

CLANDESTINE CORNERSECRET STATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST

The wide distribution of cheap transistor radios, most of them manufactured in Japan and Hong Kong, have spawned a series of clandestine broadcasting stations, particularly in the Near East.

The cheapness and availability of these radios have put them within the price range of even the poorer tribesmen of these remote areas. With this audience, organizations of nearly every persuasion have capitalized on the situation and have taken to spreading their messages by illicit broadcasting stations.

One such Near Eastern clandestine station is operated quite secretly by the Yemeni Royalist forces within Yemen itself.

For the past several years there has existed sporadic guerrilla fighting between supporters of the republic, headquartered in the capital city, Sana, and backed by United Arab Republic military forces, and the Yemeni royalists, supported by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, holding out in the hinterlands.

At least two years ago there were reports of a clandestine station operated from Northern Yemen by the royalists. Newspaper accounts and DX broadcasts said the station was truly an underground one, operating from caves. This was questioned by some listeners at the time, though little has appeared about the Yemeni clandestine in recent months.

Now, however, more data on this station, which continues to operate, has come to light. Still unknown, though, is the station's operating frequency, or even if it broadcasts on shortwave.

An American journalist recently visited the cave-based clandestine and has reported what he observed.

After a rough trip by truck across the wastes of southern Saudi Arabia and northern Yemen, the reporter arrived at the cave headquarters of two of the royalist commanders, Princes Hassan ben Hussein and Mohammed ben Mohsen. At Idda, just inside the Yemen-Saudi Arabia border, in a cave some 200 yards from the princes' headquarters and supply base, is the royalist radio station. It is a five kilowatt, European manufactured transmitter powered by a gasoline generator. It is operated by a German technician, Herbert Stolz, who has been described in Cairo propaganda, which may or may not be correct, as a "fugitive Nazi."

The royalists employ some 100 Frenchmen as mercenaries; a combination training cadre and shock troop force, self-styled by one of the French as "deGaulle's little force de frappe." They are said to be there privately because the French government does not want to officially approve.

Some 12 hours away, by truck, at Garwah, is headquarters of another Yemeni prince, Abdulla. There a force of British mercenaries operate what is described as a "royalist radio network in eastern Yemen." These stations, apparently, are for military communications, not broadcasting. Estimates of the number of these transmitter-receivers they operate vary from 15 to 50. Gasoline for all radio operations is brought in by camel caravan.

Meanwhile on the other side, the Cairo-supported republican government, in turn, backs a group known as the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY). This group opposes the establishment of the British proposed independent state at Aden, or as it is called now, the South Arabian Protectorate. It is active in subversive work presently. The group now broadcasts English programs to Aden over the medium wave, 60 kw. station on 1,000 kc/s. from Taiz, Yemen.

In another development, the Swedish Kurd Committee confirms what appeared in last month's Frenex, that the Kurdish clandestine station in Iraq is not Peyk-ye-Iran. The small Kurdish transmitter described last month, operated on 11,695 kc/s., and cannot be heard in Europe, it is said. The Kurds say Peyk-ye-Iran is a communist station in East Germany. It may be that programs are produced in Germany, but your editor still feels the P-y-I transmitters are located in Bulgaria. -0-