Oman-South Yemen border skirmish, Nott proposed to Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates that Britain increase its ground forces in the Gulf states to provide security for the unrest British intelligence is creating.

The prime target is Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has repeatedly declared that it is not interested in any foreign military presence in the area. The reason Britain and its Gulf assets have crafted a propaganda campaign against the U.S. Rapid

Deployment Force is essentially to stir up anarchistic rebellions aimed at challenging the Fahd faction of the Saudi elite, seen as American allies.

There were reports in March that Saudi forces had engaged North Yemen in fighting to halt what Riyadh perceives to be a turn in North Yemen toward its southern neighbor. And last week, British reporter Michael Adams, editor of *Middle East International*, a mouthpiece for a British intelligence front, the Committee for Arab-British Understanding, wrote that there is growing hatred of Saudi Arabia by Yemenis, and Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia, a signal of future tensions on Saudi Arabia's southern border.

British Foreign Office agent Professor J. B. Kelly, at a recent Washington briefing, warned that the Yemenis in Saudi Arabia would be used "by Marxists" as "cannon fodder" against the Saudi regime.

Kelly is known to have had lengthy transatlantic telephone discussions beforehand with British lawyer Lionel Bloch on the future of the Persian Gulf. That week Bloch himself issued an editorial commentary in the London *Sunday Times* advocating a "Western military invasion" of the Persian Gulf. Bloch expresses the view that it "would not be a catastrophe" if the West occupied the oilfields and even destroyed them. Both Bloch and Kelly are members of the newly formed Committee for the Free world, a gaggle of social-democratic cold warriors whose aim is to steer the U.S. into a deadly military move into the Gulf.

This column was contributed by Thierry LeMarc, Bonn bureau chief.