

c. Western Area

(1) The SIMBA position continues to attract considerable attention from the enemy mainly by medium mortar fire although there is also SA fire mainly directed at BLACK and BLUE. A careful watch is obviously being kept on the airstrip. A Skyvan landed, quickly turned around and 3 minutes after takeoff 2 x 85mm rounds landed. Strike-masters carried out a number of attacks on SPIDER Wadi and enemy positions to the East of SIMBA.

(2) Strike and supply aircraft continue to attract enemy fire whenever the opportunity presents itself. A Skyvan in the HADRUE area on 9 Dec attracted HMG fire from a new enemy position at GR 852153.

d. Negd

(1) On 9 Dec 73 a patrol from MAKINAT SHIHAN (OIR 53) found tracks of vehicles of an enemy patrol 9 miles to the SE of their base. Tracks were said to belong to "Saladin" and Landrover vehicles and were approx one week old.

e. Maritime

(1) Two FPBs operated in Dhofari waters during the period. Operations were conducted against targets in the CAPSTAN area. One FPB still has a defective engine.

f. Air

(1) On 3 Dec 73 a Caribou crashed on landing at TAWI ATAIR. There were no casualties but the aircraft is a write off. TAWI ATAIR has a notoriously bad runway (OIR 50) although it has been reported that the aircraft touched in the undershoot. It is clear that the undercarriage was subjected to strains beyond its design limits.

(2) On 5 Dec 73 a white Dakota type aircraft with black stripes under its wings was reported flying from South to North over MIDWAY at approx 2/3000 feet. Ten minutes later it was reported flying from South to North over SHISUR. On 6 Dec a blue and white aircraft said to be a Viscount was reported flying South at approx 2000 feet over MAKINAT SHIHAN. These intrusions must have come from either PDRY or SAUDI ARABIA.

(3) Poor availability of helicopters continues to cause concern. Although the spares situation appears to have improved recently serviceability is relatively poor. As at 12 Dec only one 205 and one 206 were given as serviceable. The helicopter situation must be improved by improving the spares situation and also by additional helicopters being made available if SAF are to press home their initiative in DHOFAR.

(4) Poor provisioning of certain components for VT fuses will very shortly prevent SOAF from using this method of attack. Urgent action has been taken to procure and fly out the necessary items but provisioning will depend on clearance for release from R&F war reserves.

g. General

(1) Although the period has been relatively quiet with the enemy apparently avoiding major encounters, the rebels retain the capability to mount well planned attacks such as the Katyusha attack against SALALAH. The Iranian task force will shortly start operations to open up the MIDWAY road and this should do a great deal to reduce SAF overstretch. This new element in the situation should give SAF