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# Britain's Withdrawal from the Gulf: With Particular Reference to the Emirates

**Saif Mohammad Obaid Bin-Abood**

*B. A. Governments*

*M. A. Political Science*

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at the University of Durham.

*University of Durham*  
*Faculty of Social Science*  
*U.K.*

April 1992



14 OCT 1992

## **Abstract**

This thesis is an attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, with special emphasis on the Trucial States before it became the United Arab Emirates in December 1971.

The work commences with a review of the historical British connection with the Gulf from 1820 to the Kuwait operation of 1961. Then we look at various nationalist movements and the political upheaval around the Gulf, such as the Aden and Dhofar rebellions, and how that affected the British presence in the area. The British tried to curb such influence from reaching the Trucial States, especially those of Nasser and the Arab League, by introducing some economic development through the Trucial States Development Office. Furthermore, Britain gradually ceded various responsibilities such as legal and internal security to the rulers. At the same time the British companies working in the Emirates were encouraged to rely on their own resources without the protection of the British troops.

The establishment of a federation between the nine emirates was Britain's prime aim but when that failed in July 1971, the federation of the seven was established (Ras al-Khaimah entered the federation in February 1972). Furthermore, Britain worked hard to bring Saudi Arabia and Iran together in order to help to fill the vacuum that would occur after the withdrawal of the British troops. The latter policy changed Britain's stance on the territorial disputes from support for the rulers of the Trucial States to pressuring them to compromise with Iran over the Islands of Abū Mūsa and the Ṭunbs and with Saudi Arabia over Buraimi.

The thesis concludes that all of these factors prepared the Emirates to stand on their own and consequently enabled the British withdrawal in December 1971.

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**Dedication** *to*

# Masfūt

## Acknowledgments

I should like to record here my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. R. Lawless for his constant help and guidance. Without him this work would not have been possible. I should also like to thank the staff and the secretaries of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, at the University of Durham. I am grateful to Dr. Peter Sluglett, Professor A. Brucket, Mrs. A. Shields, Mrs. B. Minto and Mrs. J. Bee for their support and kindness.

I am indebted to the Education Department at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in London, especially to its head Mr. A. Al-Marri, for financing my education and being patient with me. Also I would like to thank those officials at the Ministry of Education who have given me so much support during my years of study abroad.

The information in this thesis would not have been possible without the help of so many people who gave me the opportunity to interview them or who answered my questions in writing. I here register my deepest appreciation to the following people: Mr. Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī, Mr. Moḥammad Mahdī al-Tājir, Mr. John Armitage, Captain Tim Ash, Mr. G. Balfour-Paul, Mr. P. Bannerman, Major Jack Briggs, Lord Buckmaster, Brigadier De Butts, Sir James Craig, Field Marshal Sir Ronald Gibbs, Mr. David Heard, Dr. Frauke Heard-Bey, Mr. Edward Henderson, Mr. Maḥmūd Ḥassan Jum‘a, Mrs Shirley Kay, Mr. J. Kay, Mr. Donald

McCarthy, Mr. N.D. Ḥamūdī, Sir Anthony Parsons, Mr. B. Pridham, Sir David Roberts, Major Jim Stockdale, Mr. Michael Tait, Mr. Julian Walker, Colonel Tug Wilson, Dr. Rosemarie Said Zahlan, Sir Antony Acland, Mr. Harry Arnold, Major L. Barron, Sir Richard Beamont, Sir Julian Bullard, Sir Stewart Crawford, Sir Stephen Egerton, Mr. A. Horan, Mr. Brian Kendall, Lt., Colonel Elliot Legg, Mr. R.P. Liddiard, Miss J. Davis, Mr. D.W. Paterson, Mr. Maḥmūd Siksik, Mr. George Chapman, Mrs. Sarah Seariat, Mr. John Luch, and Mrs Inocenta and John Euwart.

My gratitude goes also to all my friends in Durham for their valuable assistance and encouragement over the four years I spent in this city. At the top of the list is Aḥlī Darwēsh ‘Omrān, Dr. ‘Isām al-Rawās, Dr. Salāmah al-Nu‘ymat, Sa‘eed al-Turkī, A. Badruddīn, Dr. Ann Fyfe and Robin Fyfe, Dr. H. al-‘Uwais, Dr. ‘Obaid Bu Sit, Jamāl al-Muhairī and Faraj al-Muwalid.

Finally, the help and understanding of my family: Umm ‘Abdullah, Mouzah, ‘Abdullah, Hend, Ṣafiyah and ‘Alī kept me going throughout the years I spent in the United States and Britain. I am very much indebted to them all.

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## **Abbreviations**

ADDF	Abu Dhabi Defense Force (UAE)
ADIA	Abu Dhabi Investment Authority
ADIB	Abu Dhabi Investment Board
ADMA	Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Limited (offshore concessionaire)
ADPC	Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (inshore concessionaire)
AIOC/APOC	Anglo-Iranian/Persian Oil Company
ANM	Arab Nationalists' Movement
Aramco	Arabian American Oil Company (formerly Casoc)
ARIP	Arab Information and Public Relations Establishment (UAE)
ATUC	Aden Trade Union Congress
Bapco	Bahrain Petroleum Company
BBEM	The British Bank of the Middle East
BD	Bahraini Dinar, (BD1= £0.870 in 1970)
BDU	British Documents on the United Arab Emirates
BP	British Petroleum
Casco	California Arabian Standard Oil Company
CAT	Cotracting And Trading Company (Lebanon)
CENTO	Central Treaty Organisation
CFP	Compagnie Francaise des Petroles
COMET	Committee on the Middle East Trade (Britain)

CPC	Conservatives Political (Research) Centre
DDF	Dubai Defense Force (UAE)
Dh	(UAE) Dhirham, Dh6.40 = £1 (February 1992)
DLF	Dhofar Liberation Front
<i>EIU</i>	Economic Intelligence Unit
F	Federation Documents
FO	(British) Foreign Office (records)
FCO	(British) Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FLOSY	Front for the Liberation of South Yemen
FNC	Federal National Council (UAE)
HC	HOuse of Commons Debates (UK)
H.M.	His/Her (Britannic) Majesty's
H.M.G	His/Her (Britannic) Majesty's Government
H.M.S.O	Her Majesty Stationary Office
IO	India Office (records)
IPC	Iraq Petroleum and Associated Companies
KOC	Kuwait Oil Company
KW	Kilowatt
MAT	(British) Military Assistant Team
<i>MEED</i>	Middle East Economic Digest
<i>MER</i>	Middle East Records
<i>MEES</i>	Middle East Economic Survey
MoD	(British) Ministry of Defence
MFA	(UAE) Ministry of Foreign Affairs' General Archive
mgpd	million gallon per day
MW	Megawatt

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLF	National Liberation Front
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PA	Political Agent
PDO	Petroleum Development Oman (IPC Company)
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (former South Yemen)
PDTC	Petroleum Development Trucial Coast (IPC Company)
PFLOAG	The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf
PR/PRPG	Political Resident (Persian Gulf)
PUSC	(British) Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee
RAF	Royal Air Force
RIIA	Royal Institute of International Affairs
SAF	Sultan's Armed Forces (Oman)
Socal	Standard Oil of California
SWB	Summary of World Broadcast
T	Department of Trade (UK)
TOS	Trucial Oman Scouts
TOL	Trucial Oman Levies
TSC	Trucial States Council
TSDO	Documents on the Trucial States Development Office
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UDF	Union Defence Force
UK	United Kingdom(Britain)
UN	United Nations
US	United States

## **Introduction**

### **1. Significance of the study:**

Even though the British withdrawal from the Gulf was 20 years ago, British relations with the Gulf Arab Emirates are still strong. There are numerous examples that may illustrate this close relationship. For example in 1980 there were more than 550 British companies working in the Emirates in comparison to only 90 British companies in Egypt at the same period. Furthermore, there is a substantial number of British expatriates working in the Gulf, outnumbering the expatriates of any other western country. In addition whereas the foreign oil companies have almost all been nationalized all over the the Middle East, Abu Dhabi have retained the concessionaire as a partner. At the same time the foreign oil companies are helping to operate the national oil companies that were recently established in the Gulf States. Finally, during the Gulf crisis the Gulf States sought help from their old ally, the United Kingdom, when they were threatened by Iraq. In order to understand the roots of this strong relationship, this thesis will study the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971.

There are various motivations for carrying out this research. First of all the present writer, being a former student of the British-controlled military school (the Trucial Oman Scouts' Boys School) is personally interested in understanding the British policy towards the area in the sixties. However, the available published

materials on the subject are limited and mainly emphasize the earlier periods. Thus there is a need to study in detail the circumstances leading up to the British withdrawal. Besides that, after the withdrawal various problems occurred which have their roots in the withdrawal period. They included boundaries disputes, the weakness of the federal structure of the Emirates, Gulf security, the duplication of military forces, and the Iranian seizure of certain Gulf islands etc. By studying the period of the British withdrawal we may contribute to a better understanding of these problems. In addition, this thesis hopes to prepare the ground for greater understanding of contemporary British policy towards the Gulf by adequately assessing British policy toward the area before and during the withdrawal period.

## **2. The Problem and the Scope of the study:**

The factors that might have influenced the British withdrawal from the Gulf can be divided into two sets of variables. First, domestic variables that had existed in the United Kingdom itself. Amongst these factors were: (a) the military financial cuts of 1966 which might have undermined British military strength and capability; (b) the internal struggle within the Labour Party over the allocation of resources. The left wing of the party wanted the Government to put more resources into social programmes such as health and education. (c) The economic problems that made the Government devalue the pound sterling in November 1967; and (d) the European factor which was that Britain was trying to join the Common Market. However, these factors have been covered by several studies, therefore we do not intend to go over them again.

The aims of this study therefore are to examine and analyse the factors that

existed in the Gulf and which might have had a role in convincing the British Government to withdraw. Accordingly, this study will concentrate on the following aspects:

1. The identification and analysis of the nationalist movements in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf and how they influenced the British withdrawal policy.
2. The economic development of the Trucial States and how prepared these States were to stand on their own without the British presence.
3. Identification and discussion of British economic interests in the region and how the oil companies managed to survive without British protection.
4. Identification and study of the various political, territorial, administrative and security arrangements the establishment of which Britain encouraged before the withdrawal in December 1971.

The study of these various factors is limited to the Trucial States before it became the United Arab Emirates on 2nd December 1971 and to a lesser degree to Bahrain and Qatar. The reasons are that Bahrain and Qatar were much more developed than the Emirates both in the growth of nationalist feeling and in economic development. Furthermore, the Emirates have been neglected in the past and hence concentrated study is needed.

### **3. Previous Studies:**

There have been limited studies on the British withdrawal from the Gulf and those which are available either focus on the military aspect of the withdrawal, such as Darby's *East of Suez*, and Jackson's *Withdrawal from Empire*, or they concentrate on the impact of the withdrawal on United States policy towards the

Gulf, like Sirriyyeh's *The Gulf: British withdrawal and US policy, 1968-77*,

Notwithstanding, there are other materials written about the Gulf and which refer to the British position in the Gulf in a broad way. One notable example are the writings of former British Political Agents, diplomats and British national working in the Gulf on private contracts. For example, Balfour-Paul (1991) *The end of empire in the Middle East*; Sir Bernard Burrows (1990) *Footnotes in the Sand*; Sir Anthony Parsons (1986) *They Say the Lion*; Frank Brenchley (1989) *Britain and the Middle East*; P. Rich (1991) *The invasion of the Gulf*, and Butler (1989) *Uncivil Servant in India, Pakistan, Kenya and Abu Dhabi*. Since these books were written by people who were themselves greatly involved in shaping events in the Gulf during their service there, using these books has enriched this study and given it many insights which have helped in understanding the withdrawal phenomena.

Studies dealing with the establishment of the United Arab Emirates are limited also. For example, Taryam's (1987) *The Establishment of the United Arab Emirates* gives details of various meetings between the rulers in 1968-71 in order to establish the federation. Taryam though did not discuss the British role in forming the federation. Another valuable work on the transformation of the Emirates is F. Heard-Bey's (1982) *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*. Heard-Bey explored various characteristics of society: the culture, tribes, economic and historic roots of the United Arab Emirates. It seems however, that Heard-Bey's coverage of the British policy toward the area in the sixties left important points inadequately covered (for example the deposition of Sheikh Shaḥhbūt) probably for political reasons. Al-Mutawa's (1983) thesis *Social change and political development in the Omani Coast, 1934-1970*, concentrated on social and political developments in the



Emirates. He argues that nationalists were behind the British withdrawal from the Gulf. Hawkin's (1972) *The Labour Party and the Decision to withdraw from East of Suez*, investigated the factors that influenced the withdrawal decisions of 1968. However, he neglected factors that existed in the Gulf.

Therefore the available research on the topic is limited in scope and this encouraged us to try to make some new contributions toward understanding the British withdrawal policy from the Gulf in 1971.

#### **4. Method of study:**

The study is primarily based on various unpublished documents obtained from: (a) The Public Records Office at Kew Garden in London; (b) The Private Archive at the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; (c) The General Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates; (d) Private Papers ; (e) Interviews with over 35 personalities including former British soldiers, civil servants, former employees of British companies, Arab politicians and former advisers now in retirement; and (f) substantial correspondence with former British officials who had a connection with the Gulf in one way or another. (see bibliography).

The bulk of the source material on the economic development of the Emirates in the 1960s, boundary disputes, the correspondence of the oil companies with the rulers, and the minutes of various meetings of the Trucial States Council, has been gleaned from the Cultural Foundation's Private Archive. However this massive collection of documents has been closed to researchers and it seems that the degree of secrecy will increase with the establishment of the proposed National Archive in Abu Dhabi. The problem one faced was that there were no specific rules regulating

the usage of these documents and thus one's research depended very much upon the personal judgement and discretion of the director of the Private Archive. The latter agreed, after much procrastination, to permit the present researcher to read the necessary documents but would not allow him to make any copies. A further restriction was that one was not permitted to make notes from certain documents.

The most interesting and enjoyable part of the research was interviewing former British and Arab officials who were in positions of power in the Gulf. It is important to have some record of their experience before their memories faded. Furthermore, because of the British Public Record Office's 30 year rule on documents the only alternative is to meet the people who actually served in the Gulf at that time. The advantage in meeting such personalities<sup>is to</sup> make the researcher aware of other events and stories which might not be important for an official to report to his government but were significant in explaining certain points. However, one should be cautious in taking everything they say for granted. For even though some of them lived in the area for a long time there were still certain aspects of the society which they might not be fully aware of.

**The method of organizing the documents in this thesis is as follows:**

**a. TSDO:** *Documents on the Trucial States Development Office.* They contained minutes of the Rulers of the Trucial States meetings from 1966-1971; letters and communication between the Trucial States Development Office and various personalities like Sheikh Shakhbūt; agricultural, water and soil surveys and surveys relating to fisheries; minutes of the Deliberative Committee; minutes of the police commissioners' meetings; and, general items relating to the Development organization.

**b. BDU:** *British Documents on the United Arab Emirates.* This general index contains material on the communication of the rulers with the Political Agents and Residents about the boundaries of the Emirates; banking agreements with various rulers; letters from the oil companies to the rulers; and a letter from the British Foreign Secretary, R.A. Butler, to Prince Fayṣal bin Abdul Aziz Āl Saud, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, relating to the Buraimi dispute, August 1964.

**c. F:** *Federation Documents.* This file is comprised of the manuscripts of the rulers' meetings, letters, resolutions, and telegrams related to the Federation of the Arab Emirates. It also contained Major General Sir John Willoughby's report on the Federation's defence needs.

**d. MFA:** *The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs' General Archive* which contains numerous files on the foreign relations of the United Arab Emirates. This study was concerned only with the United Kingdom file (which was numbered 1/3/3) with special interest in documents relating to the 1971-73 period. This file, unfortunately, could not be located but the present writer was not totally disappointed because some of the materials on the British Military Assistance Team (MAT) were found in the Military file numbered 1/1/3.

**e. The Private Papers:** The use of the private papers of two individuals has greatly enriched this study. Firstly those of Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum'ah, a former Iraqi minister who was invited by Sheikh Zayed to supervise Abu Dhabi's development programmes in 1967. He became General Director of the Development Board from 1968-1973, and later on was appointed adviser to the ruler of Abu Dhabi.

Mr. **Jum'ah** has collected important documents about Abu Dhabi relating

to that period especially in the field of economic development. He also possesses valuable letters relating to the development of Abu Dhabi. Furthermore, he made notes during the meeting between Sheikh Zayed and Edward Heath, the Conservative Opposition Leader, during his visit to the Emirates in 1969. However he was hesitant to allow certain documents to be copied out in their entirety believing them to be of a particularly sensitive nature, but he allowed this researcher to read them and even copy brief extracts from them.

The second set of private papers belonged to **Najim D. Ḥamūdī** who was also a former Iraqi official who had come to Abu Dhabi in the 1960s. He was in a position to witness political development which took place from 1968-72 while he was adviser to the ruler of Abu Dhabi on federation affairs. The papers that he allowed the present writer to see were related to the efforts of the British (as well as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) in discussions concerning the establishment of the nine-emirate federation. Furthermore, he recorded information regarding the Buraimi dispute as well as details of his meetings with British officials such as Sir Geoffrey Arthur the Political Resident in the Gulf.

## **5. Organization of the study:**

The study consists of seven chapters. The first chapter traces Britain's involvement in the Gulf region from the last century until the Kuwait operation of 1961. The second examines the development of nationalism in the Arabian Peninsula from 1962: the Yemen revolution, the Aden rebellion, the Oman civil war, the Dhofar revolution and the spread of nationalism into the Trucial States. The third discusses the economic development of the Trucial States with emphasis on the British role in economic development through the Trucial States Development

Council. The fourth deals with the British role in preparing the Trucial States to depend on themselves in the legal, police, military and political spheres. The fifth provides an account of the British economic interests in oil, trade and investment and how they prepared to depend on themselves before the withdrawal of the British troops.

The sixth chapter analyzes the political arrangements that Britain strived to create before the withdrawal date. This chapter includes an assessment of the federation of the nine emirates and the reason for its failure. There follows a further discussion of the federation of the seven emirates and the British role, especially that of Sir William Luce, in the affairs of both federations. The special Saudi-Iranian understanding, the "Twin Pillars" system is also discussed with emphasis on the British and American role in creating it. The final chapter deals with the territorial disputes related to Bahrain, the Ṭunbs and Abu Mūsā islands and the Buraimi oasis and considers the role of the British not only in their attempt to solve these problems but also the reasons for their success and failure in this respect. The thesis ends with a conclusion, derived from our discussion in the preceding chapters and a comprehensive bibliography.

## **6. Note on Transliteration:**

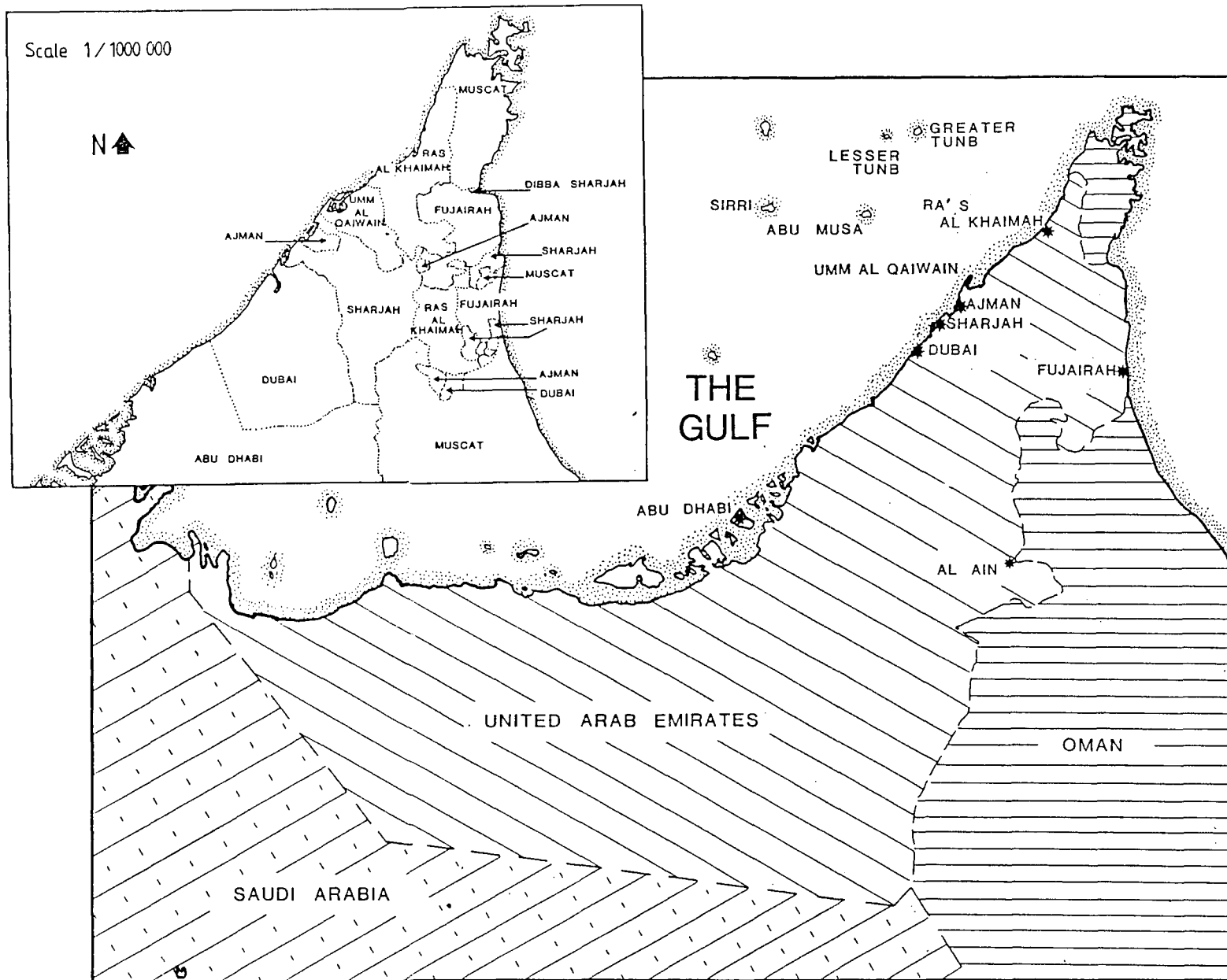
For the sake of greater accuracy, I have followed a policy of transliteration from the Arabic throughout the thesis. In the view of the researcher, this is particularly important with regard to many of the toponyms which are generally unfamiliar to those living outside the area. Without a transliteration method, even a reader familiar with the Arabic language would often be unsure of the original Arabic word and thus how it should be pronounced, so confusion in the case of identification

might easily occur.

Certain proper names (Nasser, Ibn Saud, Zayed for instance ) have been left in their familiar English form and the same applies to Bahrain, Kuwait, the names of the Arab Emirates, Oman, Muscat, Dhofar and so on where the anglicized spellings are now so widespread. I have preferred, however, Makkah and al-Madinah to the usual English renderings of Mecca and Medina.

The method of transliteration follows that adopted by the well-known *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ( 2nd. Edition: Leiden, 1960 - still in progress) except for the following details:-

- (a) The Arabic letter *qāf* appears as *q* (not as *k*).
- (b) *ḡim* appears as *j* (not as *dj*).
- (c) Words ending in a *tā'marbūṭah* ( when not in the construct state, *muḍ āf*) have been given a final *h*, (i.e. Madīnah, not simply Madīna).
- (d) Arabic letters rendered by two consonants in English (*th*, *kh*, etc.) are not italic or underlined.
- (e) A final double *waw* is represented as *uww* not *ū*.



MAP 1.1

## **Chapter I**

### **Historical Background: The Development of British Interests in the Gulf**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Britain's interests developed in the Gulf because it was considered one of the frontier regions flanking the Indian Empire. The Gulf made a bridge between Europe and the Far East, across which a number of invaders, and conquerors have marched. The control of the strategic straits at Hormuz and of the upper Gulf was of major importance for the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and the British. The British presence in the Gulf, however, survived for more than a century and a half - considerably longer than the presence of the other European nations.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the development of British interests in the Gulf from their arrival in Gulf waters in the seventeenth century until Britain's military operation in Kuwait in 1961. How did these interests develop? What was the role of the British authorities, both of the government of India before 1947 and the relevant ministries in London? And how did the local societies, the regional powers as well as the other European powers react to these developments? In order to outline these developments this chapter will categorize these interests chronologically under different headings; commercial, strategic and economic interests, which focus mainly on oil.



## 1.2 Commercial Interests

The first ship of the British East India Company had reached India in 1608 under the command of William Hawkins. The English pioneers were able to get a *firman* (Royal Decree) from the Mughal emperor, and not long afterwards a trading factory was established on the Indian coast at Surat. The Company's production of broad cloth and other commodities exceeded the demand in India, so the Company's agents started to look for markets outside India. This search brought them to the Gulf to trade with Persia.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Britain's entry into the Gulf came about more by accident than design. In the first place, the Company's merchants were interested in selling their products to the Persians, but found themselves in rivalry with the former masters of the Gulf - the Portuguese. However, the Shah of Persia agreed to do business with the British. He allowed them to establish a factory at Bandar Abbas<sup>3</sup> but asked them to help him recapture Hormuz from the Portuguese. Eventually, Hormuz was returned to Persian control in 1622 with English help.<sup>4</sup> After the Portuguese were defeated in Hormuz, a new rival emerged in the form of the Dutch East India Company. Even though the Dutch had cooperated with the English in defeating the Portuguese, they challenged the British at the court of Shah Sāfi, who succeeded to the Persian throne in 1629. By 1680, the Dutch were firmly established at Bandar Abbas and Basrah but the decline of Holland in the eighteenth century affected the Dutch position in the Gulf and, as a result, the English replaced them as they had previously replaced the Portuguese, and the last Dutch base in the Gulf was subsequently abandoned in 1765.<sup>5</sup>

A third East India Company (after the British and the Dutch) was established in 1664, by the French.<sup>6</sup> They were granted similar rights for trading via the Gulf by the Shah of Persia. The French had also made attempts to increase their

influence in the Gulf by establishing a residency at Basrah in 1755.<sup>7</sup> The British were suspicious of French movements in the Gulf and also of their activities in India which resulted in conflict. The Anglo-French conflict was resolved during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) in favour of Britain, and as a result the French position in the Gulf was weakened.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, Britain was left as the only western power on either shore of the Gulf but due to security problems after the death of Nadir Shah in 1747 the East India Company headquarters was moved to Basrah which was part of the Ottoman Empire and was thus, in comparison, safer.<sup>9</sup> Basrah also was a convenient trading centre that provided British businessmen with close communications with Europe through the Syrian routes and at the same time it enabled them to participate in the trade of the Gulf. British trade expanded and initially the Company made substantial profits. However, at the end of the eighteenth century British trade in the Gulf sharply declined. This was as a result of competition from local Arab merchants; an outbreak of plague in Basrah; and a shortage of money in the Gulf.<sup>10</sup> Some of these factors had long term implications. But why did the Company remain in the Gulf even though it was not making a substantial profit? This question might be answered by looking at the British politico-strategic interests in the area.

### **1.3 The Strategic interests**

At the end of the eighteenth century Britain was firmly established in India. The British East India Company was collecting taxes, fighting wars, installing princes and removing others.<sup>11</sup> The Crown took over the Company in 1858 and Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1878.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it was im-

portant to protect the routes that led to the Empire and to exclude the other powers from disturbing the Empire's frontiers. For this reason Britain again became concerned about the activities of the French, this time following the French invasion of Egypt in 1798. For the first time it made the British take seriously the possibility of a French overland attack on India.<sup>13</sup> They were also concerned about the Ottoman presence at the head of the Gulf and the activities of Arab tribes in Southern Iraq. These threats prompted Britain to sign the first agreement with the Sultan of Muscat in 1798.<sup>14</sup> The agreement was a turning point in the history of British involvement in the Gulf. It enabled the Government of India to exert some control over the Sultanate since the Sultan agreed to exclude other powers from his territories. In 1808 the Sultan also extended the agreement by accepting a British Political Agent at Muscat.<sup>15</sup> The major reason why the Sultan signed the agreement was the existence of a new challenge that came from the "Wahhabi" movement in central Arabia and the Wahhabis' ally the Qawāsim.<sup>16</sup>

The Qawāsim tribes, whose base was in Ras al-Khaimah, controlled both sides of the Gulf and their position became so powerful that they demanded dues from British ships passing through the Gulf.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the Qawāsim represented a threat to the Company's trade in the Gulf, and as a result a rivalry had developed. The Government of India retaliated by accusing the Arabs in the Gulf of piracy. For the Arabs, though, the action was justified by their wish to defend their traditional trade routes to India and the Far East. In addition, to the Gulf Arabs the British seemed just like the cruel Portuguese, who had indiscriminately killed women, children and the old. There was no guarantee that the British would refrain from doing likewise.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, there was a struggle between the Arabs of the Gulf and the British. British expeditions against the Arabs were repeated three times

before the Arab Sheikhs agreed to sign the 1820 Agreement in which they agreed to stop further attacks on British-protected ships.<sup>19</sup> During these expeditions British forces destroyed a substantial number of Arab ships. In 1835 the Sheikhs signed another treaty because the 1820 treaty had not brought complete peace to the area. The Sheikhs were persuaded by the British Political Resident, Captain S. Hennell, (the Residency was established in Bushire, Persia, in the 1770s) to sign a truce forbidding maritime attacks on each other during the next pearl-fishery season. The truce was annual, and in 1853 it was accepted as a permanent truce.<sup>20</sup> The Truce was upheld by the Indian Navy which patrolled the Gulf's shores. The third type of agreement the Sheikhs signed (after the 1820 non aggression and the 1853 truce treaty) was the Anti-Slavery Agreement in 1847.<sup>21</sup> The latter gave Britain an opportunity to intervene in the internal affairs of the Gulf.

Britain's attempt to control the Gulf area did not, however, go unchallenged. This time challenges came from outside the Gulf for example, that of Mehmet 'Ali Pasha of Egypt. In 1834, Mehmet 'Ali was interested in extending his power over the Arabian peninsula. The Holy cities of Makkah and al-Madinah came under Egyptian influence at the end of 1837. A second Egyptian army was sent to the rich coffee producing country of Yemen and a third army was operating along the Euphrates not far from the Gulf and Persia.<sup>22</sup> These events created a significant change in Anglo-Egyptian relations. Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary, on hearing this said "Mehmet 'Ali is distinctly to understand that Great Britain will not permit either the Pasha or his subordinates to continue this system of universal hostilities to British commerce."<sup>23</sup> Consequently Aden was occupied by British forces on January 16th, 1839 on direct orders from London, and at once became a calling station for British vessels.

On the Persian side of the Gulf, British concern regarding the consequences of the Persian annexation of Herāt in 1856 prompted a war with the Shah in 1856-57. It is possible that Britain saw this action as a possible door to the invasion of India. The Anglo-Persian war brought the British forces into strategic locations near the Gulf such as Khārg, Bushire (Būshahr) and Muḥammarah. However, a peace treaty between the two countries was signed in March 1857, by which the Persians agreed to abandon Herāt and their claims to Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> Evidently Britain was not interested in acquiring territory at this stage but it was interested in keeping the routes, which were relevant to the Indian Empire, open and in friendly hands. The result of the war with Persia plus the agreements with the Sheikhs put the British in full control of the Gulf. From that time Britain was able to exert considerable control over Arab shipping in the Gulf and to place restrictions on their trading activities. However, even though the Gulf trade with India had multiplied especially after introduction of the steamer communications it was not the local Arabs or Persians who benefited from it. Most of the profits were earned instead by the Europeans and the Indian merchants who served as their agents. Native shipping activity was the principal victim because, in addition to the restrictions now enforced by the British, the *dhow*s (type of Arab boat) found it more and more difficult to compete seriously with the steamers on the Indian-Gulf trade lines. These developments caused grave hardship to the peoples of the Gulf but British control over the area was now too strong for them to offer effective opposition.

The other threat to Britain's routes to India came from Imperial Russia. In 1877 the Russians were marching toward Constantinople. If Russia succeeded in dominating Turkey, then it would control the routes leading to India. Therefore,

Turkey had to be supported against Russia.<sup>25</sup> The other frontier that the Russians threatened was Persia, which was strategically important because of its location between Russia and the Gulf; and the old Czarist dream was to capture one of the Gulf ports. If this had occurred it would have challenged Britain's naval domination of the Gulf. Thus to stop the Russians, Persia was transformed into a buffer state with the Persian Shah supported by Britain.<sup>26</sup>

The British position in the Gulf region then came under threat from the Ottoman Empire which had occupied al-Hasa in 1871.<sup>27</sup> This Ottoman expedition appeared to be a direct threat to the British position in the Gulf, mainly after Ottoman influence was extended to Qatar. Ottoman activity in the upper Gulf prompted Britain to search for a new policy in order to reaffirm the Crown's position in this part of the Empire.

Further to these events, the British position in the Gulf was again challenged by the French who, in cooperation with Russia, re-entered the field in the 1880s. Their challenge was significant because their agents had contacted some Arab Sheikhs in the Gulf and persuaded the Sheikh of Umm al-Qaiwain to fly the French flag in 1891.<sup>28</sup> They were also negotiating to build a coal depot on the Gulf shores.

Finally, Great Britain's other competitor was Germany which had won the Baghdad Railway concession from the Ottoman Sultan in 1899.<sup>29</sup> This railroad would eventually connect Berlin with Baghdad. For Germany, this pact was meant to be understood as a symbol of her rising power and imperial interests in the Middle East. For Great Britain it was considered as a menace to the balance of power in the Middle East and as a menace to her interests in the Gulf region, particularly since Kuwait had been chosen as the terminus of the Baghdad Railway.

As a consequence of these challenges to the British position in the Gulf, a new exclusive treaty with the Sheikhs was reached in 1892. In this treaty, which was signed on different dates by the Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Bahrain respectively, the Sheikhs each accepted the following:<sup>30</sup>

I do hereby solemnly bind myself and agree, on behalf of myself, my heirs and successors, to the following conditions, vis:-

1st. That I will on no account enter into any agreement or correspondence with any power other than the British Government.

2nd. That without the assent of the British Government, I will not consent to the residence within my territory of the agent of any other Government.

3rd. That I will on no account cede, sell, mortgage or otherwise give for occupation any part of my territory save to the British Government.

Kuwait before 1899 was regarded as being under Turkish protection, but due to the Berlin-Baghdad railway scheme, Great Britain was encouraged to engage in a similar exclusive agreement with Sheikh Mūbārak of Kuwait on 23 January 1899.<sup>31</sup>

Having overcome the threats from Mehmet 'Ali Pasha, these exclusive agreements were intended to exclude powers such as France, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Germany from gaining a foothold in the Gulf region. At the same time it gave Britain the right to control the foreign and defence affairs of the Arab Gulf States. Such agreements placed the rulers virtually under British control. As a result Britain emerged as the sole supreme power in the Gulf making not only the Gulf States but also the other Great Powers recognise that supremacy. France signed an agreement that recognised British control over the area in 1904 and Russia, Germany and Turkey made similar agreements in 1907, 1912 and 1913 respectively.

## 1.4 The Evolution of Britain's Economic Interests

As has been shown already Britain's concern with the protection of the routes that led to India was the prime reason for involvement in the area. From the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the discovery of huge quantities of oil in the Gulf made Britain appreciate its economic importance as well.

The first oil concession in the Gulf was granted to William Knox D'Arcy by Muzaffar al-Dīn Shah of Persia in 1901, to find, exploit and export petroleum in all Persia except the Northern provinces.<sup>32</sup> The first oil strike was at Masjid-Sulayman on 26th May 1908.<sup>33</sup> The initial reason for the British Government's interest in the affairs of the oil industry was the conversion of the Royal Navy ships from coal to oil in 1913.<sup>34</sup> To this end, Britain in 1914 had reached an agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company by which the Government subscribed £2.2 million to the Company's capital and thus obtained a controlling interest of 51% and the power of veto in matters of the highest policy.

On the Arab side of the Gulf, however, the rulers signed an undertaking that no concessions for oil would be granted in their territories except to a person appointed by the British Government. Kuwait signed such an undertaking in 1913, Bahrain in 1914 and the Trucial States in 1922.<sup>35</sup> In this Agreement the Sheikhs each gave to Britain the following undertaking:<sup>36</sup>

Let it not be hidden from you that I write this letter with my free will and give undertaking to your Honour that if it is hoped that an oil mine will be found in my territory I will not give a concession for it to foreigners except to the person appointed by the High British Government.

The purpose of the above agreement was to facilitate the British subjects in obtaining oil concessions in the Gulf and to exclude non-British interests, the principal fear was the infiltration of American interests. But the American oil



companies were able to win considerable oil concessions in the region. For example, in 1928 the Standard Oil Company of California (Socal) won the Bahraini oil concession<sup>37</sup> and in 1933 it again won another oil concession in Saudi Arabia.<sup>38</sup> Also in 1934 the American-owned Gulf Oil Corporation and APOC formed the Kuwait Oil Company with equal shares to explore the Kuwait oil concession.<sup>39</sup>

In the Trucial States the D'Arcy Exploration Company Ltd., a subsidiary of APOC, obtained oil concessions in most of these Sheikhdoms in 1935-36. However, in the meantime, in 1935 a new company, the Petroleum Concession Limited, was formed with the specific object to obtain oil concessions in the lower Gulf. The shareholding of Petroleum Concession Limited was the same as IPC of which AIOC (now BP) 23.75%, Royal Dutch/Shell 23.75%, Compagnie Française des Petroles (CFP) 23.75%, Near East Development Corporation 23.75% and 5% to the Gulbenkian Estate.<sup>40</sup> Therefore in 1937 the Petroleum Concession Limited, to which the D'Arcy Exploration Company option had been assigned, won oil concessions in Dubai and Sharjah and in 1938 in Ras al-Khaimah. In 1939 Abu Dhabi and Ajman oil concessions were won by Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., (PDTC) that replaced Petroleum Concession Limited as its subsidiary in 1938.<sup>41</sup>

The role of oil in shaping Britain's policy in the Gulf at the turn of the century was of immense importance. It involved Britain firstly in the internal affairs of the Gulf emirates over their territorial boundaries, and secondly in the struggle to stop the penetration of American oil companies in the exploitation of Gulf oil resources. As a British Cabinet memorandum in 1919 stated, "we possess in the South Western corner of Persia great assets in the shape of the oil fields, which are worked for the British Navy and which give us a commanding interest in that

part of the world.”<sup>42</sup> Oil, as a result, made a great impact on British policy in the Gulf mainly after the two World Wars. It was clear that oil was the main reason for Britain’s continued presence in the Gulf even though it had withdrawn from India in 1947.

## **1.5 Britain’s Position in the Gulf (Post-World War I)**

There were overlapping British interests in the Gulf at the turn of the century but the military use of the Gulf bases throughout the Great War was an essential one due to the Ottoman Empire’s entry into the war on the side of Germany. The involvement of the Ottoman Empire in the war gave Britain a reason to invade the Ottoman provinces of Basrah and Baghdad (that were later to form part of Iraq) in order to protect her oil installations at Abadan. However the principal reason was that if the Turks had penetrated into the Gulf, there was fear that they could have influenced the Muslims in India against British rule. At the same time German agents could easily penetrate and sabotage the oil fields. Therefore, in October 1914 British troops and a fleet were stationed in the Gulf and by March 1917 Baghdad had been occupied.<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, at the end after the war, Sir Percy Cox was appointed as the first High Commissioner of Iraq.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, the Ottoman entry into the war gave Britain a free hand on the Arabian shore of the Gulf. For example, Ibn Saud signed a treaty with the British Government of India in December 1915 whereby Britain recognized his independence as ruler of Najd and Hasa, and he in return agreed to abstain from any aggression against Kuwait, Bahrain and other Arab Sheikhdoms. In 1916 Qatar, which previously was under Ottoman Empire rule, signed an agreement with Britain similar to that of the exclusive agreements with the other sheikhdoms.

Again Ibn Saud pledged to recognise Britain special position in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States in the treaty of Jeddah in 1927.<sup>45</sup>

In Persia, which was the focus of Britain's oil interests at that time, the Russians had occupied the northern part and Britain's influence was dominant in the south. The central Government was very weak, therefore Britain was left with a free hand and was well placed to impose her will on Persia.

In this way Britain's position in the Gulf was strengthened after World War I and was free from problems in sharp contrast with Iraq or Palestine. As was indicated by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs before the House of Lords in May 1924: "In reference to our position in the Persian Gulf ... it is at the present time absolutely untouched and unassailable."<sup>46</sup>

In comparison to the pre-war period, Britain had increased its power throughout the Gulf region and became involved in the affairs of the Gulf Emirates in new ways. For example, in 1922 it negotiated Kuwait's frontier with Ibn Saud at the Treaty of al-Uqair.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, British interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf States became more forceful than before as the example of the removal of Sheikh 'Isā of Bahrain in favour of his son in 1923 illustrates.<sup>48</sup> At the same time in 1932 the first permanent British establishment in the Trucial States came with the construction of a rest-house for the Imperial Airways in Sharjah. This occurred as a result of the transfer of the air route from the Persian side of the Gulf to the Arabian side.<sup>49</sup> The reason for this change was that Persia refused to extend the Persian Route Agreement; however, in Sharjah British officials were able to sign an agreement with its ruler in 1932. On top of that, Sharjah became the main base for British facilities in the Trucial States for both military and civilian aircrafts

with refuelling grounds, emergency landing grounds and sea plane-alighting areas throughout the Trucial States.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, British military facilities were established in various parts of the region. For instance, at the end of 1932 a landing-ground had been laid out together with an oil depot at Masīrah island off Oman; in 1934 a petrol store for the RAF was built at Salalah in south Oman<sup>51</sup>; and, in 1936 Jufair in Bahrain became the Royal Navy HQ in the Gulf.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the introduction of a system of British Political Agents in the Trucial States also occurred at this stage with the appointment of a British political officer in Sharjah in October 1939. Later, in 1953, this officer was upgraded to the status of 'political agent' and the agency was then moved to Dubai.<sup>53</sup>

## **1.6 Britain's Position in the Gulf (Post-World War II)**

During the Second World War British troops fought again to maintain control over the Gulf region. For instance Iraq, at the head of the upper Gulf, was a country of strategic importance for the Allied Forces, playing a major role in the war efforts. Besides its oil, the Fertile Crescent also provided the Allied Forces with labour, supplies of grain and herds of cattle. More important for Britain was the strategic route to India that would have been threatened had the Germans succeeded in breaking into Iraq. Therefore, when the pro-German nationalist Government under Rashīd 'Alī came to power in Iraq on 31st March 1941 with popular support, British troops from bases inside Iraq together with reinforcements from outside overthrew this regime and a pro-British government was installed in its place. The new government of Nuri Sa'īd accepted the British garrison force and dealt with Britain according to the provisions of the 1930 treaty. Later on, the garrison

became part of the Baghdad Pact until its withdrawal after the 1958 Revolution.<sup>54</sup>

The second significant area of British action in the Gulf during the Second World War was Iran. Iran took on a new significance after the Germans had invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. One of the best ways to come to the aid of the Soviet Union was through Iran, hence Iran's invasion was arranged. Dissatisfaction with Reza Shah's policy toward Germany and his opposition to the Allies' access through Iran to the USSR were taken as a pretext for the invasion. The two powers invaded Iran; the USSR from the north, and Britain from the south. Britain later deported Reza Shah to South Africa, and his son Muḥammad Reza Pahlevi was placed on the throne.<sup>55</sup>

In the post-war period, the Gulf was affected by the British decision to relinquish its position in India in 1947. Contrary to some opinions,<sup>56</sup> this decision had a great impact on British policy toward the Gulf. Formerly, India was the centre of the British Empire but that dimension was removed by virtue of the declaration of Indian independence in 1947. As a result, the Middle East superseded India as the major component of the British Empire for two reasons: economic and strategic. The economic importance was mainly based on the oil fields of the Gulf region. According to the British Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee (PUSC) paper that assessed Britain's policy toward the Middle East, April 1949:<sup>57</sup>

The Middle East, and particularly the oil producing countries and Egypt (cotton) is an area of cardinal importance to the economic recovery of the United Kingdom and Western Europe. It is hoped that by 1951 82 per cent of our oil supplies will be drawn from the Middle East (as compared with 23 per cent in 1938) and this will present the largest single factor in balancing our overseas payments. If we failed to maintain our position in the Middle East the plans for our economic recovery and future prosperity would fail.

Strategically, the Middle East was important for Britain and the Western World because of the new Cold War situation. The PUSC expressed this strategic

importance in the following terms:<sup>58</sup>

The Middle East is important strategically because it shields Africa, is a key centre of land and sea communications, and contains large supplies of oil, particularly in Persia, the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Above all, in the event of attack on the British Isles, it is one of the principal areas from which offensive air action can be taken against the aggressor.

The material weakness of the United Kingdom (particularly with regard to military forces after withdrawal from India and the loss of the Indian Army) made it difficult to pursue these interests in isolation. British policy toward the Middle East was therefore built on a new outlook that sought to transform the old colonial system into a relationship of "equal partners" with the Middle East States. An excellent example of Britain's new strategy was the creation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955. The general design behind this change in policy was to prevent the initiative from passing to anti-British nationalists and thus to prolong less direct and costly British influence in the area.<sup>59</sup> In spite of Britain's efforts to alter her position in the area, however, she failed to up-date her plan toward the Middle East. This was due to the implication of the Palestine question and the creation of Israel and then the rise to power in Egypt of President Nasser.<sup>60</sup>

The other change in British policy toward the Gulf which came as a result of the withdrawal from India in 1947, was the transfer of responsibility for the Gulf from the Government of India to Her Majesty's Government in London. This took place on the 1st of April, 1947 a few months before the British withdrawal from India. For a year the Gulf was subordinate to the Commonwealth Relations Office and after that the Foreign Office took it over.<sup>61</sup> Unlike the Government of India, the Foreign Office took a closer interest in the affairs of the Gulf and was more concerned with the proper administration of the Sheikhdoms. The Government of India was always reluctant to interfere in the internal affairs of the Sheikhdoms

since its main concern was the security of its routes. As Sir Rupert Hay, the first Political Resident in Bahrain, pointed out in 1953:<sup>62</sup>

[U]ntil the early thirties of this century we studiously refrained from all interference with the internal affairs of the Shaikhdoms...The construction of an air-port at Sharjah and the grant of concessions to an oil company forced us to modify this policy to some extent...we are in effect, in contradiction to our declared policy in the other Sheikhdoms, tending to treat the Trucial Coast more and more as a Protectorate and whether we like it or not we shall, I feel, find ourselves compelled increasingly to assume responsibility not only for the maintenance of law and order but also for administration and development.

The loss of British influence in the Middle East was not paralleled among the Gulf Sheikhdoms, whereby Britain intervened more directly in the internal affairs of the Sheikhdoms after the Second World War. This new interventionist policy that was adopted by Britain toward the Sheikhdoms stemmed from her desire to protect her expanding interests in the region; notably, oil and airline facilities. British intervention can be seen in the increased number of Political Agents as well as in the reorganization of the administration in the region.<sup>63</sup>

The British Political Residency was moved in August 1946 from Bushire in Iran to Bahrain, and hence the severance of its long-standing connection with Iran. Eventhough the transfer of the Residency headquarters to Bahrain had been decided on before the Second World War, it was not carried out until 1946. The Political Resident in his capacity was responsible for eleven states (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, seven Trucial States, and Oman) and was assisted by various Political Agents, Political Officers and Consuls. The dates for establishing Political Agencies varied from one state to another in accordance with its importance as viewed by the British authorities. For instance, the British Political Agency was established in Kuwait and Bahrain in 1904,<sup>64</sup> but was not established in the Trucial States until 1939. Prior to 1939 the Trucial States were administered through

an Arab Agent representative called the Residency Agent who reported to the Political Residency in Bushire.<sup>65</sup> Subsequently, with the expanding activities of the oil companies the Residency Agent was replaced by a British Political Officer stationed in Sharjah in October 1939. However the Political Officer did not take up permanent residence there until 1948. In 1953 the Agency was transferred to Dubai, and the status of the post was raised to that of Political Agent. Also from 1957 onwards, there was a Political Officer resident at Abu Dhabi and with the development of oil in Abu Dhabi the status of the post was raised in 1961 to a full Political Agency.<sup>66</sup> These Political Agents gave advice to the rulers and occasionally, when the Agent felt it was necessary, they insisted on their advice being followed by the rulers.

Other forms of British interference in the internal affairs of the Sheikhdoms was in the restructuring of the state system by the incorporation of the previously independent state of Kalbā with Sharjah and the recognition of Fujairah as a new state in 1951.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, in the wake of transferring Gulf responsibilities to the Foreign Office, certain institutions were established, such as the Trucial Oman Scouts in 1951, the Trucial States Council in 1952 and the Development Office in 1965 (see chapters 3 & 4). Besides that, the drawing of the Trucial States boundaries by various British missions (see chapter 4) represented another form of interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf Sheikhdoms that Britain felt was necessary in the 1950s. In addition to these policies Britain also carried out some military operations such as their intervention in the Buraimi dispute in 1955<sup>68</sup> and into the interior of Oman in 1957-59<sup>69</sup> (see chapters 2 & 7).

In Oman, British influence became stronger after Sultan Sa'īd bin Taymūr signed new treaties with Britain in 1951 and 1958.<sup>70</sup> The latter agreement was



behind the establishment of the Sultan's Air Force as well as the strengthening of the Sultan's Army. The wording of the agreement was as follows:<sup>71</sup>

Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have agreed to extend assistance toward the strengthening of Your Highness's Army. Her Majesty's Government will also, at Your Highness's request, make available regular officers on secondment from the British Army, who will, while serving in the Sultanate, form an integral part of Your Highness's Armed Forces. The terms and conditions of service of these seconded British officers have been agreed with Your Highness. Her Majesty's Government will also provide training facilities for members of Your Highness's Armed Forces and will make advice available on training and other matters as may be required by Your Highness.

Her Majesty's Government will also assist Your Highness in the establishment of an Air Force as an integral part of Your Highness's Armed Forces, and they will make available personnel to this Air Force.

Also during this period three particular issues had a major impact on the British position in the Gulf in the 1950s, as we shall see below.

### **1.6.1 The Persian Oil Dispute**

Oil became a subject of great expectation and hope but it also became a symbol of foreign influence and one of the targets most favoured by nationalists. A common accusation against the oil companies had been that they were an instrument and a motive force of imperialism in the Middle East. In Iran the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) had become a symbol of British domination over Iran. Even though AIOC had tried to offer the Iranian Government a new agreement that would replace the old one, that offer was in fact less than the 50-50 formula of profit sharing that ARAMCO was offering to Saudi Arabia.

Within a few days of taking office as Prime Minister of Iran in April 1951, Dr. Moḥammad Musaddeq addressed the issue of oil. He appointed a committee of five members to conduct negotiations with AIOC and on 1st May 1951 the Iranian Parliament nationalized the Company. In September the Company evacuated its

technicians and closed down the oil installations while the British Government reinforced its naval force in the Gulf and lodged complaints against Iran before the United Nations Security Council.<sup>72</sup> When, however, these measures failed to pressurize Musaddeq into abandoning nationalization, a coup organised by Britain and America was carried out in 1954, toppling Musaddeq and replacing him as Prime Minister with the Army Chief of Staff, General Zahedi.<sup>73</sup>

Some conclusions can be gleaned from the Iranian oil dispute of 1951. The most painful result of the dispute for AIOC which in 1954 became British Petroleum (BP) and the British Government in general was that British ownership of the Iranian oil and Abadan refinery was reduced from 100 per cent to 40 per cent. The remaining shares were divided among different international oil companies. The group of foreign companies set up in 1954, known as the consortium, consisted of BP 40%, Shell 14%, various American oil companies 40% and CFP 6%.<sup>74</sup> The disturbances to oil supply caused by Iranian nationalization of AIOC resulted in a rapid expansion in oil production in the Gulf Sheikdoms.

Politically the British Government suffered considerable public discomfort over the Iranian oil dispute. In the Arab Gulf States people sympathized with the Iranians and some even expressed their anti-British feelings. The British political representatives in the Gulf realized that confidence was low among the rulers of the area who were concerned about such anti-British feelings among their people. For example, the Ruler of Kuwait had conveyed, in a discussion with the British Political Agent in Kuwait, Colonel Dickson, his lack of confidence in the British Government. The Ruler said that Britain "was tired of war and was today too weak to do anything, let alone guard her honour, her prestige and her nationals."<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, some of the British political representatives in the Gulf were worried

that the people of the area might follow Musaddeq's lead in causing difficulties for the oil companies. Nevertheless, nothing like that happened principally because the Gulf States were heavily dependent on the oil companies to ensure the development of their oil resources. At the same time, Britain, in cooperation with the United States, had made an example of Musaddeq and this had discouraged any other potential nationalists from challenging the oil companies.<sup>76</sup> In spite of that the Iranian oil dispute of 1951 did damage Britain's reputation and it increased anti-British feeling as well as promoting negative attitudes towards the oil companies among the growing number of educated nationalist Gulf sympathizers.

#### **1.6.2 The Suez Crisis, 1956**

The Suez crisis represented Britain's determination to protect her oil interests, (among other things) in the Gulf and the Middle East in general. Sir Anthony Eden's dislike of Nasser, whom he compared with Mussolini, saying "his object was to be a Caesar from the Gulf to the Atlantic, and to kick us out of it all",<sup>77</sup> illustrates the emotional part of the story. Selwyn Lloyd, Eden's Foreign Secretary, after touring the Middle East in 1956, reported his conversation with Nasser to the Cabinet by pointing out that, "Colonel Nasser was unwilling to work with the Western Powers or to cooperate in the task of securing peace in the Middle East. It was evident that he was aiming at leadership of the Arab World [and that Britain] could not establish a basis for a friendly relationship with Egypt."<sup>78</sup> That being the case, the British Government decided to do its utmost to counter Egyptian policy: by supporting the Baghdad Pact, by supporting Libya, by seeking to establish in Syria a Government more friendly to the West, by countering Egyptian influence in the Sudan and the Gulf and by withdrawing her financial support for the Aswān High Dam.<sup>79</sup> The United Kingdom also encouraged the United States to

withdraw her financial support for the Aswān High Dam. In retaliation to British and American withdrawal of funding for the High Dam, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956 with the belief that through the canal revenue he could well finance this major project. The ways in which Britain tried to put pressure on Nasser are outlined in a secret memorandum by the British Department of Trade written on 24 August 1956. They included: freezing all Egyptian accounts, an embargo on Egyptian trade,<sup>80</sup> and calling up the Suez Canal conference in London.<sup>81</sup> Finally after some diplomatic moves and threats, Britain, in collusion with Israel and France launched an attack on Egypt in late October/early November 1956. Britain accepted a ceasefire demanded by the UN on 6th of November and under American pressure British troops were evacuated.

The effect of the Suez crisis on the shipment of oil towards Western Europe was profound. Oil traffic accounted for 65 per cent of the total tonnage transported through the Canal in 1956. More than 77 million tons of oil a year passed through the Canal and 25 million tons a year were transitted through the IPC pipelines in Syria. Both operations came to a complete halt due to the crisis.<sup>82</sup> Britain and other Western European States, had now either to depend on American oil, which would run down their balance of dollars, or they had to transfer the oil shipment via the Cape route. In both cases there were not sufficient quantities to cover the regular European consumption of oil. The Cape route would take at least two weeks longer, and another problem was the shortage of big oil tankers economically capable of transporting the large quantities of oil needed to make this route viable. Accordingly, in November 1956, a 10% cut in oil consumption was introduced by the Ministry of Power of the United Kingdom.

The consequences of the Suez crisis on the British economy, according to Mr.

Macmillan who was the Chancellor at that time, were regarded as grave.<sup>83</sup> In one month Sterling lost £100 million of its gold and dollar reserve<sup>84</sup>; the estimated deficit for 1957-58 was £564 million compared with £352 million for 1956, due to the loss of production and additional dollar expenditure on oil.<sup>85</sup> Food shortages were not really serious, but most of the supplies from the Commonwealth like tea and spices were badly affected.<sup>86</sup> However, the main trouble came from the shortage of oil. This was because most of the Arab oil producing countries had announced their support for Egypt. Kuwait, which was by far the biggest oil supplier to Britain, had temporarily cut back her oil production.<sup>87</sup> Some KOC installations such as the oil wells, underwater pipelines at Ahmadi Port and the gasoline pipes feeding an electricity generator were sabotaged. The pipelines were damaged and four oil wells were set on fire.<sup>88</sup> The Sheikh of Kuwait also came under pressure from his people to boycott British commercial interests and cancel existing contracts between his State and British firms and to dispense with the services of British technicians.<sup>89</sup> It was reported that an Islamic Guidance Association in Kuwait was distributing a pamphlet calling the people of Kuwait to stand up against the Western aggressors.<sup>90</sup> The situation in the Gulf and especially in Kuwait was of serious concern to the British Foreign Office to the extent that the Secretary of State was about to send a letter to the Sheikh of Kuwait in order to 'stiffen him a bit' in face of popular anti-western pressure. However on the advice of the Political Resident in Bahrain the draft letter was cancelled.<sup>91</sup>

The Saudi Arabian reaction, was expressed firstly by breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain and France; and secondly by proclaiming an embargo on the shipment of Saudi oil to Britain and France (which lasted until March of the following year). Thirdly, Saudi Arabia instructed ARAMCO to stop the flow of oil

to the Bahrain refinery because it was located in a British controlled territory.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, ARAMCO and American firms were quick to utilize the situation to their advantage. Indeed there is evidence that ARAMCO contributed some donations to Egyptian victims of the Suez War.<sup>93</sup>

In other parts of the Gulf reactions varied from violent attacks on British citizens and their interests in Bahrain to a subdued reaction in the Trucial States and Oman. Yet, clearly, the rulers of the Gulf States of Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah were shocked that Britain had taken sides with Israel in the Suez crisis. The rulers of Qatar, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi had strongly protested to the British political agents and had even expressed their sympathy for Egypt.<sup>94</sup> During his call on the rulers of the Trucial States during the crisis, the British Political Resident, Sir Bernard Burrows, explained to them that the action of Her Majesty's government was taken "in the best interests of all of the Gulf States in seeking to maintain freedom of passage through the Canal in face of the Egyptian and Israeli conflict." He reported, though, that the ruler of Sharjah "was obviously less happy at the turn of events than the Ruler of Dubai but assured me that he would do his best to restrain his Egyptian and Jordanian teachers from criticizing H.M. Government."<sup>95</sup> This made some of the British political agents in the Gulf repeat and emphasize their request to the British Government in London to take some kind of action against Israel such as pressing Israel to withdraw from Egyptian territory. They saw this as the best way to convince the Gulf rulers and their peoples that Britain was not siding with Israel and that her aim was to maintain freedom of passage through the Canal in face of the Egyptian and Israeli conflict. The rulers were not convinced by this argument and the British representatives in the Gulf knew that the "vast majority of Arab opinion is for Nasser, right or

wrong.”<sup>96</sup>

The most serious consequences of the Suez crisis, however, was that Britain's position in the Gulf no longer remained unchallenged. The crisis had opened a new way of challenging the *pax-Britannica*. The nationalists, inspired by the leadership of Nasser, recognized the sensitive and weak point which the West cared for most, namely, the oil installations. In these changing times the treaties with the local rulers were not sufficient anymore, as they were in the nineteenth century, to guard imperial interests. Therefore it was a lesson and a turning point for both the oil companies and the British Government to revise their policies towards the Gulf States. The Suez crisis had proved that the West was vulnerable to interruptions in the supply of Middle Eastern oil, and the oil companies were vulnerable to political nationalists. The crisis undermined British prestige in the region.

### 1.6.3 The Iraqi Revolution, 1958

The British Government had made a great effort to secure the Iraqi oil concession for a British oil company in the 1920s.<sup>97</sup> Britain had depended on Iraqi as well as on Kuwaiti oil during the Musaddeq dispute of 1951. However, forces opposing the British position in Iraq as well as the regime of Nuri Sa'īd gained strength from the success of Nasser at Suez<sup>98</sup> and *The Times* reported that nationalist feeling in Iraq was running very high because of the Suez crisis.<sup>99</sup> In addition, the rise to power of 'Abd al-Karīm Qāssim in Iraq as a revolutionary leader with his promises to eliminate imperialism from Iraq was a great blow to British interests. First of all Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact and secondly Qāssim issued Decree Law 80 of 11 December, 1961, which limited the IPC concession to less than 0.5% of the former concession but at that stage actual operations were not

nationalized.<sup>100</sup> IPC had tried to get the British Government to help but the Government responded merely by dispatching a diplomatic note.<sup>101</sup> After Qāssim was overthrown in 1963, negotiations did little to relieve the impasse between the IPC and the Iraqi Government and in 1972 all assets of IPC were finally nationalized.<sup>102</sup>

The other economic loss for Britain after the Iraqi Revolution was that Qāssim swung Iraq towards the Soviet orbit. The first economic agreement between Iraq and the Soviet Union was signed in March 1959 with an emphasis on military, economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, Britain's trade with Iraq was deteriorating. Iraqi annual imports from Britain amounted to £38 million before the revolution and were increasing. However, they fell to £30 million by 1960, and hardly regained their former high level six years later (Table 1.1). Before the revolution a Development Board had been established in 1950 as a means of using the oil revenues with British advice.<sup>104</sup> The Development Board had carried out construction projects including the building of bridges, dams, roads, houses, schools, irrigation, and so forth. After the Revolution however, the Board, which was accused of being under British influence, was abolished.<sup>105</sup>

After the 1958 Revolution, Iraq played a significant role in encouraging anti-British feeling in the Gulf. Through radio and newspapers Iraq criticised the British presence in the Gulf and accused the rulers of being British lackeys.<sup>106</sup>

## **1.7 Britain and the Gulf at the beginning of the 1960s.**

The Persian oil dispute, the Suez Crisis and the Iraqi Revolution had a momentous effect on British policy towards the Gulf. Firstly, Britain had lost her principal bases in the Suez Canal and at Ḥabbāniyyah and Shu'ybah in Iraq. The



**Table 1.1: Iraq Trade With UK. (£m.)**

Year	UK Export	UK Import
1955	26.5	32.6
1956	32.6	24.2
1957	34.4	12.2
1958	31.1	50.5
1959	31.8	53.1
1960	28.5	54.2
1961	28.5	45.0
1962	20.2	53.1
1963	17.7	61.8
1964	20.2	80.3
1965	21.6	70.0
1966	25.8	65.6
1967	17.3	24.1
1968	16.0	28.0
1969	21.9	31.1
1970	23.7	18.1
1971	24.8	18.7
1972	26.8	36.8
1973	27.0	34.1

**Source:**

UK Government, Central Statistical Office, *Annual Abstract of Statistics* (London: H.M.S.O, 1964-1975). 27

British base in the Suez canal had been the single largest of the entire British defense establishment throughout the world, except India. It had had more than thirty-eight camps and ten airfields in use during World War II.<sup>107</sup> According to the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936, the number of British garrisons allowed to be stationed in the canal area was 10,000 persons in peace-time, and the RAF was subject to a peace-time, maximum of 400 pilots. However, the number of the British troops (with some of the Allied forces) garrisons had reached over a million soldiers by the end of the World War II, and until their withdrawal in June 1956, their number was never less than 75,000 men.<sup>108</sup>

In comparison with the Suez base, the British garrison in Iraq was a modest one. Britain retained RAF bases at Ḥabbāniyyah, Shu‘ybah and Basrah for over 35 years, until their final withdrawal in May-June 1959.<sup>109</sup> Different RAF squadrons had been stationed at these bases but the number of aircraft did not exceed 200 planes during peace time. Despite the small size of the British garrison in Iraq, it played an important role in connecting the empire due to its important location. Furthermore, RAF aircraft had conducted various operations in the Arabian Peninsula such as participation in the Buraimi dispute and in the civil war in the Imamate in Oman.

Secondly, with the loss of the Suez and Iraqi bases, it became more difficult for Britain to reach her bases in the Gulf and Aden from the United Kingdom or Cyprus due to air restriction on over flying by various Arab countries as well as Turkey.<sup>110</sup> This instigated the British Government to seek a new approach to protect her interests in the Gulf. The 1957 Defence White Paper outlined this new approach in the proposed strategic Mobile Forces.<sup>111</sup> The gist of this policy was that “overseas garrisons were to be reduced, a central reserve was to be maintained

in Britain, and reinforcements were to be despatched from Britain at short notice when required.”<sup>112</sup> But the course of the internal Oman rebellion, as well as the Kuwaiti operation, had illustrated that the mobile forces were no substitute for troops on the ground in maintaining stability in a troubled area. Therefore, Britain came to rely, more than before, on her Aden base as well as on the smaller bases in the Gulf.<sup>113</sup>

As far as the Aden base was concerned it had significantly expanded after the Iraqi revolution of 1958, and in 1959 it became the headquarters of British forces in the Middle East. By December 1963 some 8,000 men were stationed in Aden, mainly army and airforce personnel. The RAF also had a sizeable airport in Khormakser that could accept any type of aircraft; the British navy had a squadron serving as the naval headquarters unit; and at a cost of £20 million, married quarters, army workshops, and stores were constructed in Aden before 1962 and 1966.<sup>114</sup>

### **1.7.1 The Kuwait Operation**

Kuwait became of prime economic importance to the United Kingdom after the Second World War. It was a major source of oil supply to the United Kingdom which drew over half of her oil from Kuwait’s oil fields between 1957 to 1960.<sup>115</sup> Concerning Kuwaiti investments in Britain, *The Financial Times* had estimated that these totalled more than £300 million by 1960.<sup>116</sup> Equally, BP and Shell had enormous investments in Kuwait.<sup>117</sup> Britain, however, was persuaded to give Kuwait her full independence and abrogate the 1899 treaty.<sup>118</sup> The most convincing reasons were firstly that Kuwait had developed significantly enough to manage her internal and external affairs; secondly, the Amir of Kuwait had asked

for the termination of the Agreement; thirdly, independence was considered the best method of combatting nationalism.

Therefore on 19th June 1961 an exchange of notes was signed between the Amir of Kuwait, Abdullah al-Salim Al Sabah, and the British Political Resident in the Gulf, Sir William Luce, in which the new relationship between Britain and Kuwait was defined. The main points were that the 1899 Agreement be terminated and that the two Governments should continue their relations in a spirit of friendship, and that the Government of the United Kingdom should assist the State of Kuwait if the latter requested such assistance.<sup>119</sup> Less than a week after the termination of the Anglo-Kuwaiti treaty, Abdul Karīm Qāssim laid claim to Kuwait as an inseparable part of Iraq.<sup>120</sup> Yet, how genuine was Qāssim's threat? Why did Britain respond so quickly? How did the Kuwait Operation affect the British presence in the Gulf? And what did Britain gain from the Operation?

The seriousness of Qāssim's threat has been a matter of disagreement among many commentators. Many writers considered that the idea of Qāssim taking over Kuwait by force was an exaggeration. They saw other motives behind his announcement. First it was a political solution for his troubles inside Iraq.<sup>121</sup> Qāssim had problems with both the Kurds<sup>122</sup> and Iraqi political groups of Nasserites, communists and Ba'athists.<sup>123</sup> Another motive that has been suggested is the struggle over the leadership of the Arab World. *The Times*, for example, stated that Qāssim wanted to sell his image to the Arabs as "the most anti-imperialist of the Arab leaders."<sup>124</sup> *The Economist* explained that Qāssim wanted to prevent Egypt and Saudi Arabia from gaining control over the Gulf.<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, those who took Qāssim seriously justified their fears through the Iraqi military manoeuvres in Basrah and the violent press and radio campaign from Baghdad.<sup>126</sup> However,

Basrah at this very time was witnessing a military parade to mark Iraq's National Day on 14th July.<sup>127</sup> Some saw this parade in Basrah as a pretext by Qāssim to transfer troops to the border in preparation to invade Kuwait. Therefore the British Government could not see any clear proof of an Iraqi troop movement with the intention of invading Kuwait. At the same time, the British representative in Kuwait, Sir John Richmond<sup>128</sup>, was not consulted over the introduction of the Vantage Operation (Kuwait operation) and the British Ambassador to Iraq considered aggression to be unlikely, although not out of the question.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, we might question the motives that made the British Government carry out the operation since there was not enough proof of the seriousness of General Qāssim's statement.

Britain's decision to rescue Kuwait was ostensibly because of her treaty obligations with the Government of Kuwait. The Ruler of Kuwait requested British assistance on the morning of 30th June.<sup>130</sup> However, others argued that Britain's assistance was meant to serve political and military objectives. The operation, it was stated, would give Britain greater influence over the rulers to encourage them to develop not only their own states but other parts of the Middle East in order to contain the spread of communism. Kuwait and the Gulf States could participate in this strategy through the distribution of their oil wealth to their Arab neighbours. The problem was that most of the Sheikhs were refusing to go along with the plan, but it seems that the Kuwaiti incident made them have second thoughts about it.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, the British Political Resident in the Gulf had no difficulty in explaining to the other rulers of the Gulf the strength and value of their relations with H.M. Government<sup>132</sup>. In addition, from a military perspective the Kuwait operation served as a good training manoeuvre through which Britain

could discover the strengths and weaknesses of her defence policy toward the Gulf-the Strategic Mobile Forces.

An assessment of the results of the Operation shows the extent of the problems with which Britain had to contend during her mission to defend the independence of Kuwait.<sup>133</sup> There were problems with air cover because Kuwait had no radar system; problems of getting the tanks on land due to lack of a landing ramps for the ships; problems due to temperatures of 120 degrees Fahrenheit, many soldiers suffering from heat exhaustion; arrangements for the command control and administration of the forces were inadequate; there were difficulties in establishing an efficient communications system that could work because some of the troops arrived without their signalling equipment and much of the available signalling equipment was rendered useless due to heat and some equipment was even damaged; and there was a problem with the transfer of troops from the UK due to a temporary ban on over-flying by Turkey and Sudan.<sup>134</sup> The cost of the operation was £1 million<sup>135</sup> and the immediate consequence of the Kuwait incident was that the Arab League agreed to replace British troops in Kuwait and also admitted Kuwait as one of its members on 20th of July 1961.<sup>136</sup>

The Kuwait operation drew attention to the limitation of British defence policy toward the Gulf in particular to the shortages which existed in men and equipment. Furthermore, as a result of the operation a battalion group was stationed in Bahrain and in 1962 work started on permanent accommodation and other facilities there. Similarly at Sharjah permanent accommodation were built for the British garrison there and the RAF reconstructed the airfield and built additional quarters.<sup>137</sup> The underlying objective of this expansion was a change in the British defence policy toward the Gulf from protecting British interests from

outside bases like Cyprus, to the use of bases within the Gulf. The 1962 Defence White Paper highlighted the importance of a continued Gulf security: "Peace and stability in the oil-producing states of Arabia and the Persian Gulf are vital for the Western World. We are, and still remain responsible for military assistance to those states in the area to which we are bound by treaty."<sup>138</sup>

## 1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Arab Gulf States' position in the British Empire was less closely tied into the general framework of the Empire. They were in a position similar to that of the Protectorates of South Arabia. The Gulf States had been brought under British protection through several treaties that were signed in the nineteenth century. The 1892 treaties became the main basis of British authority in the area.

The independence of India in 1947 destroyed the original *raison d'être* for the British position in the Gulf but the discovery of oil resources in the region meant that it acquired new interests and an importance in its own right. Although Britain's influence was declining in the Middle East as a whole, it was on the contrary increasing in the Gulf area. Therefore Britain protected her position there by using the Aden military base as well as other minor bases in the Gulf. The 1961 Kuwait operation had proved the value of those bases in facing the outside threat that came from General Qāssim of Iraq. For instance, from the Aden base British troops were quickly transferred to Kuwait and Bahrain and Sharjah were also used by the RAF and other British troops during the Kuwait operation. The question that had arisen, however, was how would Britain react to such challenges to her position if they came from within the Gulf region. This question will be addressed

in the next chapter.



## 1.9 Notes and References

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3. Ibid., p. 70.
4. Donald Hawley, *The Trucial States*, (London: George Allen and UnWin Ltd, 1970) p. 74.
5. Ibid., p. 76.
6. Cottrell, op. cit., p. 33.
7. Wilson, op. cit., p. 189; and Charles Belgrave, *The Pirate Coast*, (Beirut:

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8. Maḥmūd 'Alī al-Daud, *The Arab Gulf and Joint Arab Action*, (Basrah: Centre for Arab Gulf Studies Publications, Basrah University, 1980) p. 34.
  9. Cottrell, op. cit., p. 71.
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  11. B. Lapping, *End of Empire*, (London: Granada, 1985) p. 2.
  12. Zinkin Taya, *India*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965) p. 39.
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  15. Wilson, op. cit., p. 232.
  16. Faleh Hanzal, *al-Mufssal Fi Tarik al-Imarāt al-'Arabiyyah al-Muttahidah*, (Chronological History of the United Arab Emirates) (Abu Dhabi: Dar al-Fikr, 1983) pp. 267-270.
  17. Hawley, op. cit., p. 117; see also Rodney Wilson, Review of Sultan al-Qāsimī, "The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf," in *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 41,

- no. 2, (Spring 1987) p. 304; and, Sultan al-Qāsimī, *Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf*, (London: Croom Helm, 1986) p. 31.
18. Frauke Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates: A Society in Transition*, (London: Longman, 1982) p. 282.
  19. Aitchison, op. cit., pp. 245-249. On the Sultan of Muscat role in the attack see: Hanzal, *al-Mufssal*, op. cit., p. 316; For more details of the Treaty see: Ṣāliḥ al-Abid, *daur al-Qawāsim fi-l-khalij al-arabi*, (The role of the Qawāsim in the Arabian Gulf) (Baghdad: al-Anī Press, 1976).
  20. Aitchison, op. cit., pp. 252-253.
  21. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 288; The slavery subject is an issue which needs more careful study. Some writers such as J.B. Kelly and Sir Charles Belgrave accused the Arabs of the Gulf as they were trading in slavery. On the other hand there are others, like M.M. Abdullah, who accused the British Government of using the slavery issue as a cover up to get involved in the Arab Gulf Emirates internal affairs. See M.M. Abdullah, *Daulat al-Imarāt al-arabiyyah al-muttahidah wa-Jiranuha*, (Kuwait: Dar al-Kalim, 1981) p. 47; Harry Magdoff in his study of imperialism suggests that British merchants controlled at least half of the transatlantic slave trade by the end of Eighteenth Century. They used the slaves in the West Indies Plantations. See, Harry Magdoff, *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present*, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1978) p. 25.
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24. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, op. cit., p. 161.
25. Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A History of British Imperialism*, (London: Longman, 1975) p. 84.
26. Lapping, op. cit., p. 193.
27. Cottrell, op. cit., p. 80.
28. M.M. Abdullah, *United Arab Emirates: A Modern History*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978) p. 25.
29. Wolfgang Kohler, "German Approaches to the Arabian Gulf- a provisional Survey," *Proceeding of the Fourth Seminar of the Centres and Institutions concerned with Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, (Abu Dhabi: Centre for Documentation and Research, Nov. 1979) p. 153.
30. Aitchison, op. cit., pp. 256-257.
31. Sheikh Mūbārak's motive for his overtures was "in order to prevent the annexation of Kuwait by the Turks,...desired to be taken under British protection..." Lorimer, op. cit., p. 1021. *Qatar*, on the entry of Turkey in the First World War, entered into agreements similar to the "Exclusive Treaty" with Britain in 1916. See the text of the Treaty in Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Creation of Qatar*, (London: Croom Helm, 1979) pp. 144-147.
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36. For the Text of the Agreement see: Aitchison, op. cit., p. 261.
37. In the Gulf, Major Frank Holmes was called Abu-Naft, the Father of Petroleum. He used to buy oil concessions from the Sheikhs for his British Co., (Eastern and General Syndicate) and sell them for better prices as in the case of Bahrain oil. See, Stocking, op. cit., p. 70-74.
38. ARAMCO: was formed by Standard Oil of California, Texaco, Jersey Standard and Mobil. The first three holding 30 per cent and Mobil 10 per cent. See, Sampson, op. cit., p. 90; Elizabeth Monroe, *Philby of Arabia*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1973) pp. 204-205.
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128. Hewins, op. cit., p. 268.
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130. In comparison with a later incident during the Shah's invasion of 3 islands in the Gulf in 1971 that belonged to Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah which had treaties with Britain but it did not rescue them. (See chapter 7).
131. In reply to the opposition leader, Mr. H. Gaitskell who proposed that Kuwait and the oil producing States should extend their wealth to the rest of the Mid-

dle East, Mr. MacMillan (the then British Prime Minister) said the "Ruler of Kuwait has shown himself conscious of his responsibilities in the Arab World" H.C., vol. 643, 30.7.1961, col. 1009.

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## **Chapter II**

### **Political Development in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

By the 1960s, Britain's physical/military position in the Middle East had been reduced to the bases in Aden and the Gulf which were smaller in comparison to the former Suez base. These bases were used to protect the 'vital' oil interests as well as to fulfil Britain's obligations towards the rulers. However, political events in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula were disturbing the British position in the area. Three main events were largely responsible, namely: the experience of revolution in both Yemens; the Imamate and the Dhofar Revolution in Oman, and the development of anti-British feeling that was building up among nationalist groups in the Gulf (with emphasis on the Trucial States). The purpose of this chapter is twofold: firstly, to study these political changes and analyse their effect on the British position in the Gulf; and secondly, to discover their role in influencing the withdrawal announcement of January 1968.

#### **2.2 The Yemens: Experience of Revolution**

Traditionally Yemen was ruled by an Imamate system that followed the Zaydi sect of Islam. However, Imam Aḥmad died on the 18th of September 1962 and this event was followed eight days later by a coup d'état which took place under the leadership of the republican General, Abdullah al-Sallal. Under his command Yemen was proclaimed the Yemen Arab Republic.<sup>1</sup> However, from October 1962



to June 1970 the country was locked in a civil war between the Republicans and the Royalists (those who remained loyal to the Imam).<sup>2</sup> The Yemen Civil War was a manifestation of the Arab 'Cold War'.<sup>3</sup> It had brought the two camps, the 'revolutionary' states of Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Algeria, and the 'conservative' states of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco, to the brink of war. Fighting, between Egypt and Saudi Arabia over Yemen, was only stopped after both countries, especially Egypt, were humiliated by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Egypt's involvement in the Yemen Civil War had various aims. Firstly, it represented Nasser's drive against Britain and colonialism. He saw the new Republic as a base from which he could fight Britain in Aden and the Gulf. According to Nasser he went to Yemen in order to defend the revolution from Britain because the revolution in North Yemen would jeopardize Britain's imperialist position in the South and in the Gulf. He stated in a speech that, "Britain thought that the Revolution would affect Aden and the Protectorate, and harm the British design of keeping the Federation of South Arabia under its authority, therefore Britain and the reactionary states launched a campaign against the Republic."<sup>4</sup> Secondly, Nasser saw an opportunity to spread Arab Nationalism in Saudi Arabia, Aden, and the Gulf States. According to Heikal, a close confidante of Nasser and former editor of *al-Ahrām*, Egypt went to Yemen initially as a matter of principle and belief in Arab Nationalism. Heikal, also wrote, "the victory of the revolution in Yemen is the high road towards Palestine; indeed, victories of revolution in Saudi Arabia, in Jordan, and in other countries where reaction dominates, will be high signs on the road to victory in Palestine."<sup>5</sup> It seems that what Heikal meant was that changing the reactionary Arab regimes to a form of revolutionary Arab Government would make it easier for the Arabs to unite in their struggle against Israel. That idea

was open to question since the revolutionary Arab regimes were challenging each other.<sup>6</sup> The other way of understanding Nasser's involvement in Yemen is to look at the oil fields in the Arabian Peninsula. Nasser hoped to utilize that wealth in solving the Palestinian problem. According to Nasser's book, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, oil was one of the main strengths of the Arab World<sup>7</sup> which could be used as a political weapon against the 'imperialists': "If Britain believes she can intimidate us I have this to say: we also can apply economic sanctions against Britain," by which he meant oil.<sup>8</sup>

Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Civil War of Yemen was intended to curb the spread of revolution, to maintain the *status quo* and to weaken Nasser. At the beginning of the civil war Saudi Arabia was shaken for several reasons. The first reason was the weakness of the administration under King Saud. There was also the defection of some Saudi princes as well as a number of Saudi pilots to Egypt. Another factor was the pressure of many Yemeni labourers who were working inside Saudi Arabia and who carried out some acts of sabotage inside Saudi Arabia. A further reason was that the Egyptian fighter planes in seeking to eliminate Royalist bases in Saudi Arabia, in fact bombed some Saudi settlements.<sup>9</sup> But threats to the Saudi regime were contained due to diplomatic and military help from Jordan, the United States and Britain. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was strengthened by the deposition of King Saud in November 1964.<sup>10</sup> The war brought the Saudis closer to the Western world. In a letter to King Fayṣal, President Kennedy had emphasized the importance of stability in Saudi Arabia and he assured the government that it "... can rely upon the friendship and cooperation of the United States."<sup>11</sup> The American government recognized the Republic of Yemen in December 1962 and tried to persuade both the Saudis

and the Egyptians to disengage.<sup>12</sup>

The British Government faced a dilemma over the current situation. On the one hand Britain was not happy with a revolutionary regime in Yemen next door to her base in Aden. On the other hand if she recognized the Republican regime in Yemen Britain could improve her reputation in the Arab World which had been damaged by the Suez crisis. In the end Britain withheld her recognition of the new Republic and gave some support to the Royalists including guns and ammunition.<sup>13</sup> This policy exacerbated the relations between the Yemen Republic and the British Government over Aden. Egypt and the Yemen Republic, for their part, had given arms to nationalists groups in the Federation of South Arabia. There were some conflicts along the frontier between Yemen and the Federation during which British aircraft bombed a number of Yemeni villages.<sup>14</sup> Britain was charged by the Yemen Republic at the United Nations of provocation, aggression and intimidation against Yemeni territory.<sup>15</sup> Anglo-Egyptian friction over Aden came to an end when Britain hastily withdrew from Aden in 1967.

### **2.2.1 Aden and the Protectorates rebellion**

Britain's involvement in Aden went back to 1839 when Captain Hains had occupied the area. The reason for this acquisition was that it provided the British navy with a useful strategic post on the route to India.<sup>16</sup> Britain had divided the area into three parts. The main base was Aden Colony which came under the direct authority of the Crown. There was also the Western Aden Protectorate and the Eastern Aden Protectorate which were brought under British influence through various kinds of treaties by which the Sultans, Amirs and Sheikhs of twenty one states accepted the advice of the British representatives in their respective

territories. After the Egyptian revolution of 1952 the British officials in Aden had tried to amalgamate those states; however the rulers only accepted the idea of a federal government after the Iraqi Revolution of 1958.<sup>17</sup>

Another concern of the British authorities and the rulers of the 'South' was the Imam in the 'North'. He claimed that the Protectorates were part of his Kingdom.<sup>18</sup> For that reason he was considered a threat by British political agents and the rulers of the South. However, the rulers in the South became more vulnerable and their position was challenged by their people after the Imamate was abolished in the North. Furthermore, the new 'Republicans' were critical of the old feudal regimes in the South and associated themselves with the increasing number of nationalists in the Federation of South Arabia.

Various nationalist groups had developed in the South throughout the 1950s and 1960s, but the most important were the pro-Marxist National Liberation Front (NLF) and the pro-Nasserist group, the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY). On 14th October 1963 in the Yemen Arab Republic the NLF announced its formation and took the *Radfan* mountains as their guerrilla base in the South. Many of its leaders belong to the Arab Nationalists' Movement (ANM) that had been founded in the early 1950s by a group of Arab intellectuals, including George Ḥabash and Wadi' Ḥaddad at the American University of Beirut. However, the NLF broke away from the Nasserite line that was followed by the ANM and turned to the far left of Marxist-Leninism adopting armed struggle against the British and the Federation of South Arabia.<sup>19</sup>

The FLOSY nationalist group was formed in January 1966 through Egyptian efforts to unite various groups, including the NLF, into a unified national front.

Most of the FLOSY leaders and supporters were pro-Nasser and relied heavily on Egypt for their financial support, weaponry and propaganda. After a few months of negotiation the NLF refused to join FLOSY accusing it of backward bourgeois attitudes. Thus, fighting between the two groups was inevitable and continued until November 1967 when the NLF emerged victorious.<sup>20</sup>

The British troops met this nationalist revolt with a long-drawn-out operation that resulted in heavy casualties. The involvement of British troops brought criticism from all over the world including the United Nations, the Arab League, the Afro-Asian Council as well as a section of both the British public and the British press. Several British newspapers argued that Britain was putting her soldiers' lives in danger in *Radfan* in order to protect some feudal Sheikhs.<sup>21</sup> In December 1963 the High Commissioner, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, proclaimed a state of emergency. Following this, some of the Trade Union leaders in Aden were arrested and the number of troops stationed in *Radfan* was increased.<sup>22</sup> However, the application of the state of emergency brought increased criticism from within Britain especially from the Labour Party, then in opposition. The Labour Party looked upon Aden's Trade Unions Congress, which was registered in Aden in 1953, with respect. It was favourably compared to British Trade Unions and encouraged as a socialist organisation in Aden. Other British officials, however, considered a trade union as being too democratic an institution for the Colony but nevertheless saw in it an organisation that could be negotiated with as opposed to an unrepresentative group of workers. However, to the dismay of the British officials the ATUC was taken over by various nationalist groupings. The Labour Government, which came to power in 1964, tried to use its friendly relations with the ATUC in order to form a broadly-based government that would replace Britain after withdrawal and at the

same time be accepted by all the political groupings in South Arabia. However, the idea was opposed by another more radical groups, namely the National Liberation Front (NLF).<sup>23</sup>

Britain found herself fighting a long ‘counter-insurgency’ war with different guerrilla groups,<sup>24</sup> which was eventually to cost her more than £27 million. The number of British casualties was increasing as the following table illustrates:

**Table 2.1: British casualties 1963-67**

1963	45
1964	75
1965	298
1966	480
1967	750 <sup>25</sup>

Therefore, the British Government was looking for the best way to withdraw and evacuate the British troops because the Aden base, which was intended as the headquarters of the British troops in the Middle East and supposed to defend the area, was actually facing difficulties in defending itself. For instance, the British campaign in *Radfan* had lasted three months instead of the planned three weeks and was only successful after 2,000 troops had been brought from Britain to fight along with the Federal forces. Thus as more British troops were needed to deal with the insurrection in different parts of the Federation and as the cost of the campaign rose criticism both at home and internationally increased.<sup>26</sup>

The decision to hand Aden over to the Marxist-orientated NLF instead of the nationalist Front for the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY) needs some clarification. According to Serjeant, the British Government deliberately handed Aden to the NLF because it had accepted the British conditions which had been discussed secretly.<sup>27</sup> It could be that Britain had already had enough trouble with Nasser and thought that if his supporters (FLOSY) came to power they would then seek a union with the pro-Nasser Abdullah Sallal who was based in the North. If this union were to take place Nasser would be in a better position to carry on his fight against Britain in the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. The other possibility was that Britain wanted to keep her influence in Arabia and the Gulf: by having a radical neighbour the rulers of the Gulf would live under a continuous threat and would then need to retain special links with Britain. This might explain why some of the rulers insisted on keeping British troops in the area even after Britain had made public her intentions to withdraw by 1971. Yet another possibility could be that Britain handed over power to the NLF because they were considered to be the strongest group and could keep the country united and stable after the withdrawal British troops. On balance the evidence suggest that Britain beleived that the NLF posed less of a threat to the British interests in the Gulf than the pro-Nasserate FLOSY.

The final task of withdrawing the British troops from Aden was given to Sir Humphrey Trevelyan who was required 'to evacuate the British Forces and their stores in peace'.<sup>28</sup> The departure though was not done in peace and was actually one of the severest military engagements experienced by British troops in South Arabia.

The withdrawal from Aden deeply concerned the rulers of the lower Gulf. Ac-

According to Sir William Luce, who served in both Aden and the Gulf, the evacuation had a damaging effect on the Gulf rulers. It had shaken the Sheikhs' confidence in Britain's friendship because since she had left the rulers of the Federation of South Arabia without protection, the Gulf rulers feared that they too might eventually be abandoned by the British and face exile or death.<sup>29</sup> This led the British Government to send Mr. Goronwy Roberts, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, on a visit to the Gulf in November 1967 to inform the rulers that Britain's withdrawal from Aden would not apply to the Gulf and that Britain would remain in the Gulf as long as necessary without any timetable for withdrawing. However, the Government that was left in power in Aden after the evacuation of the British troops immediately encouraged nationalists in the Gulf and Oman to follow its example.

### **2.3 Oman: the Imamate War and Dhofar Revolution**

British military command in the Middle East was moved from Aden to Bahrain in 1967 and was renamed the British Forces Gulf Command with accompanying bases in Sharjah and the Masīrah island in Oman. There were several reasons for the British presence in Oman. After World War II British interests in Oman and the Gulf centred on vital strategic points. On the one hand, Oman was considered an important strategic base for the British Royal Air Force (because of its location in-between Africa, the Middle East and the Far East) while on the other hand it was considered important due to the oil fields in the Gulf and in Oman itself. At the same time, Oman controlled the strategic Straits of Hormuz through which all tankers entering and leaving the Gulf had to pass. Finally, Britain considered Oman so important that it developed close friendship with Sultan Sa'īd bin Taymūr of Oman. Therefore, Britain responded quickly to the Sultan's difficulties in the 1950s<sup>30</sup> (see Anglo-Omani treaties in ch.1). The most dangerous challenge



to the Sultan's authority came firstly from the Imamate uprising in 1957-1959, and secondly from the Dhofar rebellion which was more sophisticated ideologically as well as in the military field. The Dhofar revolution started in 1965 and continued until 1976 when it was finally suppressed.

The Imamate wars to seek independence from the authority of the Sultan of Muscat, Sa'īd bin Taymūr, were built on the Ibadi religious doctrine. Ibadism is a branch of the Khariji sect that developed in the first century of Islam. It emphasized the leadership of an imam as the religious and political head chosen by the elders of the tribes.<sup>31</sup>

In September 1920, following the resistance of the Omani Ibadi tribes to the Sultan's control, the Treaty of *Sib* was concluded. The Treaty was mediated by the British Political Agent in Muscat, Mr. Wingate. Under the *Sib* Treaty the Sultan granted control of justice, trade and administration to the Imam and the people of the interior, and for their part the Imam and his followers agreed not to attack the Sultan's position. The wording of the Treaty of *Sib* included four points pertain to the Government of the Sultan and four points which pertaining to the people of Oman (i.e. the term used to refer to the people of the interior). Those pertaining to the people of Oman were as follows:<sup>32</sup>

1. Not more than five per cent shall be taken from anyone, no matter what his race, coming from Oman to Muscat or Matrah or Sur or the rest of the towns of the coast.
2. All the people of Oman shall enjoy security and freedom in all the towns of the coast.
3. All restrictions upon everyone entering and leaving Muscat and Matrah and all the towns of the coast shall be removed.
4. The Government of the Sultan shall not grant asylum to any criminal fleeing from the justice of the people of Oman. It shall return him to them if they request it to do so. *It shall not interfere in their internal affairs.*

The four conditions pertaining to the Government of the Sultan are:

1. All the tribes and Shaikhs shall be at peace with the Sultan. They shall not attack the towns of the coast and shall not interfere in his Government.
2. All those going to Oman on lawful business and for commercial affairs shall be free. There shall be no restrictions on commerce, and they shall enjoy security.
3. They shall expel and grant no asylum to any wrongdoer or criminal fleeing to them.
4. The claims of merchants and others against the people of Oman shall be heard and decided on the basis of justice according to the law of Islam.

However the treaty was interpreted by the Sultan and the British to mean that the Sultan's sovereignty over the whole of Oman was not challenged whilst the Imam of Oman, on the other hand, understood it as the basis for creating an independent state for the Imamate. In 1954 Ghalib b. 'Ali became Imam, and the relations between him and Sultan Sa'īd bin Taymūr began to deteriorate seriously. With aid from Saudi Arabia, Imam Ghalib claimed complete independence maintaining that the oil concessions granted by the Sultan were not valid in areas under his control and applied for membership of the Arab League.

The policy of extending the Sultan's authority over the tribes of Central Oman was encouraged by H.M. Government, because it would enable Petroleum Development (Oman) Ltd to take full advantage of their concession, and it would exclude Saudi influence from the area and thus possible interference from the American oil companies. In pursuing the above aim, the British Government in 1953 instructed the Political Resident in the Gulf, Bernard Burrows as follows:<sup>33</sup>

Her Majesty's Government hope that the Sultan of Muscat will be able to extend his authority peacefully and effectively over the tribes of the Central Oman and that Saudi influence will be excluded from that area. Her Majesty's Government are ready to assist the Sultan in this task but wish if possible to avoid direct involvement.

In December 1955 the Sultan's forces, helped by Britain, forced the Imam and his supporters to surrender. The Imam's brother, Ṭālib bin 'Ali, fled to Saudi Arabia and later to Cairo where he was able to rally some Arab help and establish

an Imamate Office in 1957.<sup>34</sup>

The Imamate struggle for independence was full of contradictions from the beginning. On one hand the Imamate leadership had associated itself with the secular revolutionary Egypt, but on the other hand it was trying to establish a religious Imamate and at the same time was completely dependent on the 'Wahhabi' Saudi regime and Egypt. Saudi Arabia and Egypt, under the leadership of King Saud and President Nasser, respectively, were enjoying a rare period of friendly cooperation at the end of the fifties. Both countries had been in conflict with Britain in the past; Saudi Arabia over Buraimi, and Egypt over Suez. Thus, they were more than happy to offer their help to the Imamate movement. At the same time, it was a rare opportunity for Nasserism to enter the "closed" area of Oman, but it seems that Nasserism was not easily accepted by the religiously motivated Omani tribes. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, was totally unacceptable to the Ibadi Imamate because of the fundamental religious differences between them. Moreover the Ibadi-Imamate had participated in the Buraimi disputes on the side of the Sultan and the British troops. However, both sides tolerated each other for political reasons.

The Imamate leaders needed Saudi financial and military aid. The Saudis helped in training the Omani Liberation Army in Dhammam and in 1957 fresh fighting between the Sultan's forces, assisted by the RAF and the Trucial Oman Scouts, and the Imamate's troops broke out. This civil war had lasted for many years, and although the Imam increased his efforts in 1959 the Sultan's forces were by that time highly trained and well equipped by the British Government.<sup>35</sup>

After 1959 the Imamate movement added a political dimension and was able to

present its case at the United Nations and thus embarrass the British Government internationally. The 'Oman Question' was investigated by an *Ad Hoc* Committee which was established in 1963 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Committee continued what a special representative of the Security-General, Mr. De H. Ribbing, who visited Oman in early 1963,<sup>36</sup> had started. The Committee, which was not permitted by Sultan Sa'īd to visit Oman, reported that the question of Oman was a serious international problem requiring the special attention of the Assembly and it proposed that the question be solved by negotiations assisted by a United Nations Committee.<sup>37</sup> In considering the *Ad Hoc* Committee report, the General Assembly of the United Nations, in December 1965, passed Resolution 2073 in which it condemned the British Government for its colonial policies and foreign intervention in Oman. The resolution also recognized the "right of the people of the territory as a whole to self-determination and independence in accordance with their freely expressed wishes." Finally it called upon Britain to withdraw from Oman.<sup>38</sup> The British Government and the Sultan did not accept the UN resolutions and therefore the 'Question of Oman' was regularly brought up on the UN Agenda.

The involvement of the United Nations in the Omani dispute had given the latter a world-wide publicity. The leaders of the Imamate, like Ṭālib bin Alī, Sheikh Sulayman bin Ḥimyar and Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥirthī, were received warmly when they addressed the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>39</sup> They had also toured the Soviet Union, China, Europe and other countries. This of course had led to much criticism of the British Government which was embarrassed by accusations that she was keeping Oman and the Gulf shut off and backward. Even Britain's closest ally, the United States had asked her to restrain the Sultan of Muscat as well as the

British officials in Oman in their violent ways of dealing with the Imamate problem. In fact, the Americans did not want the Saudis to blame them for not restraining the British Government and feared that the Saudis might retaliate against Aramco and the air base at Dhahran if they took no action. Besides that the Americans in discussion with the British Foreign Office pointed out their fear that this dispute might allow Russia to increase its influence in the Arab world.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the British Government pressed for negotiations in Beirut with the representatives of the Imamate delegation who demanded complete and immediate independence. The talks were unsuccessful as the British refused to accept their demands.<sup>41</sup> However, even though the Imamate revolt was unsuccessful in its main aim, namely that of establishing an independent Imamate State, it had had some significant effects. Firstly, it gave the British authorities cause for concern regarding their policy toward the area. Secondly, it had internationalized the Omani cause, and, thirdly the world became aware of the Gulf and Oman and the British involvement there. It also paved the way for a more sophisticated Marxist revolution in the Dhofar mountains.

By 1970 the Imam, who took up residence in Saudi Arabia, was asked by King Fayṣal either to remain quiet and accept the *status quo* or leave the country. The Imam took the first option.<sup>42</sup> The Saudi Government changed its policy toward Oman after the British withdrawal announcement, by (a) playing a leading role in Gulf security (see 6.3); and (b) resisting the communist rebellion in Dhofar through cooperation with the Sultan.

### 2.3.1 The Dhofar Revolution

Dhofar, the Southern province of Oman, is distinct from the rest of the coun-

try in its tropical climate; in its language (related to the ancient languages of South Arabia); and in its Shaf'i-Sunni Islam as opposed to the non-Sunni Ibadi inhabitants of the Sultanate. The Dhofar province is also distinct in its mountainous character in that the altitude rises to as high as 4,500 feet; and, located on the border with Yemen (South Yemen), by its distance from Muscat, the capital of Oman.<sup>43</sup>

It was the Imamate rebellion that had encouraged tribal leaders of Dhofar province to try to set up their own separate state and escape from the harsh rule of Sultan Sa'īd of Muscat. These dreams turned into reality with the adherence to the cause of young Dhofaris working in the Gulf who had come into contact with Arab nationalists. These young Dhofaris were encouraged by the success of the Yemen Revolution in 1962. By 1964 these two groups, viz. the tribal leaders and the Dhofari branch of the Arab nationalists, had organized themselves into a front called the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF). However, the DLF did not become active until 9 June 1965 when it made its first declaration.<sup>44</sup> What concerns us here about the Dhofar Revolution (which itself is beyond the scope of this study) is the influence that this rebellion had on the British presence in the area.<sup>45</sup>

By 1966, the Dhofar rebellion was creating some concern among the British authorities in the Gulf for varieties of reasons. For example, they felt it was a threat to their interests in the Gulf and Oman. Also this was a time when Britain was trying to expand its military presence in the region after the experience of the Kuwait operation of 1961. Britain had recognized the difficulties involved in mobilizing forces from Britain, therefore, each Gulf ruler was encouraged to develop his own army and air force by using capital from oil revenue.

This new policy had been accepted by Kuwait, which had already started to develop a Kuwaiti Air Force with the help of British advisers.<sup>46</sup> In Oman, Sultan Sa'īd also started to expand and develop his armed forces but he did this with some reservation because he was afraid that the rapid expansion of armed forces could pose a military threat to his regime. Furthermore, he was not in a position to improve the living conditions in his country because even though oil exploration was taking place the Sultan was not yet receiving oil revenues.

The Emirate of Abu Dhabi, under the control of Sheikh Shakhbūt, was even more reluctant to develop its armed forces but in 1964 Sheikh Shakhbūt did agree to the establishment of a small defence force under the command of Colonel Tug Wilson. After Sheikh Shakhbūt was removed in August 1966 the forces were expanded and were equipped with Hunter aircrafts.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, Britain was to retain a direct military presence in Oman and demonstrated this by leasing the Island of Masīrah from Sultan Sa'īd for ninety-nine years after the defeat of the Imamate forces in 1959. Masīrah became part of British Military Command in Aden. But it was not until after the Kuwait operation of 1961 that Masīrah became more important. In 1962 a 9,000 foot asphalt runway was constructed there. The strategic position of the Island on account of its isolation and offshore location, caused it to outlive all the other British bases in the Gulf and thus the RAF continued using it until their withdrawal in 1977 after the defeat of the Dhofar rebellion.<sup>48</sup> The same was the case with the Sharjah RAF station that was established in the thirties and later expanded after the Kuwait operation in 1961 with a new 9,000 foot asphalt runway. The RAF base in Sharjah received further expansion in 1967.

By 1966, however, the Dhofar situation was intensifying and Britain did not want any further large scale dissidence in Oman such as that which had occurred in the Imamate. It already had enough trouble with the nationalists in Aden.<sup>49</sup> The guerillas nevertheless were having considerable success, as was epitomized by a series of well-planned and skillfully executed operations, when compared with those of the Imamate, which claimed the lives of British officers and caused casualties among the Sultan's forces. There were also attempts on the Sultan's life: for example there was one in May 1966 by his guards. This state of affairs created a good deal of anxiety for the British authorities because these activities gave indications that the situation would continue for many years to come.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, Britain accepted the Sultan's requests to put into effect the 1958 treaty which requested that Britain offer military assistance to the Sultan. Consequently, a few units of army and RAF were rapidly dispatched to Oman. British military forces in Oman were quick to publicise their presence to the rebels and any potential supporters by means of exercises, show of the flag and firepower demonstrations.

In order to avert the threat of rebellion in Oman, Britain introduced a number of new measures. The first was political and economic development. Oman was considered an independent State but with special treaty relations with Britain. However, Sultan Sa'īd was causing consternation for Britain because he was not eager to spend money on development and was ruling Oman like a police-state. After 1967, when oil was found by Shell in commercial quantities, the Sultan began receiving substantial oil revenue but was still not spending on development. According to H.M. Consul-General in Oman, Mr Carden (1965-1969) it became a major political problem when the Sultan had money but refused to spend it:<sup>51</sup>

Britain had an old alliance with Oman and with the Sultan. The Sultan presented Britain with a problem. He had inherited in 1930s a bankrupt state that was left by his father who abdicated and lived in a hotel in Bombay in poverty. The



Sultan always remembered this and he did not want to be bankrupt so he did not spend money which he did not have...The oil was found by Shell and then his financial position was different but he had been influenced by the last 30 years. He could not stop being afraid of spending money. It became a major political problem when he does have money but does not spend it on the welfare of his people like schools, hospitals, roads etc. The problem for the British government was that we knew his people were getting restless, they wanted these necessities...We tried to persuade him to be generous but he used to say: I am an independent sovereign and you British mind your own business.

The British authorities tried to persuade Sultan Sa'īd to change his methods but, as Mr Carden explained, the Sultan refused to cooperate in utilizing the oil revenue for the economic development of his country. However, Sultan Sa'īd did cooperate with the British in regard to their strategic interests. Britain had an RAF station at Salalah, Dhofar, in addition to the RAF base on Masīrah Island. Also the British Navy was permitted to use the Sultan's ports at any time, and a British oil company was responsible for developing the country's oil resources.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, in spite of the fact that Sultan Sa'īd's policy presented an embarrassment to Britain because of the harsh nature of his rule,<sup>53</sup> Britain continued to offer him financial support and between 1959 and 1967, before the discovery of oil, provided a grant of £250,000 annually. The development programme which involved building roads, establishing agricultural trial stations and constructing a number of health dispensaries, was headed by Sir Hugh Boustead.<sup>54</sup> Boustead recalls that although he found Sultan Sa'īd a pleasant man he was nevertheless responsible for obstructing development in Oman.<sup>55</sup> This problem became more serious when the country began to receive substantial oil revenue after 1967.

In the light of the Sultan's reluctance to introduce economic development in Oman which was promoted by the British authorities as a measure to help contain the rebellion of Dhofar, the British officials now began to see the need for political change in Oman. They tried to get concessions from the Sultan but their attempts

to persuade him to change his policies or to step down in favour of his son met with failure. Nevertheless, in July 1970 Sultan Sa'īd abdicated in favour of his son Sultan Qābūs. Officially, Britain considered this as an internal affair but there was strong evidence that the British were closely involved in the coup.<sup>56</sup>

The other measure that Britain had introduced in an attempt to avert the threat of the Dhofar rebellion was a series of military operations in Dhofar province from 1965 onward. In order to support the military operations in Oman the number of troops was increased and military units were transferred from Cyprus to Bahrain and Sharjah.<sup>57</sup> First, a number of Canberra B16 aircrafts were transferred from the squadron in Cyprus to the RAF base in Sharjah. Other RAF planes were despatched to Masīrah along with a parachute regiment.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, the RAF bases Sharjah and Masīrah were developed. For example in 1965-67, the RAF base at Masīrah was completely rebuilt at a cost of £3 million that provided fuel storage installation, a new water distillation plant and communication centre storage installations.<sup>59</sup> Thirdly, the British Government sent the destroyer, *H.M.S Fearless*, to the Dhofar border with South Yemen to launch an operation in the Hauf area. This was undertaken by elements of the 1st Irish Guards.<sup>60</sup> However, Britain could not continue this sort of operation in Oman on a wide scale due to defence cuts as well as her responsibilities elsewhere such as NATO. At the same time the British public, press and parliament were uneasy with regard to these operations.<sup>61</sup> Therefore Britain encouraged the Sultan to seek help from other countries like Jordan and Iran. In addition, it encouraged British soldiers to seek personal contracts in the Sultan's forces. As a result of this policy, more than 1,500 British officers and soldiers arrived in Oman to assist the Sultan's forces and were only withdrawn in March 31, 1977 after the defeat of the rebellion.<sup>62</sup>

The Dhofar Revolution thus had a significant impact on the British presence in the Gulf. On the one hand, Britain had been fighting the rebellion in Oman in order to protect her interests in the Gulf but, on the other hand, Britain's military operations in this area and the very presence of British troops became a provocation in itself. Hence it was easier for the DLF to encourage other nationalists in the Gulf to rally around them. Even though the Gulf was considered a quiet area, except for Bahrain, the DLF was able to contact the nationalist forces in the Trucial States as well as in Bahrain and Kuwait.<sup>63</sup> The Dhofar Revolutionaries attempted to link up with different nationalist groups in the Gulf but at the beginning they concentrated on the Dhofaris working in the area. Most of the Dhofaris were employed in the armed forces and the police, and when they returned to Dhofar on vacations some were recruited into the revolutionary movement which sought to recruit other Dhofaris working in the Gulf in the late sixties.<sup>64</sup> Other groups were discovered in the Ras Musandam mountain region by the British Desert Intelligence Officer, Captain Tim Ash, in early 1970.<sup>65</sup> The most important impact of the Dhofar revolution was that Oman and the Gulf were no longer isolated from world opinion. They became the focus for debates in Britain and the Arab World as well as in the international arena. People became more aware of the colonial war that Britain was fighting in Dhofar and some even considered it 'Britain's Vietnam'.<sup>66</sup> Thus Britain's presence in the Gulf was affected by the Dhofar Revolution and it could be argued that the rebellion was one of the reasons that persuaded Britain to withdraw from the Gulf before the situation there reached the same position as it had in Aden.

## **2.4 The lower Gulf: development of anti-British sentiment.**

By the beginning of the 1950s Arab nationalism had had little affect on the

lower Gulf States. However during the course of the Musaddeq dispute of 1951 some anti-British feeling did emerge in the southern shores of the Gulf (see chapter I).<sup>67</sup> It was the Egyptians who had introduced modern Arab nationalism into the lower Gulf in the 1950s. This nationalism had come with the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 which had been orchestrated under the leadership of Nasser and whose specific aims were anti-colonialism and Arab unity. The Foreign Office, in its instructions to the British officials in the Gulf in 1956, warned that,<sup>68</sup>

The principal threat to the British position in the Gulf seems to come, immediately, not from the rulers who recognize the value to themselves of our relationship with them but from the dissident and reformist elements over whom Egypt exercises the greatest influence.

The growth and significance of Egyptian influence in the Gulf (after the 1952 Egyptian Revolution) was represented in different ways. First, a significant number of Egyptian school teachers were seconded from the Egyptian government. Second, a number of students had been sent to Egypt from the Gulf for further education. Third, a number of other Egyptian technicians and professionals such as doctors were employed by the Gulf Sheikdoms. And fourth, influence was exerted by the radio broadcast from Cairo, *the Voice of the Arab Gulf*, and through the distribution of newspapers and magazines.<sup>69</sup>

Before looking at President Nasser's direct encouragement of anti-British feeling in the lower Gulf and the Arab League's involvement in the Trucial States in 1964-1965, the national movements in Bahrain and Qatar will be summarized. Bahrain and Qatar were more developed than the Trucial States due to the earlier discovery of oil. Nationalism had arrived earlier with the introduction of widespread education, as well as contact with Arabs who came to work in these States. However, Bahrain had experienced organized nationalist movements since

the early fifties. One example was the Higher Executive Committee which was established in October 1954 and was able to make the government accept it as a legal organization.<sup>70</sup> After huge demonstrations during the Suez crisis, the Bahrain government had declared a state of emergency and asked the British Government for help to which the latter responded by sending a battalion of British troops.<sup>71</sup>

By 1965, during the Bahrain Oil Company (BAPCO) strike, the national movement in Bahrain emerged once again. There were widespread demonstrations in the streets of Manama during March of that year which were concerned with redundancies in BAPCO as well as with political issues. Since Bahrain was important for the British forces that were withdrawing from Aden, both Britain and the Bahraini Government refused to accept any demands from the nationalists and the rioting was terminated very quickly by force by the Bahrain police commanded by British officers.<sup>72</sup>

The other Gulf emirate that had experienced a small short-lived nationalist uprising was Qatar. The early discovery of oil in Qatar in January 1940, (although it was to be December 1949 before any oil was shipped out),<sup>73</sup> led to contact with Egyptian and Palestinian teachers in much the same way as in Kuwait and Bahrain, though in Qatar it was on a much smaller scale. The inspector of the education department was an Egyptian, most of the teachers were Egyptians and the rest were Palestinians.<sup>74</sup> In April 1963 there was a demonstration in support of the proposed Union between Egypt, Syria and Iraq. The demonstrators, who were young and educated Qataris with some Yemeni labourers and others, established a National Unity Front after clashing with the authorities. They demanded from the Government various reforms such as the freedom to form trade unions. The government, however, reacted severely by imprisoning and exiling the leaders of

the movement including Ḥamad al-‘Atiyyah and ‘Abdullah al-Musnid.<sup>75</sup>

The British representatives in the Trucial States had advised London that Nasser might seek to expand Egyptian influence in the Gulf region because Britain had neglected to concern itself with the development of the region. The Egyptians used radio to broadcast propaganda which argued that Britain had been exploiting Gulf oil without developing the region. Accordingly, we find that many of the political agents in the Trucial States had pressed the British Government to do more to develop the area. For example, Sir Bernard Burrows, the Political Resident in the Gulf, in 1953 urged the British Government to provide capital for development in the Trucial States, because he felt that:<sup>76</sup>

If they cannot get it from us or from other Gulf rulers they will turn to Egypt, not necessarily because they sympathize with Egypt politically, but simply because help is available there and indeed is known to be waiting on offer.

In response to this, but with some reluctance, Britain spent £25,000 on the area in 1955-6.<sup>77</sup> However, in order to counter Egyptian influence in the area more attention and economic assistance was needed. Britain responded in a number of different ways. For example, British teachers were provided for the vocational schools, and the rich Emirates like Kuwait were encouraged to help with education and hospitals.<sup>78</sup> In addition the oil companies were asked to participate in developing the area and encouraged to employ more local people. The oil companies were also urged by the British government to improve their arrangements for technical training for the local inhabitants.<sup>79</sup> Finally, the British authorities in the Gulf, through the British Council, encouraged students from the Gulf to study in Britain.<sup>80</sup> It was hoped that this would lead to more pro-British feelings than had been the case.

However, the above measures which were designed to counter Egyptian in-

fluence in the Gulf, were not totally effective. On the one hand, Britain had encouraged Kuwait to help the Trucial States by sending teachers, but Kuwait had no teachers of her own and therefore sent Egyptians.<sup>81</sup> The other reason why countering Egyptian influence in the Trucial States was unproductive was the willingness of some rulers (like Sheikh Şaqr of Sharjah) to cooperate with the Egyptians. An Egyptian educational mission was opened in Sharjah in 1958.<sup>82</sup> By 1963 the Egyptian mission had trained and sent more than eighty teachers to the Trucial States.<sup>83</sup> However, Britain probably felt that this was no great threat since the number of Egyptian teachers did not exceed a few hundred and thus could be carefully watched and controlled.

In 1964 the Arab League had formed a fact-finding mission to the Gulf under the League's General Secretary, 'Abdul K̤haliq Ḥassunah, his assistant Sayyid Nawfal, and one representative from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq respectively. The mission visited the Emirates in November 1964 where it met the Sheikhs of Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States. Besides this, the mission had opportunities to meet different Arab immigrants and had also attended rallies and delivered some speeches. The Mission's report to the Arab League Council had two important recommendations. The first suggestion was that a specialist Arab team made up of experts in electricity, roads, water drilling and agriculture should be sent to the Emirates so as to study the needs of the area. The other recommendation was an idea to establish an Arab Development Fund for the Emirates. The Arab League Council approved the recommendations, and the specialist group was sent to the Emirates in July 1965.<sup>84</sup>

The British authorities allowed the first Mission because they thought it would concentrate on economic fields. However, when they found it had been involved

in political discussions, the second mission in June 1965 was denied entry to the Emirates. Sir William Luce, the Political Resident, ordered the closing of the Sharjah airfield to prevent the Arab League delegation landing.<sup>85</sup> According to Balfour-Paul who was Political Agent in Dubai at that time, Nasser had tried to use the Arab League to weaken British control by persuading the rulers of the Trucial States to terminate their treaties and friendship with Britain.<sup>86</sup>

Another aspect of British reaction to the Arab League mission was the deposition of Sheikh Şaqr of Sharjah. This incident needs more explanation since Sheikh Şaqr was considered a symbol of Arab nationalism in the Trucial States. The policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the Gulf rulers' association with the Egyptians had been unobtrusive at first. The rulers were not questioned about their meetings with, for instance, Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian Minister of State, during his visit to the area before the Suez crisis. They were not prevented from participating in fund-raising during the Suez crisis. It was quite in order for the Sheikhs to pay "lip service to the emotional concept of Arab solidarity."<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the Political Resident in the Gulf recommended that:<sup>88</sup>

Our role must in certain respects be unobtrusive. We must avoid putting too much strain upon the loyalties of the rulers over issues touching their 'Arab' consciousness.

But that was not always the rule especially when some of the Sheikhs, Sheikh Şaqr in particular, acted in a way that was considered dangerous to British influence in the Gulf, and refused to break his relations with the Egyptian Government. In addition, Sheikh Şaqr bin Sultan al-Qāsimī, (Ruler of Sharjah 1951-65) supported the Arab nationalists. The Political Resident in Bahrain, Sir Bernard Burrows, described him as an 'ambitious man with a modicum of education'. Sheikh Şaqr had toured the Middle East and had returned with promises of help from



Egypt in 1958. He had been, according to the Political Resident, "singled out among all the Trucial Coast rulers as the Egyptian target and has been flooded with offers of hospitality and technical help by Egyptian personalities in close touch with the Government".<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, at a later date he had received some help from Egypt in the form of education and health assistance for his state. Sheikh Ṣaqr had explained the reasons for his close association with Egypt by saying that he merely wanted to develop his state and since Britain was not offering him the help he needed, he had turned to Egypt which, in any case, he considered an Arab 'sister state.'<sup>90</sup>

There are three main reasons which may explain the replacement of Sheikh Ṣaqr by his cousin, Sheikh Khāled, in 1965. The first reason, and the most important, was that Britain wanted to keep the Trucial States stable and free from any irritant elements such as Egyptian influence. The spread of nationalism in the Trucial States had created some concerns to the British officials in the Gulf. For example, Sir James Craig recalls that when he was appointed to the Trucial States in 1961 as a Political Agent he was asked to pay great attention to the Egyptians and Palestinians working in the area.<sup>91</sup> Major Jim Stockdale, with twenty two years service in the TOS, was a Desert Intelligence Officer on the eastern coast of the Trucial States in Khor Fakkān from 1968 to 1971. When asked about the role he was performing in that area, he pointed out that: "I was looking after the border disputes between Fujairah and Sharjah, taking care of the illegal immigrants that were using the port at Khor Fakkān, and at the same time keeping an eye on Egyptian and Palestinian teachers in the schools of the eastern coast."<sup>92</sup> The TOS Commander 1964-67, Brigadier De Butts, noted that "Pictures of Nasser were everywhere...Sheikh Ṣaqr was permitting Egyptians to demonstrate in his Emi-

rate, and they were attacking Britain's policy."<sup>93</sup> Sir James Craig had explained to Sheikh Şaqr "the disadvantages in associating with Egypt and that he should be on the British side because he had a treaty with H.M. Government. However, he refused to curb his relationship with the Arab League and the Egyptians."<sup>94</sup> Mr. M. Tait, Assistant Political Agent in Dubai in 1965, added that "the removal of Sheikh Şaqr was for a security reason because he was under the influence of his private secretary Mr. Ghareeb, an Egyptian, whom the Agency classified as an agent."<sup>95</sup>

The second reason for removing Sheikh Şaqr was strategic. That is to say, Britain's policy in the Trucial States in the fifties was supportive of Kuwait. For example, there was some talk in the Foreign Office of renouncing the treaty obligations with the Trucial States and concentrating on Kuwait. However, Sir Bernard Burrows, Political Resident in the Gulf 1953-58, in a letter to Sir James Bowker, (Assistant Under-Secretary of State, FO 1950-53) could not endorse that:<sup>96</sup>

I remember that you and others in London said to me that it might have to be considered at some time whether it was going to cause continuing international complication and a continuing commitment of expenditure. I know that you are familiar with the argument that if we gave up the Trucial States this would seriously reduce our power to influence events in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, which are generally admitted to be of great importance to us...In fact I do not feel that the Trucial States are now a derelict area of which we should be glad to be rid, but that with a little care and continuity we can make something quite good out of them.

In other words, Britain in the fifties had concentrated on Kuwait because of her oil. But, with the discovery of huge quantities of oil in Abu Dhabi in 1958, the Trucial States became a key element in the British policy in the Gulf; what is more, after withdrawing from Aden the Trucial States became an alternative base for the British troops. As a result, Sharjah was the ideal replacement for Aden as a British military base that could contain the troops that would be withdrawn

from Aden by 1966-67.

But contrary to official British opinion, the Ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Ṣaqr, did not welcome the idea. He resisted the new agreement to expand British military bases in Sharjah that Mr. George Thomson, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, was trying to get him to accept in May 1965.<sup>97</sup> However, after the removal of Sheikh Ṣaqr, the new Ruler, Sheikh Khāled bin Muḥammad al-Qāsimī, accepted the agreement and signed it together with the British Political Agent in Dubai, Sir David Roberts, in 1966.<sup>98</sup> It made available to British authorities additional land for new facilities to be used by British troops. Therefore, in 1967 British troops that had moved from Aden were stationed in the old RAF-TOS base at *al-Maḥaṭah* in Sharjah, and the Trucial Oman Scouts, TOS, were moved to *al-Murqāb* garrison. Sir David Roberts explained that Sheikh Khāled had insisted that the TOS remained in Sharjah. The other point that the Political Agent had negotiated with Sheikh Khāled was an agreement regarding the delivery of water for the troops.<sup>99</sup> The British Government made a down-payment of £100,000 in August 1966 and subsequently an annual payment of a similar amount from January 1967.<sup>100</sup> Finally, the third reason for the removal of Sheikh Ṣaqr was to warn the other Sheikhs that Britain was determined to keep the Gulf under her control and would not allow any contacts that were regarded as unacceptable to her.

The removal of Sheikh Ṣaqr in 1965, served as a warning to the nationalist groups that their activities would not be tolerated by Britain. However anti-British feelings were exacerbated again with the June 1967 Arab/Israeli War.

There was an atmosphere of despair and disappointment in the Gulf after

the June 1967 War. The people were frustrated with the result and anti-British activities were intensified after Cairo incorrectly announced that Britain had participated in the surprise Israeli attack on the Egyptian air force bases on 6th of June.<sup>101</sup> Demonstrations, rioting and other violent anti-British activities spread all over the Gulf. In Bahrain, as the Political Agent there, Sir Anthony Parsons, recalled:<sup>102</sup>

In no time demonstrators were swirling and chanting outside the gates of the Agency. The next four or five days were confused and hectic. The flames of excitement burnt high in Bahrain and the Agency was surrounded by shouting crowds from early morning until late at night.

In Dubai, riots and demonstrations also occurred for a few days and some shops were destroyed. The British Agency there was also surrounded for two days and the Political Agent, Sir David Roberts, brought in the TOS because he thought it was too much for the Dubai Police to handle and restore order.<sup>103</sup> In addition, in Sharjah, sailing boats from a British club were burned during a night incident.<sup>104</sup>

In the short term, the outcome of the June War was negative for British policy in the Gulf because the people's desire for freedom and their hatred of colonialism was enhanced. But at the same time Nasser, who was backing nationalism in the Gulf and Oman, now began to lose interest. By calling on Arabs to unite behind him on the issue of Palestine, he called for financial assistance from oil producing countries and King Fayṣal and the other Gulf rulers were ready to help Nasser to rebuild what the war had destroyed. Accordingly, the Cairo Radio station "*Voice of the Arab Gulf*" was shut down and the Egyptians changed their attitude towards the Gulf Sheikhs.<sup>105</sup> As a result, the British Political Agents in the Trucial States had now to concentrate their efforts on other 'subversive' elements that had broken away from Nasser due to his failure in fulfilling their dream as the man who would

lead them to victory.

After the 1967 June defeat, the Arab nationalists in the Gulf, as well as in the rest of the Arab World came to realize that, after all, Nasserism did not provide the magical solution to the crisis in the Arab world.<sup>106</sup> Some of the nationalists in the Gulf joined Marxists in Dhofar and others joined Ba‘thists while support for Nasser declined. In the Trucial States: (a) the supporters of the DLF (which became the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf “PFLOAG” in 1968) were located mostly in the TOS<sup>107</sup>; (b) the Ba‘thists supporters group had taken ‘Ras Mūsāndam Mountain’ as their base, but later (as was mentioned before) were discovered by the authorities; and (c) the rest, who came mostly from wealthy families and the ranks of educated people, were a non-violent opposition group and were located in the urban areas of Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah and Dubai. Even though their number was relatively small, the nationalist groups created a significant cause for concern for the British authorities as well as for the rulers. For example, the TOS in cooperation with the British army had mounted a joint operation in the Ras Mūsāndam area in 1971, before British withdrawal, against the Shaḥuḥ tribe who had been recruited by Ba‘thists activists from the Trucial States’ towns, who received military equipment and support from Iraq. As an additional means of dissuading the Shaḥuḥ tribe from any future revolutionary activities the British authorities in the Gulf also introduced some social services in the area such as a visiting doctor who travelled through the villages. They also improved communications between the tribal areas and the city of Ras al-Khaimah as well as introducing other medical and practical help.<sup>108</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the forces of nationalism that existed in the Arabian Peninsula in the 1950s and, in particular, the 1960s and the effect of such forces on the Trucial States, in order to understand the role played by these movements in the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971. The Yemen Revolution of 1962 and its impact on the development of nationalism in the area together with Britain's withdrawal from Aden have been discussed. The latter occurred as there was no point in having a base that had to waste large resources defending its very existence rather than doing the job for which it was created.

The Imamate of Oman and Dhofar revolution also played a considerable role in influencing British policy in the area. The Dhofar affair, however, was by far the most outstanding movement that influenced Britain's withdrawal. Like the resistance in Aden, the Dhofar revolution was strongly anti-British and they used the British presence to recruit more members to their movement. Finally, they were able to present their case internationally and embarrass Britain, mainly at the United Nations.

In the Trucial States, however, the strength of nationalism was questionable. Two different arguments have been generated concerning this matter. There are those such as Taryam who claim that Britain's evacuation from the Gulf was due to the pressure of the nationalist movements and there are those, on the other hand, such as Balfour-Paul, who suggest that nationalism played no significant role whatsoever. It is hoped that the foregoing analysis demonstrates that conflict between Britain and the nationalists played no major role in the withdrawal decision. However, had British forces remained in the area then this might have

encouraged the growth of the nationalist movements to dangerous proportions. Thus, Britain probably concluded that it would be better to withdraw from the area before internal opposition had reached boiling point. At the same time Britain had encouraged development in the area as a means of both absorbing any nationalist criticism and also of preparing the Emirates to stand on their own feet when the inevitable withdrawal came. The nature of this development will be discussed in the next chapter.

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- (a) To change the Front's name to the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) thus to expand their struggle against the British presence in another part of the Gulf.
- (b) To adopt Marxist-Leninist ideology.
- (c) To support the struggle of the Palestinians and other liberation movements in the World.
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## **Chapter III**

### **Economic Development in the Trucial States**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

By the end of 1967, although Britain had withdrawn from Aden; she had sent her Minister of State, Mr. Goronwy Roberts, to assure the rulers of the Gulf that there was no schedule for similar action in the Gulf and that Britain was going to remain as long as necessary. Nevertheless, a few months later, in January 1968, the same Minister returned to the Gulf in order to inform the rulers that Britain now had a plan to withdraw by the end of 1971. The crucial question asked by many people, including members of the House of Commons, was, why did Britain not withdraw from the Gulf at the same time as she withdrew from Aden? Would it not have been more convenient to have withdrawn from the whole area at the same time since it was expected that Britain would face difficulties in defending the Gulf without the Aden base?

The answer to be assumed by this thesis was that Britain's economic interests in the Gulf were the motive for her remaining in the area. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, keeping the British forces in the Gulf was creating a certain amount of anti-British feeling. Therefore, it seems that Britain remained in the Gulf after the withdrawal from Aden only as a temporary measure until such time that the Gulf Emirates should be able to stand on their own feet. Accordingly, this chapter intends to analyse economic development in the Trucial States with an emphasis on the British role. It will cover the Northern Trucial

States (Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah) Dubai and Abu Dhabi Emirates. Furthermore, it will attempt to explain Britain's role and aim in encouraging development in the area and assessing whether those Emirates were in fact sufficiently developed enough to be left to their own devices by the end of 1971.

### **3.2 Britain's role in the economic development**

Modern economic development in the Trucial States passed through two stages. First, in the early fifties, Britain had encouraged development and continued to do so until 1965. The second stage started in 1965 and lasted until the establishment of the United Arab Emirates in 1971.

In the first stage, the amount of money that Britain contributed was very modest. The objectives were to create certain facilities for the oil companies which had directed their efforts towards the Gulf after the Persian oil dispute of 1951. Since the oil companies needed to import a great deal of heavy equipment in order to expand oil production, the rulers were encouraged to develop their ports to which Britain allocated some aid.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the first of the United Kingdom's objectives for promoting development was to protect and facilitate the activities of the oil companies. The other objective in the fifties was to improve economic conditions in the Trucial States in order to build up their resistance to nationalism<sup>2</sup> and the new influence being exerted by the Arab League. Therefore, the objectives of the first stage were part of Britain's general policy towards the Middle East which was to preserve her economic and political interests.<sup>3</sup>

The total amount that had been contributed to development in the Trucial States from 1954 to 1965 was only £1,050,000. It included the following: the

establishment of a school in Sharjah in 1953; the provision of water supplies in Ras al-Khaimah; the improvement of Dubai Hospital<sup>4</sup>; *falaj* restoration in Buraimi; the dredging of Dubai creek; the establishment of dispensaries in different Emirates; the establishment of an agricultural Trial Station in Diqdāqah in 1957, and a Trade School in Sharjah.<sup>5</sup> Aid from other sources was also welcomed in the Trucial States. Kuwait, for example, had assisted with education and medical aid; Qatar and Bahrain also assisted in educational developments and the United Nations had assisted in water surveying,<sup>6</sup> together with the anti-locust project<sup>7</sup> and indeed such aids were encouraged by Britain.

The second stage of development in the Trucial States was on a wider scale. It involved creating a Development Office under the authority of the Trucial States Council (TSDO) in 1965. However, before discussing the activities of the Development Office, it is necessary to analyse the reasons for its creation.

In contrast to Britain's aim of economic development in the fifties as a means of strengthening her presence in the area, it seemed that the new policies were in fact, preparatory to her departure. In reply to a question in the House of Commons George Thomson, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, in an attempt to stress the attention that was being given to economic development in the Gulf, stated on 17 April 1967:<sup>9</sup>

the Trucial States Development fund was set up by the present Government a year or so ago with a capital grant of over £1 million. Work has been continuing on an all-weather road link between the Trucial States. We shall push ahead with these constructive proposals.

The objectives of the development plans in the sixties were various. Firstly, Britain introduced such a policy as an alternative to the Arab League assistance that was not welcomed by Britain because of the League's political activities (see

chapter 2). Secondly, the policy aimed at preparing the emirates to stand on their own feet before the withdrawal day. George Thomson, after his visit to the Gulf States, May 8 - 16 1965, explained that the British Government was anxious to modernize her relationship with the Gulf States.<sup>10</sup> Such steps included giving added assistance to the less wealthy states in order to promote economic and political advance and to transfer to them certain functions such as jurisdiction over foreigners. The more developed Emirates such as Bahrain were recommended to join some of the United Nations organisations. The others were encouraged to meet together to discuss their common problems, such as the currency crisis during the devaluation of the Indian Rupee.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Mr. George Brown, the British Foreign Secretary, explained this aim on 20th July 1967 by saying that "it is our long-term aim to create a situation in which these small States can stand on their own feet."<sup>12</sup> However, Brown did not clarify the reasons why Britain wished to help those states and he by-passed the protection of oil as the possible main reason.<sup>13</sup> It thus appeared that the policy initiated by the Labour Government was a long-term plan which aimed not only at the protection of oil interests but at maintaining the old *pax Britannica* system and of replacing it eventually with a local one through developments in the area.<sup>14</sup>

In order to accomplish the above mentioned objectives, it was necessary to keep British troops in the Gulf even if the ability to defend it without the Aden base was questionable. Mr. Duncan Sandys, the former Tory Colonial Secretary, questioned the policy of remaining in the Gulf after evacuating the Aden base. He pointed this out in the House of Commons on 12th June 1967: "Once we have broken our commitments and withdrawn our protection from South Arabia, it will be politically and militarily almost impossible to hang on in the Persian



Gulf.”<sup>15</sup> Even though it is possible that the Labour Government had accepted that argument, it could not have withdrawn from the Gulf at the same time as the withdrawal from Aden. Britain wanted to withdraw from the Gulf, but they had to remain temporarily because the Emirates were not yet developed. Therefore, the troops in Sharjah, Bahrain and Masīrah were increased and military installations were built up. Mr. Denis Healey explained this policy in the House of Commons on 18 January 1967:<sup>16</sup>

the point is to insure the continued stability of the Gulf until countries in the area are capable of maintaining stability on their own. We do not regard a base in Aden as being necessary for that purpose. But consequent on leaving Aden, we feel it necessary to make a small increase in our forces in the Persian Gulf to maintain our obligations.

Thus, we may deduce that the presence of British troops in the Gulf was for the purpose of maintaining stability while development was taking place, and that when the said aim had been accomplished they would be withdrawn. This brings the discussion to the question of the economic accomplishments of the Trucial States Development Office (TSDO) and the other economic developments that were encouraged by the British Government in the Trucial States.

### **3.3 The Trucial States Development Office**

The aim of the Trucial States Development Office (TSDO) was, as has been seen, to prepare the Trucial States to stand on their own feet. It was assumed by the British authorities that Abu Dhabi, and Dubai to a lesser extent, would share their wealth with the Northern Trucial States<sup>17</sup>; hence, the setting up of the TSDO in the summer of 1965 was intended to develop the less wealthy Emirates. The TSDO followed two objectives: the first was to provide inter-state services, the second was to provide capital programmes in the Northern Trucial States.<sup>18</sup> To

achieve these two aims, the Gulf rulers were asked to contribute to the Development Fund that was put under the authority of the Trucial States Council. The initial contributions allocated to the Fund were as follows:

- Britain £1,000,000 (over 3.5 years)
- Qatar £250,000
- Abu Dhabi £100,000
- Bahrain £40,000<sup>19</sup>

A further sum of £100,000 was subsequently received from Abu Dhabi during Sheikh Shakhbūt's reign, but it was after Sheikh Zayed's accession to power in August 1966 that the Development Fund received more than £2 million from Abu Dhabi (up to August 1968<sup>20</sup>). By 1971 Abu Dhabi's contributions to the Fund amounted to more than 90 per cent of a total of £13 million.<sup>21</sup> Kuwait and Saudi Arabia did not contribute through TSDO but were allowed to give assistance directly to the rulers of the Emirates. Egypt, on the other hand, wanted to contribute through the Arab League mission (see chapter 2) but the British authorities insisted that any contribution should be made through TSDO which Egypt refused to do.

The entire administration of this organisation which was responsible for running the development in the Trucial States, was concentrated in the hands of the British Political Agent, who was the chairman of the Trucial States Council until 1966. According to the new policy of preparing the States to replace Britain, Sheikh Shakhbūt was approached by the Agency to chair the TSC but he declined. Thus Sheikh Ṣaqr of Ras al-Khaimah was elected in March 1966.<sup>23</sup> However, the

Political Agent played the leading role in the discussions regarding economic and political issues. He also retained his seat on the TSC and attended all its meetings; in addition, he sat in on the meetings of the development committees such as the Deliberative Committee, and his suggestions were seriously considered.

The other influential British personnel in the development activities were some 26 British experts at senior staff level in the TSDO. In 1965 Mr C. B. Kendall was appointed as Acting Director of the TSDO, a job he held until 1971, when he became Financial Adviser to the TSC.<sup>24</sup> Other officials included: Mr H. G. Rae who was the Director of Public Works; Mr Van Ollenbach the former Director of Agriculture in the Bahrain Government; Mr J. McKay the Agriculture Adviser to the TSDO; Mr. A. White the Fisheries Adviser; and Mr J. Taylor the Technical Education Adviser. The remaining staff were either Jordanian, such as 'Adi al-Baiṭār, the Secretary-General of the TSC, or Omanis such as the Health Adviser, Dr. 'Āṣim al-Jamālī.<sup>25</sup> Generally, the contribution of ex-British Colonial Office civil servants and the like to development in the Trucial States was effective, probably due to their experience in the Sudan Civil Service, Aden, India, Africa and the Ministry of Overseas Development, Beirut office.<sup>26</sup>

These senior advisers, in co-operation with the advisers to the rulers, many of whom were British or Arabs appointed on the recommendation of the British political agent, were very influential in making the rulers accept British views on development priorities. Such senior advisers were also supposed to train nationals to replace the advisers before their departure. For example, during the discussion of the TSC budget in 1967 the Secretary-General of TSC, al-Baiṭār, insisted on creating some major posts which should be filled by nationals. However, the rulers believed that it was better to spend money on development projects rather than



training nationals but they reluctantly accepted the demand of the Secretary-General.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, by 1970, some nationals were ready to take their place in the development programme; for example, 'Īsa al-Gurg was appointed as the Director of Development; Abdullah al-Mazru'ī as the Director of the Development Office; Sālim Ḥumayd as the Principle of Trade Schools<sup>28</sup>; and other nationals were appointed in various departments.<sup>29</sup>

The assessment of the TSDO accomplishments, together with other developments that were encouraged by Britain, can be grouped into three categories. The first focusses on the social services: education, health, low-cost housing and the supply of water and electricity. The second category deals with provision of the economic infrastructure for transportaion, harbours and town development. Finally in the third section surveys of economic resources of agriculture and fisheries will be assessed.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.3.1 Social Services

Firstly, with respect to social services the Northern Trucial States were extremely poor and the essential needs of their indigenous population were, in large part, not fulfilled, nor were the needs of the rising number of immigrants. In view of these needs, the TSDO had offered a variety of social services in the areas of technical education, health, water supply, low cost housing, and electricity since its establishment in 1965.

In the field of education the TSDO took responsibility for technical education.<sup>31</sup> There were three technical schools in the Trucial States established in Sharjah in 1958, in Dubai in 1964 and in Ras-al-Khaimah in 1969.<sup>32</sup> However, the demand for technical education was limited and the number of students attending those three

**Table 3.1: TSDO: Social Services, (BD)**

Services	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	Total
Education	101,779	89,866	130,745	232,836	318,805	279,329	295,680	1,449,000
Health	76,320	73,197	123,726	192,829	316,349	433,772	344,211	1,560,403
Housing	8,999	23,302	23,675	62,600	13,436	28,649	12,300	172,961
Electricity	93,905	104,198	251,389	680,120	280,480	879,140	955,000	3,239,182
Water supply	265,813	75,393	169,436	636,660	137,751	506,959	355,000	2,157,013

**Sources:**

TSC, *Report*, (1969).

TSDO, *Major Capital Works Programme*, (1969 and 1970).

TSDO, *The Official Bulletin*, (Dec., 1971).

TSDO, *News Letter of the Trucial States*, (Dec., 1970).

schools hardly increased: in 1970 there were 313 students; in 1971, 386 students.<sup>33</sup> All three schools offered a four year intermediate course of education, the first year being a preparatory technical course for all pupils, and the following three years being either a general engineering course or a carpentry course. In the final year the students usually specialized in one of the courses offered by the school such as electrical installation, motor vehicle work, welding or carpentry.

In 1971, the Dubai 'Trade' School began a secondary technical course leading to the advanced qualifications necessary for obtaining the City and Guilds Certificate of the London Institute.<sup>34</sup> The technical schools were, in fact, craft

training institutions which were preparing students for jobs in such fields as air-conditioning, garage work, carpentry, etc. They had also associated with them a commercial school which prepared students for clerical jobs. The other programme which was run by the TSDO in the educational field was the scholarships and training programme. It was a 'future plan' policy to enable the local citizens to take over the work of the expatriates in the field of education. The programme was run by a TSDO Scholarship Selection Committee which was established in 1967. There were two programmes: firstly, a training programme to enable ex-students of further education to train abroad in the United Kingdom at colleges such as the Crawley College and King Alfred's College, Winchester,<sup>35</sup> or in the Qatar Training Centre which had accepted 52 students in November 1970.<sup>36</sup> Students could also train either in Bahrain or Sudan.<sup>37</sup> The second programme was to coordinate the scholarships awarded to the Trucial States by Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan and Iraq.<sup>38</sup> Although the Scholarship and Training Programmes were essential and many students had benefited from them, they did not produce enough qualified and educated citizens. This was because they were limited by the TSDO priorities in allocating the funds.<sup>39</sup>

The other social service supervised by the TSDO was the Health Department. On the establishment of the TSDO in 1965, the medical facilities available in the Trucial States consisted of a central hospital in Dubai, al-Maktūm Hospital, which was established in 1950 with 75 beds; a small hospital in Ras al-Khaimah with 10 beds; 10 clinics in different parts of the Emirates, and a touring doctor system.<sup>40</sup> The TSDO, from 1965 to the establishment of the Federation of the UAE in 1971, had spent some BD 1.6 million on health.<sup>41</sup> It had covered the expenses of building more clinics and extending the existing facilities, but the TSDO's role in health

care was gradually diminishing due to Kuwait's increasing assistance in this field. Abu Dhabi was also directly financing some health facilities in the Northern Trucial States.<sup>42</sup>

In comparison with the quite extensive support of the health services, the TSDO had taken little interest in building low-cost housing. The houses in the Trucial States were usually of the *barasti* type (houses built of palm fronds).<sup>43</sup> In 1965 Sheikh Muḥammad al-Sharqī of Fujairah requested the Development Fund to implement a low-cost housing development programme in his Emirate instead of the electricity programme, a scheme which was given priority by the Trucial States Council.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, 42 houses were built by the TSDO in Fujairah and completed by 1968.<sup>45</sup> The other areas that had received assistance in housing were Maṣfūt, Dibā, Daqdāqah and Umm-al-Qaiwain.<sup>46</sup> The total amount spent on housing services was in the region of BD 173,000.<sup>47</sup>

In terms of financial support the most expensive projects in the area of social services carried out by the TSDO were the supply of water and electricity. In both areas, the TSDO had spent a total of more than BD 5,000,000.<sup>48</sup> As far as the water supply was concerned, there were different methods implemented to provide adequate water. In May 1965 it was decided to set up a Water Resources Survey to investigate different water resources including: the measurement of floods in wadis; the *falaj* (the underground water canals) system; rainfall; and the assessment of the ground-water potential.<sup>49</sup> Other resources were investigated through the Rural Water Development Scheme by drilling wells and distributing pumps on loan to the rural areas,<sup>50</sup> or by cleaning and repairing the *falaj*, such as the project of repairing the *falaj* of Ḥattā, Maṣfūt, Filī and Sakamkam.<sup>51</sup> Finally, in order to avoid water supply difficulties in the cities, the 'Urban Water Supplies Project'

was implemented in the five Northern Trucial States in 1965. The Urban Water Supplies Project was carried out under the direction of Sir William Halcrow and Partners, the TSC's consultants. They followed a method of drilling certain bore holes away from the cities such as in Bidāy' 20 kilometres from Sharjah, and water was then carried through pipelines to storage tanks in the cities.<sup>52</sup> However, these small projects proved inadequate. For example, in Sharjah with the increase in British troops, as a result of the evacuation from Aden, the ruler of Sharjah had to commission another company to drill more wells in the summer of 1968.<sup>53</sup>

Supplies of electricity were to be obtained by means of diesel engines under the supervision of the British firm of Kennedy and Donkin, the electrical consultants to the TSDO which had seconded its engineer, Mr Wirsle, to reside in the Trucial States.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, in 1966, four power stations were constructed, in Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ras al-Khaimah.<sup>55</sup> In Fujairah, the Ruler had contracted a private company to supply electricity to Fujairah city but the TSDO had carried out the electrical scheme in Dibā town in Fujairah.<sup>56</sup> The total electricity capacity of the Northern Trucial States in 1969 was 10 MW.<sup>57</sup> Finally, with the expansion of electricity supplies in the Northern Trucial States, the responsibilities of operating as well as financing electricity were handed over to the governments of these states early in 1971.<sup>58</sup>

### **3.3.2 Economic infrastructure in the Trucial States**

In the area of economic infrastructure, the TSDO carried out an important scheme which particular emphasis on roads, harbours and town development. Consequently, the improvement of such basic infrastructure facilities had a lasting effect in linking the Trucial States together. In addition, the harbour development also



made it easier for the other development programmes to be carried out. Until 1964 there had been no proper system of roads in the Trucial States, except for small internal roads. However, from 1964 to 1971 over 220 kms of all-weather surfaced roads were constructed and a network of internal town roads was developed in the five Northern Trucial States.<sup>58</sup> This was achieved at an estimated total cost of BD 6.5 million, of which 75% was financed by Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi, 17% by the TSDO and the remaining 8% apparently by the Emirates themselves.<sup>59</sup> The TSDO's role in terms of finance was very minor when we bear in mind that most of the TSDO fund was financed by Abu Dhabi. However, the TSDO had initiated the plans and had encouraged the rulers to participate in them as the following example.

A pioneer road of an inter-state type was the Dubai-Sharjah road which was financed by the TSDO fund and supervised and designed by Sir William Halcrow and Partners. The other roads that the TSDO constructed were some 11 kms of town roads in Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ras al-Khaimah, and a small road of 4 kms in the village of Khan in Sharjah.<sup>60</sup>

The other road project which commenced in 1967 but was not completed until after the establishment of the UAE,<sup>61</sup> was the trans-peninsular and east coast roads of 125 kms.<sup>62</sup> The 'Eastern Coast Roads Programme' was vital for integrating the east and west coasts of the UAE<sup>63</sup> and took some years to complete. There were several obstacles, including shortage of funds,<sup>64</sup> rugged mountainous terrain and wadi beds to negotiate, as well as the use of the area by the British Royal Engineers and by other British troops for training purposes.<sup>65</sup>

The final project that was initiated by the TSDO with regard to transport

**Table 3.2: Roads in the Trucial States**

Roads	Length	Authority	Cost (BD 000s)
Dubai Sharjah	13.5	Development Office	428
Town roads in Sharjah - Ras al-Khaimah		Development Office	52
Trans-Peninsula and East coast roads		Development Office	438
Khan village	3	Development Office	37
Sharjah town roads		Development Office	53
Ajman town roads		Development Office	29
Umm-al-Qaiwain		Development Office	29
Ras al-Khaimah causeway		Development Office	32
Ras al-Khaimah town		Development Office	36
Sharjah towns	20	Sharjah	320
Khan - Sharjah - dual carriageway	4	Sharjah	120
Sharjah - Dhayd	48	Abu Dhabi	1,300
Ajman town roads	6	Abu Dhabi	90
Sharjah-Ras al-Khaimah	116	Saudi Arabia	3,500
Total	221.5		6484

**Sources:**

“Roads in the Trucial States” Appendix to *Newsletter of the Trucial States Council*, 1-15 September 1970, pp. 1-4; TSDO, *The Official Bulletin*, December 1971, pp. 3 and 18; TSDO 23/8, Minutes of 29th Session of TSC. Dubai, 29.8.1967, pp. 13-14.

was the proposal of a road running from south of Ras al-Khaimah to al-‘Ayn, a distance of approximately 175 kms. The road was considered necessary for the road network of the Trucial States as well as for marketing the agricultural products from projects planned at Milaiḥah, Dhayd and Ḥamrāniyyah. However, because there were some financial problems the road was eventually completed by the Federal Ministry in the summer of 1978.<sup>66</sup>

With reference to ports, Dubai was the first to take the advice of the British authorities and develop its harbour. Following the Iranian oil dispute of 1951, the oil companies increased their oil drilling in the Gulf and this necessitated the development of harbours for the importation of heavy machinery.<sup>67</sup> The other Trucial States took some time to raise funds and for the most part, this was done under TSDO supervision.

There were a number of other projects undertaken by the TSDO or by the Governments of the northern Emirates for example, the Sharjah 20 berth deep water jetty which was financed by Sharjah State sources and cost BD 1.4 million. However, in Ajman and Umm-al-Qaiwain, the TSDO had financed 35 metre jetties at a combined cost of BD 66,000 which were completed in 1968.<sup>68</sup> The Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain Governments had to contract other British consultants for further work in their harbours due to the small amount that was allowed by the TSDO. Ras al-Khaimah, on the other hand, managed to obtain funds from the British Government of £43,000 in order to improve its port before the establishment of the TSDO.<sup>69</sup> A further project designed for protection of the small port of Ma‘ayriḍ against sea storms involved the lining of its bank by some one and a quarter km of rocks. This was undertaken in April 1967 by the TSDO.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the Khor Kuwair jetty of Ras al-Khaimah was built in 1968 to enable rocks to be exported to

Abu Dhabi for the construction of its new port; this was financed by Abu Dhabi. The other project which was implemented in Ras al-Khaimah, in co-operation with the Union Oil Company, was a BD 385,000 scheme to solve the problem of shifting sands at the entrance to Ras al-Khaimah harbour. The operation was essential to enable offshore oil explorations.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, on the east coast of the Trucial States the only harbour facility was a small jetty in Khor Fakkān which was constructed by the Public Works Department of the TSDO at a cost of BD 80,000 in 1968.<sup>72</sup> Unlike the other coastal towns, the Dibā and Fujairah jetty projects were not carried out until after the establishment of the Federal Government in 1971.<sup>73</sup>

As well as the development of roads and harbours, there were other small economic infrastructure projects that were carried out by the TSDO or by the local authorities and the oil companies, such as the building of small roads in the towns, street lighting, the building of slaughter-houses, and a 50-line radio telephone exchange in Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain developed in early 1969 at a cost of BD 27,000. The telephone network that was established in Sharjah, Ras-al-Khaimah and Fujairah was through direct agreement between those States and the British Cable and Wireless Company.<sup>74</sup>

### **3.3.3 Surveys of economic resources**

With regard to the third aim of development in the Trucial States, the exploitation of the existing resources as well as the search for new resources and thus the diversification of the country's economy, the TSDO's role was in the main limited to surveys, most of which were on water resources.<sup>75</sup>

The main economic resources which were of concern to the TSDO were agriculture and fisheries. As fish is an important natural resource in the Trucial States,

the TSDO had put some effort into integrating this as part of the local industry.

In 1964, the British Chief Fisheries Officer in Aden visited the Trucial States and after a second visit to the area in February 1965 recommended the development of fisheries there. The recommendation was seconded by Dr. D. Hall, Fisheries Adviser to the British Ministry of Overseas Development, in April 1966.<sup>76</sup> However, when the subject was brought up during the TSC ordinary meeting on 16 November 1966, the rulers had their doubts as to the success of such an industry and suggested instead that contact should be made with a private fishing company. Despite the fact that the Political Agent was not happy with this resolution, he contacted a Bahraini fishing company,<sup>77</sup> but it was not interested in the Trucial States fishing industry. Accordingly, the Agent brought this item to the Deliberative Committee Session and reminded them of Dr. Hall's recommendations and that the Deliberative Committee had agreed to present the fisheries item to the next TSC ordinary meeting.<sup>78</sup> The TSC hesitantly accepted the recommendation of the Deliberative Committee to establish a Fisheries Department at the end of 1967 headed by a British Adviser, Mr. A. W. White.<sup>79</sup> The Fisheries Adviser accordingly prepared a proposal for a 3-year development plan costing BD 2,000,000 and which included the following: the purchase of a fishing vessel; the construction of offices, and a marine workshop; a loan scheme for fishermen and wholesale fish markets with ice plants and cold storage in various places in the Trucial States.<sup>80</sup>

Because, however, the rulers in the TSC were not convinced of the value of the plan, sufficient funds were not made available until the end of 1969,<sup>81</sup> and offices were not ready until March 1970.<sup>82</sup> In the meantime, the Fisheries Adviser managed to gain the support of the Sheikh of Umm al-Qaiwain for the scheme. As a result, he opened an office there, built a small marine workshop and distributed

63 marine engines to fishermen under the Government of Umm al-Qaiwain's loan scheme for fishermen.<sup>83</sup> In Khor Fakkān on the east coast of the Trucial States, the Fisheries Department headquarters was finally built by the TSDO in 1970 and was equipped with a fishing boat for exploration, the Majid laboratory, a marine workshop, staff quarters,<sup>84</sup> cold stores and an ice factory.<sup>85</sup>

The reason for the rulers disinclination over the fishing industry was both economic and social. Economically, there were contradictory reports on the possibilities of commercial quantities of fish being available in the territorial waters of the Trucial States.<sup>86</sup> However, the Fisheries Adviser reported to the TSC in February 1970 that a considerable resource of small shrimp suitable for canning had been discovered off Ras al-Khaimah,<sup>87</sup> and commercial quantities of anchovy were available off Ghurfah in Fujairah State.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, even though the survey samples proved promising for a potential canning industry, the rulers were concerned that such a project would result in the destruction of traditional fishing activities and threaten the livelihood of many of their subjects.<sup>89</sup>

The British authorities in the Gulf had realized the importance of agriculture in 1950 and had arranged for Mr. Robin Huntingdon, an ex-TOS officer, to establish the Agricultural Trials Station at Diqdāqah in 1955.<sup>90</sup> The TSDO took over the Diqdāqah Station in 1965 and extended its activities. By 1971 the Trial Station comprised an agricultural school, which was opened on 11 October 1967 and cost the TSDO BD 7,000 a year.<sup>91</sup> However, the number of students attending the school was very low.<sup>92</sup> There was also a veterinary clinic; livestock breeding; seeds, fertilisers and tractor services to the farmer, and the Milaiḥah agricultural scheme.

In 1968 a 300 hectare agricultural scheme was established by the TSDO in Milaiḥah at the cost of BD 47,172. This scheme involved the development of irrigated agriculture using well water and consisted of the creation of small 4 hectare plots for the cultivation mainly of vegetables.<sup>93</sup> The new farms that were created were offered to tribesmen from Bani Qitab who were encouraged to settle there and become farmers. The scheme was successful in bringing about the settlement of the tribesmen. The Bani Qitab agricultural development was less successful in economic terms because the tribesmen needed training before they could undertake successful farming activities. Instead of following the TSDO programme for agriculture development the newly settled tribesmen established their own rather different agriculture activities.<sup>94</sup>

To summarize the TSDO's share of developments in the Trucial States from 1965-1971 one cannot but admire its accomplishments but not without some reservations. The allocation of resources shows clearly the emphasis that the TSDO had put on creating the basic infrastructure facilities particularly roads, harbours, water and electricity. Yet, at the same time, expenditure on education, health, agriculture and other capital projects had been small, if not negligible. Furthermore, the amount of funding allocated to developing different projects was not sufficient to create a strong basis for future developments. Accordingly, since independence most of the projects initiated by the TSDO have been redesigned, such as the eastern roads, or completely abandoned, such as the Milaiḥah agriculture scheme. Added to that, there was, to a certain extent a lack of integration in the development plans among the northern Trucial States, on the one hand, and Dubai and Abu Dhabi on the other.

### 3.4 Development in Dubai

British involvement in development in Dubai and Abu Dhabi differed from that in the Northern Trucial States in that it was of an indirect nature involving mainly consultative and technical advice. In the case of Dubai, Britain did not need to give aid because the private sector contributed to Dubai's economic development. Whereas Dubai had embraced the ideas for development put forward by the Political Agent in the 1950s, Sheikh Shakhbūt, ruler of Abu Dhabi 1928-1966, completely rejected British pressure for change.

The first important development project in Dubai was the deepening of the creek in 1958 under the supervision of the British consultants, Sir William Halcrow and Partners. The harbour was dredged again in 1967 at a cost of more than £9 million by the British contractor, Richard Costain; the consulting engineers were again Halcrow and Partners.<sup>95</sup> In addition, with the expanding trade activities in Dubai, it was necessary to build an airport which the Dubai Government did in 1961 and which was replaced by an all-weather international airport in May 1965.<sup>96</sup> The other project completed early in the 1960s was a small bridge over the Dubai creek at a cost of £194,000, which was paid for by the Ruler of Qatar, the son-in law of Sheikh Rāshid bin Sa'īd, the Ruler of Dubai.<sup>97</sup> By 1967, further business-oriented projects had been created such as luxury hotels, cinemas, sports stadia and three international banks.<sup>98</sup>

The Dubai Government appears not to have been over-concerned with the social services in the 1960s. Fortunately, for the Dubai Government, health and education were paid for by the Kuwaiti Government and electricity, water and telephone systems were being run by private companies.<sup>99</sup> However, with the discovery



of oil in 1966, social services development in Dubai increased with the building of houses and town roads, the setting up of a new chamber of commerce, the taking-over of postal services from the British Postal Agencies, the establishment of a new fish and vegetable market, together with the construction, in June 1968, of huge oil installations and underwater storage tanks holding 500,000 gallons.<sup>100</sup>

It is worth noting that development in Dubai was influenced by certain elements in Dubai society. For example, the ruler of Dubai himself, Sheikh Rāshid al-Maktūm, was commercially rather than politically minded. He also surrounded himself with certain consultants who were above all businessmen like Maḥdī al-Tājir and ʿĪsa al-Gurg.<sup>101</sup> At the same time the Dubai community contained certain elements of Persian origin who were skilled in commercial activity due partly to their previous experience on the Iranian side of the Gulf. Finally, there was the business activity and acumen of certain British companies such as Gray Mackenzie and Company, the shipping and marine adviser; Halcrow and Partners, the favoured consultants; John Harris, architect and town planner of Dubai; the British Bank of the Middle East; Richard Costain civil engineers; George Wimpey and company; and Cable and Wireless.

However, Dubai's economic development would not have been possible without its entrepôt trade. Since the 1920s when many Persian merchants settled in Dubai, enterpôt trade had been the dominant economic activity. For example, in 1969 the Middle East Development Division (British Ministry of Overseas Development) found that in Dubai the largest proportion of the population were engaged in trade whereas in the other Sheikhdoms the largest proportion of the population were engaged in agriculture and fishing. Dubai, capitalizing on its geographical position, carried out trade with Iran, Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf emirates and

the Indian Continent to the extent that most of Dubai's imports were re-exported again, especially to the above mentioned countries. For example, it was estimated that in 1968 Dubai had actually made a total income from all trading activities amounting to BD 13 million in comparison to the oil income of the same year which amounted to only BD 0.31 million.<sup>102</sup> In brief, Dubai's prosperity by the end of the sixties had made it more than prepared to survive economically without the official backing of the British.

### 3.5 Development in Abu Dhabi

The previous analyses drew attention to Britain's role in pioneering modern development in Dubai and the less wealthy Northern Trucial States. In Abu Dhabi, by contrast, Britain had some problems in pursuing the same policy while Sheikh Shakhbūt was ruler. The problem was not one of money but Sheikh Shakhbūt's stand on development.

In comparison to the other Emirates, Abu Dhabi was rich but Sheikh Shakhbūt's policy would never have indicated this fact. For example, in 1963 Abu Dhabi received £2.3 million from her oil revenue, in 1967 £39.6 million and by 1971 it was receiving £179.2 million (see table 3.3). But the estimated total development expenditure from 1962 to 1966 was only £1.75 million. The projects that were undertaken during the reign of Sheikh Shakhbūt included: a 9-inch water pipe line from al-'Ayn town to Abu Dhabi; a small jetty in Abu Dhabi; two water-distillation plants; a couple of schools; a power station; a small hospital; and a number of roads within the Emirate.<sup>103</sup>

In the following section the role played by Britain in the development process during Sheikh Shakhbūt reign will be analysed. Furthermore, the reasons for the

**Table 3.3: Abu Dhabi Oil Revenue (£m.)**

Year	Amount
1962	0.7
1963	2.3
1964	4.4
1965	11.9
1966	35.6
1967	39.6
1968	64.1
1969	79.9
1970	96.9
1971	179.2

**Sources:**

UAE, Currency Board, *Bulletin*, vol. 1, No. 2, May 1975, p. 123.

deposition of Sheikh Shakhbūt will be considered together with the extent to which Britain prepared Abu Dhabi for the eventual withdrawal.

The assessment of Sheikh Shakhbūt's case and his policy with regard to development is important to the understanding of Britain's role. On the one hand, there is a considerable literature which regarded his position as against development, but on the other hand there appears to be little in the way of objective reasoning. According to Taryam, Sheikh Shakhbūt was against development as was Sultan Sa'īd

of Oman, neither of whom therefore suited British policy towards the area at this time.<sup>104</sup> Al-Mutawah, however, argued that Sheikh Shakhbūt's policy would endanger the area through the spread of unrest that might come from the Dhofar Revolution or through the influence of the Arab League.<sup>105</sup> *The Financial Times* early remarks on Sheikh Shakhbūt were a warning to the British authorities:<sup>106</sup>

If the revenue from oil at Abu Dhabi is not to be used for the benefit of the people, it would be an absurdity for the whole sheikhly system. This will be a great blunder by Sheikh Shakhbūt and a revolution and tribal armed conflict will be the consequence.

The above quote from *The Financial Times* about Sheikh Shakhbūt might have prepared the ground for his removal. On another occasion it was declared that he was 'keeping his oil revenues under his bed'.<sup>107</sup>

The number of accusations continued, occasionally by a prominent British politician such as Mr. Edward Heath who ~~had~~ met Sheikh Shakhbūt in his first Gulf trip in 1966. He wrote that Sheikh Shakhbūt:<sup>108</sup>

was known for his astuteness and his ruthlessness - the former being demonstrated in his dealings with the oil companies, the latter in the way in which he had usurped his father's position and maintained himself in power.

Finally, Sheikh Shakhbūt was accused of treating the British with suspicion and severity. The author Mann wrote of him:<sup>109</sup>

In his relationships with the British, it appears that he is suspicious and achieves a hidden satisfaction in irritating and confusing them.

The above views concerning the personality of Sheikh Shakhbūt can be understood in the light of various points. Sheikh Shakhbūt refused to accept the British Government's advice to utilize his oil wealth in developing his Emirate. For example, Colonel Hugh Boustead, who earlier had failed to encourage Sultan Sa'īd of Oman to improve the conditions in his country, was appointed by the

British Government to serve in Abu Dhabi with the hope that Arab respect for age and his previous experience would be of influence. However, his hopes and the hopes of Sheikh Shakhbūt's British private secretary, William Clark, were dashed and they both failed to influence Shakhbūt to develop Abu Dhabi. Rather the Sheikh declared himself uninterested in their advice and was completely averse to forming a governmental structure or acting on any advice from them.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, in 1962 he refused the £25 million development plan for Abu Dhabi town commissioned by the British firms, Sir William Halcrow and Partners, Scott and Wilson, and Kirkpatrick and Partners.<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, Sheikh Shakhbūt's policy on development had created problems for British companies working in his Emirate. For example, the British Bank of the Middle East had signed an agreement with Sheikh Shakhbūt on 7 March 1958 to open offices in Abu Dhabi territories.<sup>112</sup> The Bank became interested in Abu Dhabi on the news of an oil discovery there and in February 1959 a small branch was opened in Abu Dhabi town.<sup>113</sup> Initially, Sheikh Shakhbūt welcomed the Bank which was willing to pay 20% of the net profits of the branches in Abu Dhabi territory to the Ruler. The Bank also agreed to employ Abu Dhabi subjects as part of its staff as Shakhbūt demanded.<sup>114</sup> However, Sheikh Shakhbūt withdrew his money from the BBME after a personal dispute with the Bank's manager and that resulted in the BBME branch in Abu Dhabi accumulating losses of nearly £150,000 between 1959-1966.<sup>115</sup> Also the British contractors, architects and private investors such as Halcrow and Partners and Wimpey's faced difficulties in getting contracts from Sheikh Shakhbūt who preferred Arab firms such as the Lebanese owned Contracting and Trading Company (CAT).<sup>116</sup>

On top of that, relations between Sheikh Shakhbūt and the oil companies were

also deteriorating. It is clear that at first the oil companies enjoyed good relations with Sheikh Shakhbūt as can be seen from correspondence between Shakhbūt and the Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd in 1960. For example, R.E.R. Bird, on behalf of the Petroleum Development, wrote to Sheikh Shakhbūt on the 28th October 1960, informing him of the financial arrangements that his company was prepared to offer after the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Abu Dhabi. He states:<sup>117</sup>

I am writing to confirm our discussion yesterday when I said that my Co., had much pleasure in saying that it is making arrangements to pay to Your Excellency £125,000 sterling immediately and a further £125,000 sterling on the 27th October 1961 both payments (totalling £250,000 sterling) being advances against and to be recoverable from payments to Your Excellency in respect of royalty after the commencement of export of oil. [Sheikh Shakhbūt's reply was] I agree to the foregoing.

In 1964, however, when the oil companies proposed a new 50-50 oil profit sharing arrangement which had been introduced in other oil producing countries, the oil companies had great difficulties getting Sheikh Shakhbūt to accept it. *The Economist* pointed out that oil had brought problems for Abu Dhabi as the example of Sheikh Shakhbūt's rejecting the oil companies' proposal of a 50-50 agreement demonstrated.<sup>118</sup> According to Sir Donald Hawley, Political Agent in the Trucial States 1959-61, ~~that~~ Sheikh Shakhbūt was unwilling to agree to new and more favourable terms of a 50-50 arrangement because he came to fully understand the terms of the original concession whereby he was paid a fixed royalty of 12.50% for each ton of oil exported from his Emirate. But the new arrangements were probably too complicated for him to adjust to and understand.<sup>119</sup> Or as the *ARR* pointed out that the new arrangements were not welcomed by Shakhbūt because he was appalled at the speed of the change which oil wealth was going to bring to his Emirate.<sup>120</sup> However, the evidence suggest that Sheikh Shakhbūt was deeply suspicious of possible implication of the oil companies proposal giving what he

believed the betrayal by the British over the territorial disputes (see below). He though eventually agreed to sign the 50-50 profit sharing proposal in September 1965.

The other problem that occurred between the British Government and Sheikh Shakhbūt was his stand with regard to the TSDO. Since Abu Dhabi was the richest of the Trucial States 'it is an important ingredient in any co-operative venture' in the Gulf wrote *the Times*,<sup>121</sup> However, Sheikh Shakhbūt was not willing to cooperate with the British authorities by using his wealth to develop the poorer northern Trucial States. Mr. Heath, during his discussions with Sheikh Shakhbūt in 1966, found that it was difficult to persuade him<sup>122</sup>

to help the rest of the Trucial States and to relieve the British taxpayers of some of the burden they were carrying.

But to Mr. Heath's surprise, Sheikh Shakhbūt answered him with some shrewdness by saying: "Who do you think I am? Some sort of communist fellow?"<sup>123</sup>

By now the British authorities in the Trucial States were convinced that development in the northern Trucial States could not proceed without the participation of Abu Dhabi. Therefore, in order to interest Sheikh Shakhbūt in their policy, he was invited to be the first chairman of the Trucial States Council in November 1965. His reply was that he was willing to attend the TSC meetings but was not prepared to chair it<sup>124</sup>, but he did accept their other proposal of creating a special flag for the Council.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, in 1966 he had paid £200,000 to the Council funds and was promising a further £300,000. But, the British desire for more comprehensive cooperation between Shakhbūt and the northern Trucial States and stronger involvement in the TSDO programmes had been resisted by Sheikh Shakhbūt.<sup>126</sup>

The reasons for Sheikh Shakhbūt's refusal to cooperate with the British authorities and the difficulties he had caused British private companies can be understood in the light of various points. One factor may have been the British Government's role in the dispute between Qatar and Abu Dhabi in 1960 over Ḥālūl island which made Sheikh Shakhbūt mistrust the British.

The Ḥālūl affair began with the oil companies' exploration for oil in the territories of the Gulf emirates. At that time ownership of the Island of Ḥālūl was recognized by the British Government as belonging to Abu Dhabi, but in 1958 the Shell Company in Qatar wanted to use the island as a base for its offshore operations, since the ruler of Qatar included it in the Shell concession. The British Government therefore had appointed two British experts and asked both rulers to submit their cases to them for arbitration. In his letter to Sheikh Shakhbūt in December 1960, the British Political Resident in Bahrain, Mr. G. H. Middleton, urged Sheikh Shakhbūt to cooperate with the experts:<sup>127</sup>

Her Majesty's Government were most anxious to achieve an early solution of the question of the ownership of the Island of Ḥālūl...Therefore two experts have been assigned to visit the Gulf in order to examine the evidence of both sides.

The experts visited both emirates, Qatar and Abu Dhabi, and examined the available documents and claims. Qatar, with the help of its Egyptian lawyer, Dr. Hasan Kamil, had presented its documented claims to the British legal experts. Shakhbūt, however, "refused point blank to discuss its sovereignty, on the grounds that since H.M.G knew perfectly well it belonged to him, there was nothing to discuss."<sup>128</sup> He stated to the experts: "Why should I give you documents? This island is mine, there is no need to give documents"<sup>129</sup>. The experts spent a whole year discussing and studying the question and finally reported in favour of Qatar. In a letter to Sheikh Shakhbūt the Political Resident reported that according to



the judgement of the two experts they found that: "... all the evidence available to them on Ḥālūl and the other islands justified Qatar's claims to Ḥālūl. [And] *Her Majesty's Government endorse the conclusions*",<sup>130</sup>

This greatly angered Sheikh Shakhbūt, to the extent that he accused Colonel Boustead, Political Agent in Abu Dhabi, and the British government of betraying him. Later, it was reported by Dr. Allan Horan, ADMA Chief Representative in Abu Dhabi that "Sheikh Shakhbūt was very unhappy about the decision over Ḥālūl"<sup>131</sup>. In reply to the Political Resident's letter Sheikh Shakhbūt totally rejected the experts' verdict and stated that:<sup>132</sup>

We have nothing to do with this which rather concerns you as, before this, you have disposed of Umm Sa'īd according to your wishes and the company has made a port there for exporting oil. You have also disposed of Ḥālūl according to your wishes and erected establishments thereon.

We now have nothing to do with this affair and the matter is in your hands as it was before.

It seems that Sheikh Shakhbūt felt betrayed by the British decision to award the island to Qatar even though Britain had originally recognized his ownership of Ḥālūl. Therefore he accused the British Government of taking sides with Qatar so that they might establish the oil industry in Ḥālūl as they had established the port at Umm Sa'īd in the southern part of Qatar also claimed by Abu Dhabi. The British decision over Ḥālūl island appears to have had a profound impact on Sheikh Shakhbūt who like other Gulf rulers had trusted the British implicitly. Now he saw that when it suited their interests the British would go back on their word by reversing a decision taken at an earlier date.<sup>133</sup>

The other border dispute which upset Sheikh Shakhbūt concerned the boundary between Abu Dhabi and Dubai. A settlement of the disputed boundary was required to facilitate oil exploration, and was regarded by the Political Resident as

a matter of urgency. The Acting Political Resident, C.G. Mann, wrote to Sheikh Shakhbūt on 16 May 1961, that it was not possible to delay this settlement any longer.<sup>134</sup>

Accordingly, in 1961 the British Political Resident in Bahrain sent Mr. Andrew Johnston on a mission to make further studies of the frontier between the two Emirates. Mr. Johnston tried to persuade the two rulers to settle their dispute but failed. He therefore proposed his own solution to the dispute which was accepted by the British Government, but not by Abu Dhabi or Dubai.<sup>135</sup> Sheikh Shakhbūt strongly rejected the Johnston proposals but the British Government insisted that he accept them.<sup>136</sup> (See Internal boundaries in chapter 4).

As a consequence of these incidents, Sheikh Shakhbūt's confidence in the British authorities was shattered and as a Sheikh with the sensitivities of the traditional Arab tribesman, he tried to avenge his injuries by rejecting anything associated with the British. On one occasion he told Boustead:<sup>137</sup>

What sort of a friend are you to give away my lands without even telling me?

Besides Ḥalūl and the Abu Dhabi-Dubai border dispute, Shakhbūt's philosophy of gradual development probably stemmed from his fear that a rapid pace of development would bring social problems to his subjects. Some observers argued that the Sheikh's rejection of British advice on development was prompted by his belief that fast economic development would bring further problems to Abu Dhabi. The *Arab Report and Record* stated that Sheikh Shakhbūt was<sup>138</sup>

afraid of the effects that sudden wealth and too rapid progress would have on his subjects and on the social structure of his state.

Accordingly Sheikh Shakhbūt's refusal to cooperate with the British authorities in utilising his oil income for the development of his Emirate as well as the

non-oil producing Emirates would have created difficulties for British policy in the region; that of withdrawing and leaving behind a developed and stable government. Sheikh Shakhbūt had his own perception of development; that of gradual development which would not disturb the way of life his people were living. It was actually a problem of adjustment on the part of Sheikh Shakhbūt to the new wealth that oil brought for Abu Dhabi. And even though he was slowly adapting himself and his subjects to this new wealth, the British authorities expected more of him. However, when he failed to respond to their advice, the British wanted his removal and this was engineered by the British Government in co-operation with his family on 6th August 1966.<sup>139</sup>

### **3.5.1 Abu Dhabi development after 1966**

We turn now to the reign of Shakhbūt's successor Sheikh Zayed, who was both active in the economic development of Abu Dhabi as well as that of the northern Trucial States. In order to assess the extent of Abu Dhabi's progress before the withdrawal, two main points will be focussed on. Firstly, a description of the programmes that had been carried out during the first Five-Year Development Plan of Abu Dhabi in comparison with what had been achieved in Sheikh Shakhbūt's time. Secondly, the role of the British authorities and British firms will be investigated emphasising, (a) the participation of British firms and (b) the background of the people employed in development programmes in Abu Dhabi.

On his accession to the Sheikhdom, Sheikh Zayed declared that<sup>140</sup>

the ruler who is entrusted with power to safeguard the interests of the people will be considered useless by them if he lives for himself and exploits the wealth of the country for his personal interests.

This statement was a clear indication that he was determined to be different

from the previous ruler in utilizing the oil wealth of his emirate. To his advantage, oil revenue had increased (see table 3.3) and thus Sheikh Zayed was able to spend money on many types of development in a manner that led *the Times* to speculate on his spending.<sup>141</sup>

British officials, who once worried about his predecessor's tightfistedness, are now wondering whether to urge restraint.

Indeed, as a result of exceedingly rapid development, the budget did run into a deficit in 1969 of BD 12 million.<sup>142</sup> In an effort to counter this state of affairs, the government postponed the implementation of some projects as the deficit had affected the First Five-Year Development Plan of Abu Dhabi drawn up at the end of 1967 (see table 3.4).<sup>143</sup> The amount that had been allocated for the Five-Year Development Plan was BD 234,325,000 but at the end of December 1971 the real amount spent was BD 196,000,000 which was 83.6% of the original allocations.<sup>144</sup>

The accomplishments of the Plan in comparison with the previous projects (i.e. before Sheikh Zayed became ruler) in the field of education are rather remarkable. In 1966 Abu Dhabi had four schools for boys and one primary school for girls which together were attended by 587 students.<sup>145</sup> The number of students had jumped to 13,175 by the academic year 1971-72.<sup>146</sup> The number of schools had also increased to 42 by the end of 1971.<sup>147</sup> One of the reasons for the increasing number of students in Abu Dhabi was that students were receiving incentives such as free books, free clothes and free meals, as well as a monthly allowance that had cost the state BD 700,000 by the end of the Five-Year Plan.<sup>148</sup>

The other social services to which the plan addressed itself were housing and health facilities. Before 1966, Sheikh Shakhbūt had arranged for a limited number of low-cost housing projects financed by the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company and

**Table 3.4: Abu Dhabi's Five Year Development Plan (BD 000).**

Services	Amount
Education	12,140
Health	6,510
Agriculture	13,969
Industries	63,100
Communication	82,870
Municipalities	54,260
Housing	16,700
Labour	2,785
Tourism	5,916
Public Buildings	9,720
Loans and Industries	49,880

**Source:**

The National Bank of Dubai Ltd, *Report of the Board of Directors, for the Year Ending 30th November 1968*, Dubai, 1968, p. 6.

which were completed in 1966.<sup>149</sup> Whereas, in the Five-Year Plan a scheme to build 4,000 houses and 17 new small villages with full social services<sup>150</sup>, as well as 500 villas for Government staff,<sup>151</sup> was fulfilled.

As far as the health sector was concerned, there were around 90 hospital beds in Abu Dhabi town and the American Mission Hospital at al-'Ayn<sup>152</sup> before the

Five-Year Development Plan was implemented. However, in the plan there was allocation for the construction of 6 hospitals plus 11 infirmaries and 3 isolation clinics most of which were completed.<sup>153</sup>

Water and electricity are essential commodities in Abu Dhabi due to the high temperatures in the Emirate during the summer months together with a lack of surface water. The underground water is generally saline except for the town of al-‘Ayn where there is a source of fresh water. In 1966 a pipeline was constructed from al-‘Ayn to Abu Dhabi, a distance of 130 km to the east, but in 1968 with the introduction of the Five Year Plan a desalination plant with a capacity of 5 million gallons per day was constructed to supply Abu Dhabi city, and water from al-‘Ayn was used for al-‘Ayn itself.<sup>154</sup> The success of the water schemes demanded large electricity projects, hence, the 10 MW power station of 1966 had to be expanded to reach 103 MW by 1975<sup>155</sup> (see table 3.5).

Economic infrastructure, including communications and municipalities, was the most costly area of the plan and received BD 121 million.<sup>156</sup> However, due to the financial problems that had occurred in Abu Dhabi in 1969, 800 Km of roads were constructed instead of the 1,000 Km target set out in the Plan.<sup>157</sup> For the municipalities, projects of more than BD 50 million had been allocated to provide town planning in Abu Dhabi and al-‘Ayn which included town streets, corniche walls, water supply projects, abattoirs, sewage systems<sup>158</sup>, public transport and market places.<sup>159</sup> Among other communication projects was the expansion of the telephone system and postal services; the establishment of an international airport; the deepening of Abu Dhabi harbour as well as establishing 6 wharfs; a television station; a 50 KW medium-wave radio station<sup>160</sup> and a daily newspaper.<sup>161</sup>

**Table 3.5: Water and Electricity in Abu Dhabi 1966-1971.**

Year	Water Supply m.g.p.d	Electricity KW's
1966	0.8	3,000
1969	1.7	21,000
1970	4.2	70,000
1971	6.0	136,000

**Sources:**

Abu Dhabi Government, Abu Dhabi Office in London, *Notes on Abu Dhabi, 1970*, (London: June 1970) p. 20; International Bank for Reconstruction and development, "The Economic Development of the Arab Gulf Emirates," March 1970, p. 95.

There were certain projects which had been left for the private sector in order to encourage the latter's participation in the building of Abu Dhabi. Among these projects were the establishment of five hotels, five printing presses, the construction of commercial buildings and a project for a poultry farm at al-'Ayn.<sup>162</sup>

As a result the plan had changed the face of the emirate completely. However, the rapid pace of development gave rise to serious social problems. As an example, stress and depression etc., were associated with the rapid development following the discovery of oil. This also affected cultural and religious values by weakening the social relationship of kinship which had characterized Gulf society for centuries.

Furthermore, the number of foreign workers had expanded due to the jobs that were created by the development plan.

As far as the British authorities' role in the development process in Abu Dhabi was concerned, it was less direct than in the northern Trucial States. This was mainly achieved through the British Government's close involvement in the appointment of key advisers to serve in the Government of Abu Dhabi. At this time there were few local experts to advise on economic developments as noticed in 1967 by the London Chamber of Commerce's Trade Mission to Abu Dhabi:<sup>163</sup>

there are few experienced local merchants and still fewer able to handle technical products.

Foreign experts were needed for most of the development programmes and they were recruited by the British authorities i.e., the Political Agent, on the advice of the British Government. The oil companies appear to have been less important concerning appointments. The ex-oil expert, Allan Horan stated that:<sup>164</sup>

the companies supported the development of a governmental structure with the appointment of advisers as being a highly desirable feature without necessarily being directly involved in these developments; they merely had to live with the consequences. Thus the companies were for the advancement of the emirate.

There were two types of recruitment: Arab, and British experts. Of the British experts who were recruited by arrangement with the Political Agency in Abu Dhabi, most had previous service in for example, the Federation of South Arabia or other British colonies. Mr. E. J. Thompson was appointed as the Financial Director of Abu Dhabi<sup>165</sup>, and his assistant was Mr. W. J. Hill; the Director of Education was Mr. E. K. Gordon.<sup>166</sup> In addition, the investments of Abu Dhabi were run by a committee headed by Sir John Hogg of Glyn Mills. Similarly Abu Dhabi port management was controlled by Mr. Robertson; the Public Works Department was controlled by Arabicon Consultants (in association



with Alan Grant and Partners as a consulting engineers and with George and Davies as a chartered architects) and by Mr. Cowdery as the Assistant Director of Public Works.<sup>167</sup>

The other institutions that were under British control were the military, with its three branches, air, navy and army which were headed by the former British Officers Mr. Storey, Mr. Pool and Colonel Wilson respectively.<sup>168</sup>

After 1971 most of these British experts were replaced or had retired, although some did take jobs outside the government services for example, in the commercial sector. However, their influence on Abu Dhabi's development was considerable, firstly because they were in a position to handle the day-to-day work during those crucial years and secondly because their superiors, who were mostly either Sheikhs or young Abu Dhabi citizens, had little previous experience. Furthermore, their Abu Dhabi 'superiors' were tied up chairing more than one department<sup>169</sup> at the same time, thus, much of the day-to-day running of the government departments was carried out by British advisers.

The Arab experts, were mostly recruited from Sudan and Iraq. For example the legal adviser to Sheikh Zayed, Ṣāliḥ Faraḥ, was from the Sudan; the oil adviser, Dr. Nadim Pāchachī, the Development adviser, Mr. Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum'ah and the political adviser, Dr. Adnān Pāchachī were all from Iraq. There were also appointments of Iraqis and Sudanese to the Palace Court of the Ruler, such as Najim al-Dīn Ḥamūdī, adviser on federation affairs.

It should be remembered that during this period the Gulf was under pressure from Arab revolutionary states such as Iraq and Egypt and with so many British advisers, and the presence of British military forces in the Trucial States, it was

important for the Ruler to surround himself with advisers from Arab countries. However, such Arab advisers were not Arab nationalists nor were they in any sense revolutionaries. Rather, they were of Western education and background<sup>170</sup> and, more significantly, pro-British which largely stemmed from their appreciation of the British authorities who had arranged their appointments in Abu Dhabi. For example, Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum‘ah, who held the post of development adviser was known to Sir Richard Beaumont, former British Ambassador in Iraq, in 1960s and recommended for the post by him.<sup>171</sup>

Nevertheless tension did sometimes arise between the British and the Arab advisers as illustrated in the Kendall-Farah correspondence. In June 1968, C.B. Kendall, the TSDO Acting Director wrote to Šāleḥ Farah, the legal adviser to Abu Dhabi, about a complaint that he understood Farah had made to the Chairman of the Trucial States Council that he, Kendall, was addressing correspondence to Sheikh Zayed directly about Development Fund affairs rather than through the appropriate officer in the Abu Dhabi civil service. Farah, however, denied mentioning Kendall by name but indicated that he had mentioned to al-Baiṭār, the secretary-general of the TSC, that he had received correspondence from the Council addressed to His Highness the Ruler and signed by council staff. In reply, Kendall argued that while he was glad to have assurances that there was no personal criticism against him, the matter had nevertheless come to the attention of the Ruler. He admitted to being indignant at an apparent innuendo which was capable of doing mischief and stated that this was not the first time that this had happened. This example demonstrates the sort of tensions that existed between the British and Arab advisers. Even though the Arab advisers were officially closer to the rulers, nonetheless they were in reality regarded by the British as inferior to

the British advisers.<sup>172</sup>

It can be argued that the appointment of British and Arab advisers was beneficial for both the development of Abu Dhabi and for Britain whose interests they served. It can be seen that the development projects in Abu Dhabi which were directed from the Ruler's Palace and initiated on the advice of both the British and Arab advisers<sup>173</sup>, (for example, the Abu Dhabi - al-'Ayn road<sup>174</sup>, the telephone exchange system<sup>175</sup>, the sea water distillation plant<sup>176</sup>, gas turbines<sup>177</sup>, the airport runway and the sewage scheme<sup>178</sup> and so on) were completed mostly by British firms (see chapter 5). Furthermore, once the decision had been made to withdraw, these very advisers played an important role in the transfer of power from the British Government to the Gulf rulers by sitting on various committees that transferred responsibilities from the British Government to the Emirates.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Modern development in the Trucial States under British supervision passed through two stages. The first stage was spread over 10 years, starting at the beginning of the fifties and finishing at the beginning of 1965. The second stage was short, but accomplished a wide range of development projects from 1965 until just prior to the withdrawal in December 1971. In evaluating both stages, it is suggested that Britain's purposes were not the same in both cases.

In the first stage, Britain wanted to keep her troops in the area, in contrast to the second stage, when her aim was to withdraw those troops. Accordingly, the Development Office was created in 1965 to supervise development in the poorer northern Trucial States. As a result, in the northern Trucial States the development of roads, harbours, electricity, water resources, low-cost housing, etc. was

undertaken. Dubai was different because of its bouyant commercial activity and the discovery of oil which meant that it was able to finance its own development. In Abu Dhabi under Sheikh Shakhbūt the situation was also different in another way. He was not happy with the British officials due to the Ḥālūl Island incident and other border disputes. Therefore, he rejected their advice for the development in his Sheikhdom which prompted the British authorities to engineer his deposition in August 1966. The new leadership in Abu Dhabi was more anxious to carry out development programmes, but there was a shortage of experts. Accordingly, Arab and British experts were recruited by the political agents to help in the process of Abu Dhabi's development.

These policies aimed to establish basic infrastuctures in the Trucial States so that they were better prepared, economically and socially for the withdrawal of British troops in 1971. Other responsibilities such as jurisdiction, defence, police, boundary settlements and political unification were gradually handed over to the Trucial States by the British authorities, as will be examined in the next chapter.

### 3.7 Notes and References

1. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 258.
2. FO 371/91348/119502, "Middle East Report," 29.10.1951. See also FO 371/91472, Telegram no. 1628 by Mr Middleton, from Tehran to FO, 6.11.1951; see also Louis, op. cit., p. 54.
3. There was an official document written in the Foreign Office that Britain should develop the area as a means of protecting her interests there. See: FO 371/91341/119420, "Persia and Middle Eastern Oil," by P. Ramsbotham, 11.10.1951.
4. The Maktūm Hospital in Dubai was opened in 1949. See Hawley, op. cit., p. 226; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 320.
5. Trucial States Council, "Report 1969," Dubai, 1969, pp. 44-48; K.G. Fenelon, *The United Arab Emirates: An Economic and Social Survey*, 2nd edn., (London: Longman, 1976) pp. 25-26; Hawley, op. cit., pp. 226-228; Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., pp. 320-321.
6. F. Grundy, "Report to the Government of the Trucial States on Preliminary Investigation of the Water Resources and their Utilisation for Agricultural Development in the Plains south of Ras al-Khaimah in the Eastern Trucial States," F.A.O., Rep. no. 1437, United Nations, Rome, 1961.
7. Hawley, op. cit., p. 230.
8. TSDO 23/6/1, Fund report of the Development Office, April 1965 - March 1966, p. 3; see also Hawley, op. cit., p. 229; Fenelon, op. cit., p. 26.

9. H.C., vol. 745, 17.4.1967, col. 87.
10. H.C., vol. 714, 21.6.1965, col. 1180-1181
11. London Chamber of Commerce, "Report of the Trade Mission to Abu Dhabi," (London: Chamber of Commerce, 4.1967) p. 2.
12. H.C., vol. 750, 20.7.1967, col. 2494.
13. Ibid.
14. W.M. Roger Louis and H. Bull (eds.) *The Special Relationship: Anglo-American relationships since 1945*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) p. 255.
15. H.C., vol. 748, 12.6.1967, col. 78.
16. H.C., vol. 739, 18.1.1967, col. 403. See also H.C., vol. 750, 17.7.1967, col. 164.
17. For Heath's discussion with Sheikh Shakhbūt of Abu Dhabi during his visit to the Gulf in 1966, see: Edward Heath, *Edward Heath travels: people and places in my life*, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1977) p. 152.
18. Trucial States Council, "Report 1969," Dubai, 1969, p. 4.
19. TSDO 23/6/1, "Report on the Trucial States Development Fund for the First Financial Year, April 1965-March 1966", p. 3.
20. Hawley, op. cit., p. 229; Fenelon, op. cit., p. 26; *Dawlat al-Imarāt al-arabiyyah al-Muttahidah: Dirasah mash'iyyah shāmilah*, (United Arab Emirates: A Comprehensive Study) (Cairo: Arab League, 1978) p. 61.
21. The Budget of the Development Fund for 1971 was BD 2,750,000. Abu Dhabi

paid BD 2,500,000; the UK Government paid BD 228,000. See TSDO 23/6/2, Communique issued by the Secretariat of the Trucial States Council, Dubai, 13-14.3.1971, pp. 2-3.

22. Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 323.
23. TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of 25th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 2.3.1966.
24. TSDO 23/6/2, Report of the TSC's Secretariat, 10.7.1971, p. 1; TSDO, *Newsletter of the Trucial States Council*, Dubai, December 1971, p. 1; Hawley, op. cit., p. 229.
25. Trucial States Council "Report 1969", op. cit., pp. 56-58.
26. Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 324.
28. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 29th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 2.9.1967, p. 19.
29. TSDO 23/6/2, Communique issued by the Secretariat of the TSC. Dubai, 14.3.1971, p. 2.
30. TSDO, *The Official Bulletin*, Dubai, December 1971, p. 1; TSDO 23/6/2, Report of the Chairmanship of the TSC, on the 33rd. Session. Dubai, 10.7.1971, p. 1.
31. See International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, "The Economic Development of the Arab Gulf Emirates," (Confidential) Europe, Middle East and North Africa Department, (March 1970) p. 12; Hawley, op. cit., and Fenelone, op. cit.
32. Apart from technical education the TSDO had built elementary schools in Fujairah, Abu Mūsā, Maşfūt and Ras al-Khaimah. See TSDO, *Official Bulletin*,

op. cit., p. 10.

33. Fenelon, op. cit., pp. 103-105; TSC "Report 1969", op. cit., p. 7.
34. TSDO *The Official Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 14. See also Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., pp. 331-332; and Fenelon, op. cit., p. 103.
35. TSDO *Round-up of News*, "Report of the Adviser on Technical Education, 1969", 28.2.1970, p. 1.
36. Hawley, op. cit., p. 252.
37. TSDO *Newsletter of the Trucial States Council*, November and December 1970, p. 7.
38. In 1967, King Hussain of Jordan d offered 6 scholarships to the Trucial States. Unfortunately the TSC could not find suitable students for the awards: TSDO 23/8, Report of the President of the TSC, Sheikh Ṣaqr bin Moḥammad al-Qāsimī to the Council. Dubai, 29.7.1967, p. 9.
39. It is worth noting that one of the ex-technical students (who also received further education in Britain) after assuming a position of authority in 1980s, changed the educational system of the UAE and styled it on the British educational system.
40. TSC, Report 1969, op. cit. p. 13.
41. TSDO 23/6/1, Appendix A, 4.3.1970, pp. 3-4; TSDO 23/6, Special Women's Ward, al-Maktūm Hospital, 27.8.1968; TSDO *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., pp. 12-14. For the malaria survey see: TSDO, *Round-up of News*, "malaria survey", Feb., 1970, op. cit., p. 4.



42. TSDO *Newsletter of the TSC*, Nov.-Dec. 1970, op. cit., p. 9.
43. For Housing and the *Barasti*, see Fenelon, op. cit., pp. 110-113.
44. TSC Report, op. cit., p. 41
45. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 20th. Session of the Deliberative Committee. Dubai, 19.8.1967, pp. 3-4; see also: TSDO, "Report on the Trucial States Development Fund for the First Financial Year, April 1965-March 1966", p. 6; TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 21st Session of the Deliberative Committee. Dubai, 7.2.1968, p. 2.
46. See TSDO, *Round-up of News*, March 1970, op. cit., p. 3; TSDO, *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 11.
47. See Table 3.1.
48. See Table 3.1.
49. TSDO 23/6/1, "Fund report", op. cit., pp. 6-7; TSC, Report, op. cit., p. 20. For further water surveys see: Grundy, op. cit.; TSDO, "Water resources survey," Dubai, July 1970. For a recent water assessment see: Tim Unwin, "Agriculture and Water Resources in the U.A.E.," *Arab Gulf Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, (April 1983) pp. 75-85.
50. TSDO, *Round-up of News*, 18.10.1968, op. cit., p. 3; and, TSDO, *Round-up of News*, Feb. 1970, op. cit., pp. 2-6.
51. Fenelon, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
52. TSDO, *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., pp. 7- 8; TSC Report 1969, op. cit., pp. 27-28; TSDO, *Newsletter* Nov.-Dec. 1970, p. 3; TSDO 23/6/2, "Report of

the Presidential Council", Session 33. Dubai, 10.7.1971, p. 7.

53. TSDO, *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 8.
54. TSDO 23/8, minute of the 28th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 6.4.70, p. 3
55. TSC, Report 1969, op. cit., p. 25.
56. TSDO 23/8, minute of the 21st. Session of the Deliberative Committee, op. cit., p. 4.
57. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., p. 99.
58. TSDO, *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 3.
59. See Table 2. Saudi Arabia financed Sharjah-Ras al-Khaimah road of 116 km. length; Abu Dhabi financed Sharjah-Dhayd road of 48 km length and town roads in Ajman. See Roads in the Trucial States, Appendix of TSDO *News Letter*, 1-15.9.1970, pp. 1-4.
60. Dubai-Sharjah road, 13 km long, was completed at the end of 1966 at the cost of BD 427,000. Ibid., p. 1.
61. The Federal Ministry of Public Works had redesigned most of the previous work of the TSDO by, for example, making the road above the wadi bed. See Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 530.
62. 75 km. from Khor Kalbā northwards along the east coast to Dibā l-Ḥiṣn and some 50 km., mostly through Wadi Ḥām, from Fujairah- Ghurfah on the coast through Masāfī and Sījī to Dhayd, see "Roads in the Trucial States", op. cit., p. 2.

63. See Ragaei El Mallakh, *The Economic Development of the United Arab Emirates*, (London: Croom Helm, 1981) p. 76.
64. The amounts that were allocated to the Eastern Roads Programme according to the *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 18, were BD 892,196. See also TSDO 23/6/2, "The Presidential Council Report", op. cit., p. 6.
65. The British Military Team in the Trucial States (MAT) was training the local troops of Abu Dhabi and TOS. The British Royal Engineers had carried out blasting operation exercises: Jacques, Sabbath Sacking and Saint along the eastern coast roads. See MFA 1/1/3, letter from Major Buckingham, UAE Ministry of Defence to the Consul-General, British Embassy. Dubai, 21.6.1972; MFA 1/1/3, letter from Major R.B. Downs, MAT, Sharjah to Ministry of Public Works. Dubai, 20.8.1972.
66. Roads in the Trucial States, op. cit., p. 4; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 331.
67. During the Gulf War between Iran and Iraq, Dubai port was busy and its dockyard was repairing ships that were damaged in the war.
68. TSDO 23/8, minute of the 21st Session of the Deliberative Committee. Dubai, 7.2.1968, p. 4; TSC Report 1969, op. cit., pp. 33-34 and 36; International Bank for Reconstruction and Developments, op. cit., p. 105.
69. TSDO 23/6/1, "Fund report 1965-1966" , op. cit., p. 10
70. TSDO 23/8, Report of Sheikh Şaqr, op. cit., p. 5.
71. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., p. 105.

72. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 19th Session of the Deliberative Committee, Dubai, 2.5.1967, p. 3; TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 20th Session of the Deliberative Committee, Dubai, 19.8.1967, p. 4; TSDO 23/8, Report of Sheikh Şaqr, op. cit., p. 5.
73. Appendix 8, of TSDO's *Newsletter*, November and December 1970.
74. TSDO 23/8, Report of Sheikh Şaqr, op. cit., p. 5; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., p. 114.
75. TSC, Report 1969, op. cit., pp. 54-55; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., pp. 328-329. See also Note 49 above.
76. TSC Report 1969, op. cit., pp. 16-17
77. TSDO 23/8, vol. 1, Minutes of the 27th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 16.11.1966, p. 11.
78. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 28th Session of the Deliberative Committee. Dubai, April 1967, p. 6.
79. TSC Report, op. cit., p. 16
80. Ibid., p. 17.
81. TSDO, *Round-up of News*, February 1970, op. cit., p. 1
82. Idem., March 1970, p. 2
83. Idem., February 1970, op. cit., Appendix, Fisheries Department 1969-70, p. 1.
84. Ibid.

85. The cold store and ice factory were under construction in July 1971. TSDO, 23/6/2, Report of the TSC Presidency, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
86. See El Mallakh, op. cit., p. 42; The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., pp. 81-85.
87. TSDO, *Round-up of News*, February 1970, op. cit., Appendix, Fisheries Department 1969-70, p. 1.
88. Ibid., p. 2.
89. TSDO, 23/6/2, Report issued by the Secretariat of the TSC, Dubai, 14.3.1971, p. 2.
90. Fenelon, op. cit., p. 52.
91. TSDO 23/8, Report of Sheikh Şaqr, op. cit., p. 8.
92. TSDO 23/6/1, "Appendix C: Report of the Agricultural Adviser 1969," Dubai, 3.3.1970, p. 3; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 328; Fenelon, op. cit., p. 53.
93. For the Mileihah agriculture scheme draft, see TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 19th Session of the Deliberative Committee, op. cit., pp. 4-5; Minutes of the 20th Session of the Deliberative Committee, op. cit., p. 6; TSDO 23/6/1, Appendix C, p. 2. ; and TSDO, *Official Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 17.
94. The Bani Qitab tribe is the most influential tribe in the UAE because they are related by marriage with Sheikh Zayed, the president of the UAE, and Sheikh Ḥumayd al-Nu'aymī, Ruler of Ajman is brother-in-law of Bani-Huwayyidin, the tribe's Sheikh; also they are influential in Sharjah because they live in

the Sharjah hinterland and they are strong in Dubai because they form the majority of the Dubai Defence Force Officers and Private Guard. The Dubai Murqim Oil Field is also in their tribal territory.

95. R.E. Palmer, "Commercial Prospects in Dubai and the Northern Trucial States," *Board of Trade Journal*, 1.12.1967, p. 1369.
96. "Dubai: the Hong Kong of the Middle East," *Arabian Gulf Trade*, vol. 1, no. 1. Dubai, March 1967, p. 88.
97. Trucial States (excluding Abu Dhabi) economic report for the the quarter ending 30.6.1962, *Export Service Bulletin*, Weekly Supplement, 20.8.1962, p. 67.
98. *Arabian Gulf Trade*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 86.
99. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., p. 11.
100. The National Bank of Dubai Limited, Reports of 1966, 1967 and 1968, op. cit.
101. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 249.
102. Ministry of Overseas Development, Middle East Development Division, British Embassy, "An Economic Survey of the Northern Trucial States", vol. I. Beirut, July 1969, p. 7.
103. Hawley, op. cit., p. 242; M. Field, *A Hundred Million Dollars a Day*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1975).
104. Taryam, op. cit., pp. 47 and 56.

105. al-Mutawah, op. cit., p. 189.
106. *The Financial Times*, 9.2.1962.
107. Idem., 2.2.1968.
108. Edward Heath, *Edward Heath Travels: People and Places in my life*, (London: Sidgewick and Jackson, 1977) p. 152.
109. Clarence Mann, *Abu Dhabi: birth of oil sheikhdome* (Beirut: Khayats, 1964) p. 107.
110. Hugh Boustead, *The Wind of Morning*, (London: Chatto and Winds, 1971) p. 232.
111. Abu Dhabi Island: Survey Development Plan and Report, prepared by Sir William Halcrow and Partners, Scott and Wilson, Kirkpatrick and Partners, London, May 1962.
112. BDU 2/43, Banking Agreement between the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and the British Bank of the Middle East, 7.3.1958.
113. Jones Geoffrey, *Banking and Oil: The History of the British Bank of the Middle East*, vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 176-177.
114. BDU 2/43, op. cit., Articles 3 and 8.
115. Lawless, R., ed, *The Gulf in the Early Twentieth Century: Foreign Institutions and Local Responses*, (Durham: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1986) p. 15; see also Jones, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

116. CAT was becoming influential in Abu Dhabi because it was the first contractor to be engaged on Abu Dhabi development work. See Board of Trade, *Export Service Bulletin Weekly Supplement*, "Economic Reports: Abu Dhabi, Annual Economic Report for 1962".
117. BDU 2/46, AD1, Letter from Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd. to Sheikh Shakhbūt bin Sultan bin Zayed, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, signed by R.E. Bird, 28.10.1960; BDU 2/46 AD2, Letter from Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd. to Sheikh Shakhbūt bin Sultan bin Zaid, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, signed by R. E. Bird, 28.10.1960. See Sheikh Shakhbūt's answers translated into English on the same documents.
118. *The Economist*, 13.8.1966, p. 634.
119. Hawley, op. cit., p. 218.
120. *Arab Report & Record*, Special Issue, July 1969, Abu Dhabi 1969, p. 6.
121. *The Times*, 20.6.1966.
122. Heath, *Travels*, op. cit., p. 152.
123. Ibid.
124. TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 24th Session of the TSC, Dubai, 23.11.1965; and also see TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 25th Session of the TSC, Dubai, 2.3.1966.
125. TSDO 23/9, Letter from Sheikh Shakhbūt bin Sultan al-Nahayan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi to the General Secretary of the Trucial States Council, signed by William Clark, his private secretary. Abu Dhabi, 27.11.1966.



126. The other point which was rejected by Sheikh Shakhbūt was the use of the Saudi Riyal instead of the Indian Rupee. He preferred the Bahraini Dinar because of his long quarrel with Saudi Arabia over Buraimi. The British authorities, though, did not like this: they were welcoming the Saudi influence in the area as it suited their policy of gradual replacement of *pax Britannica* with *pax Arabica*. See *The Times*, 20.6.1966.
127. BDU 2/30, Letter from H.M. Political Resident in Bahrain, Mr. G. H. Middleton to Sheikh Shakhbūt, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, 21.12.1960.
128. John Wilkinson, *Arabia's Frontiers: The Story of Britain's Boundary Drawing in the Desert*, (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1991) P. 181.
129. Boustead, op. cit., p. 232.
130. BDU 2/32, Letter from W. H. Luce, H.M. Political Resident, Bahrain, to Sheikh Shakhbūt, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, 26.2.1962.
131. Letter from Dr. Allan Horan to the present writer. London, 16.2.1988.
132. BDU 2/32, from Luce to Shakhbūt, op. cit.,
133. Wilkinson, *Arabia's Frontiers*, op. cit., p. 181.
134. BDU 2/31, Letter from Mr. C. G. Mann, Acting Political Resident, Bahrain to Sheikh Shakhbūt bin Sultan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi. Bahrain, 16.5.1961.
135. Ibid. For Johnston's frontier settlement, see BDU 2/31, Letter from Luce to Sheikh Shakhbūt. Bahrain, 27.5.1961.
136. BDU 2/31, from Sheikh Shakhbūt to Luce. Abu Dhabi, 5.6.1961.

137. Boustead, op. cit., p. 232.
138. *Arab Report & Record*, Special Issue, July 1969, Abu Dhabi 1969, p. 6.
139. Interview with Colonel Tug Wilson. Abu Dhabi, 2.7.1989. Colonel Wilson came to the Trucial States in 1959 and raised the Abu Dhabi Defence Force in 1964. He was also a key figure in the removal of Sheikh Shakhbūt in 1966. He still resides (in 1990) in Abu Dhabi taking care of Sheikh Zayed's horses.
140. Government of Abu Dhabi's Office in London, "Notes on Abu Dhabi 1970", 5th ed., London, June 1970, p. 3.
141. *The Times*, 18.11.1966.
142. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., pp. 108-109; Ragaei El-Mallakh, "The Challenge of Affluence: Abu Dhabi," *The Middle East Journal*, (Spring 1970) p. 144; Dr. Allan Horan wrote 'Abu Dhabi particularly had over-stretched itself financially': letter to the present writer. London, 16.2.1987.
143. For details of the Five-Year Development Plan, see Government of Abu Dhabi, Director of Planning and Co-ordination, "Five-Year Development Plan 1968-1972".
144. File no. 2, Private Papers of Mr. Jum'ah, letter from Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum'ah, the Director of Planning and Co-ordination, Government of Abu Dhabi to Gibrael Butrus, the Holy Family School, Cairo. Abu Dhabi, 31.5.1973, p. 1.
145. Notes on Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 20; Government of Abu Dhabi, Ministry of

Education, "Statistical Abstracts 1971-1972", p. 3.

146. Ibid.

147. From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit., p. 1.

148. Ibid; *ARR*, Abu Dhabi 1969, op. cit., p. 10. The Government of Abu Dhabi had sent 150 students on scholarships abroad, of whom 50 students went to Britain. Government of Abu Dhabi, Information and Tourism Department, "Abu Dhabi: Development and Progress" May 1969, p. 3.

149. *ARR*, Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 10

150. From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit. p. 1.

151. *ARR*, Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 10.

152. Fenelon, op. cit., p. 109; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 334; From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit., p. 1.

153. Government of Abu Dhabi, Documentation and Research Centre, *Abu Dhabi: On the fifth anniversary of His Highness the Ruler of the Emirate*, (Abu Dhabi, 1971) pp. 110-112; *ARR*, Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 10; "Abu Dhabi: Development and Progress," op. cit., p. 4.

154. *The Financial Times*, 15 March 1968; Notes on Abu Dhabi op. cit., p. 20; Barton, Sidney, "Ruler of Abu Dhabi visits Britain", June 1969, p. 12.

155. From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit., p. 2; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., p. 99. The power station was totally constructed by the British company, Hawker Siddeley International Ltd, London, with Ewbank and Partners, London, as consultants. See Peter, Dow,

"Abu Dhabi: Large and growing oil income", *Trade and Industry*, 20.1.1972, pp. 89-91; London Chamber of Commerce, op. cit., Appendix 3.

156. Five-year Development Plan, op. cit.

157. *The Financial Times*, 15.3.1968; From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit., p. 2; and The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

158. A sewage system for a population of 30,000 was established. From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit., p. 2.

159. Three main market centres were established, Ibid. See also: "Sheikh Zaid White Revolution, the Five-year Development Plan for Abu Dhabi", *Arabian Gulf Trade*, vol. 1, No. 2 (September 1968) pp. 111-113.

160. *ARR*, Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 9; "Abu Dhabi: Development and Progress," op. cit., p. 6.

161. From Jum'ah to Holy Family school, op. cit., p. 2.

162. Ibid., p. 3.

163. London Chamber of Commerce, Report of the Trade Mission to Abu Dhabi. London, April 1967, p. 1.

164. Letter from Dr. Allan Horan to the present writer. London, 4.4. 1987. (Dr. Horan lived in Abu Dhabi and was ADMA Chief Representative.)

165. *Statist* "Abu Dhabi: The Wealthiest People in the World," 21 April 1967, p. 829.

166. Ibid.
167. File no. 2, Private Papers of Mr. Jum‘ah, letter from Mr. S. J. Nuttall, Political Agency, Abu Dhabi, to Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum‘ah. Abu Dhabi, 16.10.1967.
168. Interview with Colonel Wilson, op. cit.
169. Sheikh Ḥammdān bin Moḥammad was Chairman of Public Works, Education, etc. See also Notes on Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 8.
170. Interview with Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum‘ah. Abu Dhabi, 5.7.1989.
171. Letter from Sir Richard Beaumont, Chairman of the Arab- British Chamber of Commerce, to the writer. London, 3.10.1989.
172. See the following letters: TSDO, letter to Ṣāliḥ Faraḥ, Government of Abu Dhabi, from Mr. C. B. Kendall, Director of the TSDO. Dubai, 4.6.1968; TSDO, letter from Ṣāliḥ Faraḥ, to Mr. C. B. Kendall. Abu Dhabi, 12.6.1968; TSDO, letter from Mr. C. B. Kendall to Mr. Ṣāliḥ Faraḥ. Dubai, 15.7.1968.
173. The Ruler’s Palace was constructed by R. A. Scott Associates, Glasgow and London.
174. 44 miles of Abu Dhabi- al-‘Ayn road was constructed by Paulings Company. Work on the other section of the road was carried out by Humphreys of Wallington, *The Financial Times*, 22.2.1968.
175. Plessey Telecommunications Group won the telephone contract. *ARR*, Abu Dhabi 1969, op. cit., p. 9.
176. Wei Westgarth won a contract to build two sea water distillation plants. Abu Dhabi: Notes on Abu Dhabi, op. cit., p. 17.

177. John Brown Engineering (Clydebank) won the order for three gas turbines at a cost of £2 million. Ibid.
178. Brian Colquhoun and Partners carried out the municipality sewage contract. *The Financial Times*, 22.2.1968.
179. Idem., 16.11.1966.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Retrocession Process**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Other sectors which experienced developments in the sixties were the legal system, the military and security forces and there was also an increase in the degree of political coordination among the rulers of the Trucial States. In this chapter the extent to which these sectors were prepared for independence before the withdrawal of Britain will be investigated; especially the role played by Britain in the preparation. At the same time, the scope of retroceding these responsibilities to the authorities of the Trucial States will be considered with particular emphasis on the role of the Political Agent.

#### **4.2 Political preparation**

Politically, the British Government had worked on strengthening the Trucial States Council (TSC) which had been established in 1952. The Council, however, did not become active until after 1965 when it became clear that Britain was changing her policy. Therefore cooperation among the Trucial States had entered a new phase that was eventually to lead to an independent state. Furthermore, in order to implement this policy of cooperation among the rulers and see that minor aspects did not disturb stability, the question of a final settlement regarding the territorial boundaries between the Trucial States was discussed with the Political Agent. At the same time he also encouraged the rulers to have closer links with

Saudi Arabia by permitting, for example, Saudi nationals to enter the Trucial States without a visa,<sup>1</sup> and encouraging the Emirates to participate in the United Nations and the Arab League organizations.<sup>2</sup> These policies prepared the ground for a further amalgamation in the establishment of the United Arab Emirates federation in December 1971. But first it is necessary to consider the Trucial States Council in terms of its role as a political institution for the Trucial States, paying particular attention to its impact on the area.

#### 4.2.1 The Trucial States Council (TSC)

The Trucial States Council (TSC) was established in 1952 by the British authorities to bring about a measure of economic and political cooperation between the rulers of the Trucial States. In the meetings between the rulers that usually took place once or twice a year, the Political Agent was firmly in control and the limited funds made available to the TSC by the British Government were controlled by him. In the early years individual rulers used the TSC meetings as an opportunity to petition the British Agent for assistance with specific projects in their emirates, for example, schools or *falaj* restoration. But there were no cooperative ventures between the Emirates.<sup>3</sup>

In 1964 a Deliberative Committee was established by the TSC on the advice of the British Agent, James Craig; in addition, in 1965 the Trucial States Development Office (TSDO) was established. Later in 1965 a constitution was drawn up setting out the responsibilities of the TSC and its two organizations, the Deliberative Committee and the TSDO (Figure 4.1).

According to the constitution the TSC's prime responsibility was for the economic, social and cultural development of the Trucial States, but in reality it was



essentially a supervisory body and real power remained with the political agent and individual rulers.

According to the constitution the TSC's main responsibilities were:

- (a) The Council should decide the kind of projects that would receive allocation of funds. However,<sup>4</sup>

In drawing up its programme the Council will take into account the recommendations of the Deliberative Committee and of the Director of the Development Office.

Nevertheless, real power in the selection of projects lay with the Political Agent who was a key member of both the Deliberative Committee and the TSC. Brian Kendall, the British Acting Director of the TSDO 1965-1970 wrote on 16 July 1991:<sup>5</sup>

as for the development programme itself, this came up in the usual governmental way - proposed by the heads of individual departments (Agriculture, Technical Education, Health, Public Works, Fisheries) knocked into shape by me, discussed in Executive (or Deliberative initially) Committee and finally put to the Council of rulers.

The reason for this was probably that most of the Arab delegates to the Deliberative Committee appointed by the rulers had limited political power as well as little understanding of technical projects.

- (b) The TSC should appoint an Arab expert as Director of TSDO and select in conjunction with him senior members to head special departments of the TSDO. The appointment of the subordinate staff had to be left to the Director. In fact a British expert, Mr. Brian Kendall, who had been involved for many years with developments in Sudan, was appointed in 1964 as 'Development Secretary' at the British Agency in the Trucial States. He was appointed to carry out the duties of the Director but to avoid any infringement upon the

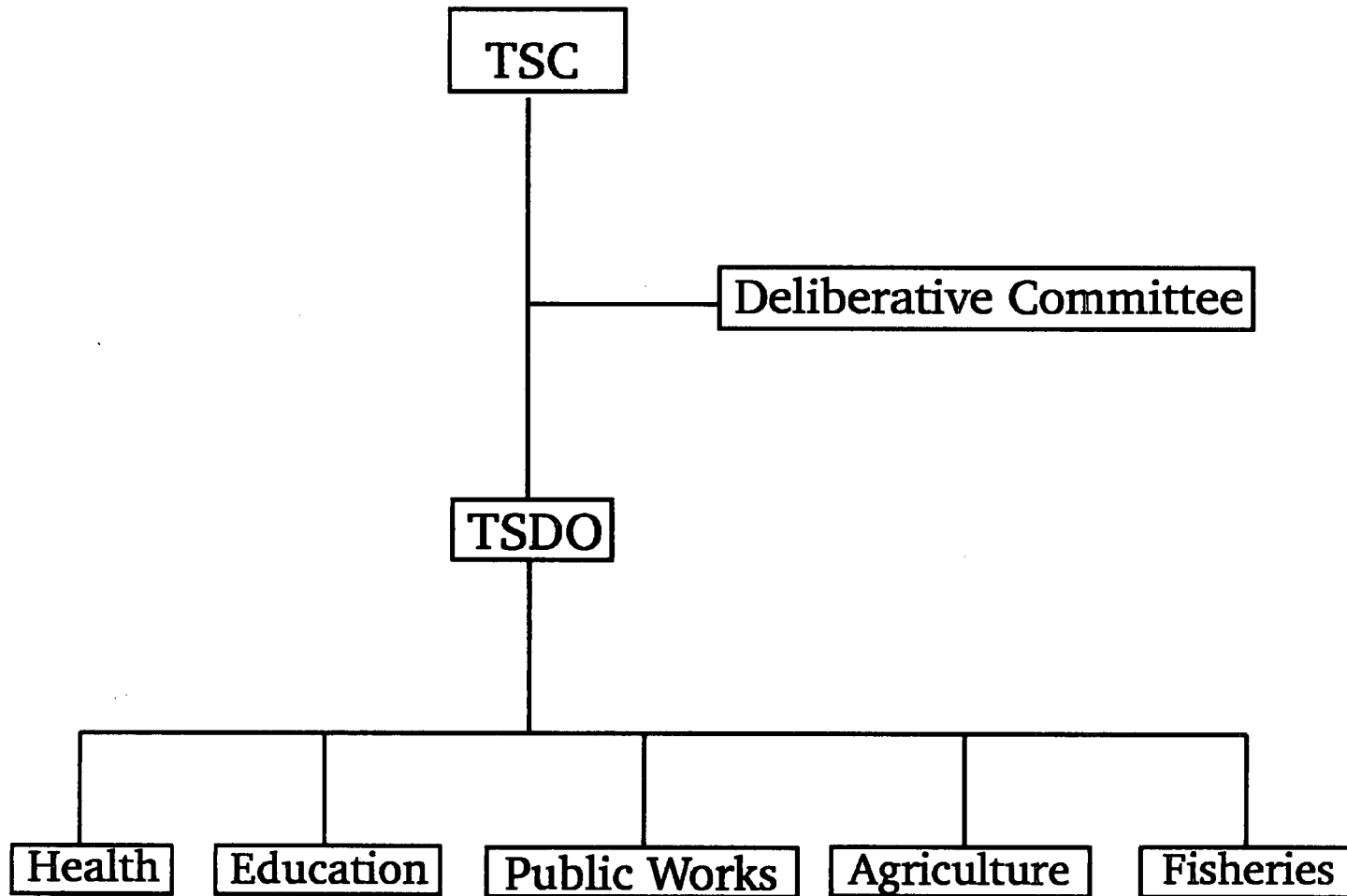


Figure 4.1: Diagram of the Trucial States Council.

Constitution, he was given the title of Acting Director. Mr. Kendall stated on 15 June 1991:<sup>6</sup>

There was a lot of manoeuvring over the post of Director of Development. Of course, in the early days a Palestinian (who held a senior position in Shell) was brought down to Dubai but rejected by the rulers; later Sayyid Ṭāriq [bin Taymūr] of Muscat was suggested but nothing came of this; and in the end I continued as an "Acting Director" until 1971 when 'Īsa [Isa] al-Gurg was brought in as a figure-head Director and the excellent Abdullah al-Mazrū'ī to head the office, with myself as Financial Adviser. [Transliteration is of the present writer]

One reason for appointing a British person as the Acting Director instead of selecting an Arab could have been that the British official would have a greater influence on the rulers in getting the projects carried out. An Arab on the other hand, who might have been from another Arab countries or a native of the Emirates, might have felt that he had to listen and submit to the point of view of the rulers which in the end might not have been accepted by the Political Agent. Furthermore, the British adviser would ensure that British companies received priority when TSDO contracts were awarded. In addition, and perhaps of greater significance, he would keep the Political Agent informed about TSDO activities, as Mr. Kendall in fact used to do.

- (c) The third responsibility of the Council was to approve and, where necessary, amend the development estimates that were submitted annually by the Development Director.
- (d) Finally, the TSC was expected to delegate further authority to the Development Director so that he could deal with contingency expenditure, effect virements of unspent allocations, etc.

As a further step towards encouraging cooperation between the Trucial States, at the 10th Session of the Deliberative Committee it was cautiously suggested by

‘Adi al-Bayṭār, the Secretary-General of the TSC, (who was a Palestinian and initially recruited as legal adviser to Sheikh Rāshid, ruler of Dubai, on British recommendation) that a single flag be raised in the TSC buildings. The Committee accepted his suggestion and recommended it to the next TSC meeting. The flag, which they hoped would become a national flag, had three colours: red, white and a seven pointed green star that represented the seven Emirates.<sup>7</sup> In presenting the flag to the rulers at the TSC meeting, the Secretary General stressed that Sheikh Shakhbūṭ, who did not attend the meeting but was nevertheless an important figure, had also accepted his proposal.<sup>8</sup> The rulers discussed the issue and agreed to have the flag raised on the buildings of the TSC.<sup>9</sup> However, the rulers were not prepared to go further in accepting the Deliberative Committee’s suggestions of uniting the police, passports, flags and various anthems. Sheikh Khālīd bin Muḥammad of Sharjah, seconded by Sheikh Muḥammad bin Hamad al-Sharqī of Fujairah, proposed that these questions be discussed initially outside the TSC in private meetings with the other rulers. Therefore, in its 28th Session, the Council decided to delay any further discussion on the aforementioned subjects until the rulers had debated them. However, with regard to the police, the Council passed a decision calling on the Police Force Commissioners to hold a meeting to discuss their common problems<sup>10</sup> (see below).

Before 1965 it was not part of Britain’s policy to encourage the TSC to become a strong governmental institution. However, after 1965 there were indications that Britain wanted to strengthen the Council to take over a more influential role in the state affairs of the Trucial States.<sup>11</sup>

The constitution of the TSC also outlined the responsibilities of the Deliberative Committee:<sup>12</sup>

- a. The Committee shall be composed of one or, if desired, two representatives of each Trucial State's ruler, selected by him from nationals of the Trucial States.
- b. The Committee shall meet at such intervals in the council and the Director of the Development Office or his nominee shall act as Secretary.
- c. The Committee shall elect its own Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Director of the Development Office or his nominee shall act as Secretary.
- d. The Committee shall consider all matters put to it for discussion by the Council or the Director of the Development Office and shall submit its recommendations thereon. It may also intimate recommendations on subjects tabled by its members.
- e. The Committee shall advise the Director of the Development Office on the award of contracts... The Director of the Development Office shall not be bound to accept the Committee's advice but in the event of his rejecting their advice he shall report the reasons to the council at its next meeting.

However, the role of the Committee was essentially consultative. It mainly acted as an intermediary between the TSDO and the rulers, and real power remained with the Political Agent and the British Acting Director of the TSDO, Brian Kendall. In 1970 the Deliberative Committee was renamed the Executive Committee.

Another important sign that the British were encouraging the TSC to become a stronger political organization was symbolized by the transfer of the chairmanship of the Council from the Political Agent to the rulers themselves. The Political Agent, Balfour-Paul, had suggested to the rulers at the 24th session of the TSC on 23 November 1965 that he should no longer occupy the Chair at Council meetings.<sup>13</sup> The rulers, after discussing the matter, decided that the Political Agent should, however, attend the meetings but that the chairmanship would rotate among the rulers in accordance with the alphabetical order of the Emirates. However, this decision was conditional upon the agreement of Sheikh Shakhbūt who had not attended the meeting.<sup>14</sup> To the disappointment of the Political Agent, Sheikh Shakhbūt did not agree and this resulted in the Council proposing the fol-

lowing:

1. Electing one of the rulers to be the Chairman of the TSC.
2. Electing a Vice-Chairman to carry the responsibilities of the Chairman during his absence.
3. Elections should be held annually, and
4. The chairman's period of office started immediately after the election and finished, with the election of a replacement, after one year.<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly, Sheikh Ṣaqr bin Muḥammad of Ras al-Kaimah was elected as Chairman and Sheikh Ḥumayd al-Nu'aymi the Crown Prince of Ajman, was elected as Vice Chairman in 1966.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Council decided to pay a monthly allowance to the Chairman of the Council for fulfilling his obligations.<sup>17</sup> In the following election Sheikh Ṣaqr was re-elected until October 1968 when he was replaced by Sheikh Khālīd bin Muḥammad al-Qāsimī ruler of Sharjah, until March 1971<sup>18</sup> when Sheikh Ṣaqr was re-elected again as Chairman.<sup>19</sup>

While economic and social matters appear to have been of prime importance to the British authorities they may also have wanted to achieve a political purpose through enlarging the responsibilities of the TSC, in particular encouraging cooperation between the individual rulers. However, the British Government clearly was unwilling to give the Council, and therefore the rulers, any real power. The case would have been different if they had transformed the TSC into a constructive instrument of government so that the rulers might solve key problems together such as boundaries disputes. Real power, however, remained with the British Political Agent.

#### 4.2.2 Internal boundaries

Britain realized that if it was to encourage cooperation among the rulers then it was essential to solve certain important problems. Boundary disputes were a major obstacle preventing cooperation between the Sheikhs. In the late 1960s when Britain announced its withdrawal and sought to bring about a federation of the Trucial States, it was felt that boundary disputes might result in the collapse of the federation initiative. Therefore, the Political Resident warned the Sheikhs that Her Majesty's Government was anxious to see a final settlement to the question of their common boundaries.<sup>20</sup>

Territorial settlements had previously been reached in 1956-57 during communications between Mr. Peter Tripp, the Political Agent of the Trucial States, and the rulers of the Trucial States. However, some of the rulers were not pleased with the settlement and had asked for further investigations. The most serious problems regarding boundaries were the Abu Dhabi-Dubai; the Sharjah-Dubai; the Oman-the Trucial States; the Fujairah-Sharjah and the Fujairah-Ras al-Khaimah border disputes.<sup>21</sup>

The Abu Dhabi-Dubai common boundary was potentially the most serious problem. The 1950s settlement was not accepted by either Emirate and therefore the Political Resident urged the rulers to cooperate with Mr. Andrew Johnstone's (Assistant Political Agent in Dubai) mission to find an acceptable solution for both parties.<sup>22</sup> He was unable to satisfy either of the rulers, but the Political Resident in Bahrain decided to enforce his recommendations upon the Sheikhs. Accordingly, Sheikh Rāshid bin Sa'īd of Dubai was asked to accept the following, as set out in the Political Resident's letter:<sup>23</sup>

(a) that the boundary between your Sheikdom and that of Abu Dhabi in the south

shall run from Sharf Sallūm in the east to Ṭawī [l-]Faqa' to the site of the dead Ṭawī Dhulaymah, to Ṭawī Brāq, to the site of the dead Muāllaqah and thence west to Wadi [l-]ushūsh,

- (b) that the boundary should, for the time being, run through these wells, which will be considered as neutral property. I have instructed Mr. Johnstone to make further enquiries about the ownership of these wells and H.M. Government's decision with regard to them will be communicated to you later in the year.[Transliteration of the present writer]

The same letter was also sent to the ruler of Abu Dhabi. However, both Sheikhs were not happy with Mr. Johnstone's report of May 1961.<sup>24</sup> As a result, tension arose between the two Emirates, but the British authorities were determined to enforce the Johnstone report.

Another event which was to cause tension occurred in 1962. Sheikh Shakhbūt had dug a well near Ṭawī Bada' al-Mughannī which Dubai considered to be part of its territory. Sheikh Rāshid of Dubai wrote to James Craig, the Political Agent in the Trucial States, on 10 May 1962:<sup>25</sup>

It is not possible to ignore or to tolerate these acts. So we write to inform Your Excellency of the course of events in our area so that you may take the necessary, positive measures to stop the digging yourself or allow us to take the necessary measures ourselves to stop it.

The Political Agent, however, in reply to Sheikh Rāshid rejected his threat reminding him that "I recognize that Your Excellency is not pleased with the decision. The Ruler of Abu Dhabi is also not pleased."<sup>26</sup> Therefore Craig decided to enforce the settlement that had been recommended by Johnstone, "Since agreement between the two rulers proved impossible the only solution was for the Political Resident to declare the boundary, in accordance with the authority given to him by the rulers."<sup>27</sup> He again emphasized Mr. Johnston's report by stating that "I am authorized to state that the Political Resident recognizes the frontier described in his letter of May 27, 1961 as the only legal frontier between Dubai



and Abu Dhabi.”<sup>28</sup>

Despite the Political Agent's decision, the border disputes of the two Emirates were not solved until 1968 during the Sumayh conference. During this conference, when the plans for federation between Dubai and Abu Dhabi were discussed, the dispute was solved because Abu Dhabi was willing to make a concession to Dubai as part of the general discussion over the federation.<sup>29</sup> Britain found this agreement satisfactory because firstly it had been solved in favour of Britain's close ally in the Trucial States, Dubai; secondly, Sheikh Zayed's willingness to undertake a concession represented an important step for the federation and strengthened Britain's efforts in that direction.<sup>30</sup>

The Dubai-Sharjah common boundary dispute was outlined in Mr. Walker's (Assistant Political Agent in Dubai) report of April, 1956 after an undertaking by both the rulers of Dubai and of Sharjah to accept the Political Agent's arbitrations in 1955.<sup>31</sup> J.P. Tripp, the British Political Agent at that time in the Trucial States, informed the ruler of Dubai about Walker's report on 2nd April 1956 stating:<sup>32</sup>

that the boundary point on the coast between your Sheikhdом and that of the Sheikh of Sharjah shall be a line running between al-Mamzer and al-bu-Hail leaving al-bu-Hail to Dubai. This line starts at right angles from the coast and passes half way between the houses of Hilāl bin Ḥumayd and Khalīfah bin Ḥasan near Birkah Well.

However the Ruler of Dubai did not accept Walker's report and requested the Political Agency to reconsider the matter.<sup>33</sup> However, since Sharjah, after the removal of Sheikh Ṣaqr in 1965 and the assassination of Sheikh Khālīd bin Moḥammad in 1972, had no stable Government, the boundaries between the two sheikhdoms were not solved until 1985.

As far as the Trucial States-Omani frontiers were concerned, Sultan Sa'īd bin

Taymūr had signed different agreements with the rulers of the Trucial States<sup>34</sup> and the British authorities had played a major role in the execution of these agreements. The Political Agency had drawn up the frontiers between the Sultanate and the Trucial States in 1950s and then Britain, which was responsible for the international affairs of the Trucial States, regarded these agreements as valid and binding on both parties and recognized the frontiers laid down in them.<sup>35</sup> Through these agreements, such as the Wadi Madḥah agreement between the Sultanate and Ras al-Khaimah in 1969,<sup>36</sup> the Sultan was entitled to rule over areas in the heart of the Trucial States territories thereby creating dissatisfaction among the Trucial States' rulers and potential for further tension.

An opportunity was missed by the Political Agents in the area during the fifties and at the beginning of the sixties when the rulers were weak and when the various territorial disputes could have been solved. However, Britain failed to solve the problem through discussion with the rulers. Instead, Britain had to impose settlements which failed to solve all the problems and so tension, and the possibility of renewed conflict, remained high. In 1972, for example, more than 12 people were killed in a border dispute between Fujairah and the Sharjah enclave of Kalbā.<sup>37</sup> Other areas where disturbances might occur were Dhayd-Falaj al-Mu'allā, Masāfī and the region of Ru'us al-Jibāl. The latter dispute would concern not only Ras al-Khaimah but also the Sultanate of Oman.<sup>38</sup>

#### **4.2.3 The opening-up of the Trucial States**

The third political issue that Britain encouraged in the Trucial States to prepare them for independence, was the opening up of the area by their joining the UN and the Arab League organizations and by improving their relations with

neighbouring states such as Saudi Arabia.

Until 1965 it had been in the interests of the British authorities to prevent any other foreign intervention in the area through the exclusive use of agreements which were made in the nineteenth century. However after 1965 there were signs that Britain was relaxing her policy of excluding other powers from the Gulf; for example, American and Japanese oil companies were permitted to seek oil concessions in the Trucial States. In addition, a consortium of Phillips Petroleum Company, American Independent Oil Co., (Amin Oil) and the Italian AGIP were granted an oil concession in Abu Dhabi in January 1967.<sup>39</sup> Further, in December of the same year another concession in Abu Dhabi, an area covering 4,416 square km, was granted to a Japanese oil consortium which formed the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Development Company.<sup>40</sup> The other Japanese group that gained an oil concession in Abu Dhabi was the Mitsubishi group that formed the Middle East Oil Development Company in May 1968.<sup>41</sup> In particular, the transfer to American oil companies of some of Britain's oil interests in the Trucial States was meant to give the United States a stake in the security of the Gulf area. This eventually paved the way for the USA to take over from Britain the responsibility for security in the Gulf. Furthermore, it was felt that the participation of American oil companies would contribute to the security of British oil companies; therefore, Britain encouraged the rulers to negotiate with American and indeed, Japanese oil companies. These negotiations provided the Emirates with valuable experience in drawing up international agreements that were different from the existing concessions that had been signed by the rulers. In this way the Emirates were given greater responsibility for controlling their own affairs, particularly in the international sphere.

The Emirates were also opened up to greater contact with the Arab World mainly with the Arab League Organization, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan. Following the British withdrawal announcement, Arab League officials were welcomed in the Trucial States in June 1968, whereas before that time, the British authorities consistently refused to allow Arab League involvement in the area.<sup>42</sup> In 1969 Abu Dhabi had also begun to contribute to certain Arab League Organizations such as the Arab Postal Union, the Arab Chamber of Commerce, Information and Tourism Organizations and also paid over £3 million towards the Arab Economic and Social Development Fund.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, Algerian representatives in the Arab League recommended Abu Dhabi's participation in Arab League activities.<sup>44</sup> Aḥmad al-Suwaydī, chairman of Abu Dhabi's royal court conveyed Abu Dhabi's support for Arab causes and for the struggle of the Palestinians against Israel during his first official visit to Cairo to participate in the Arab League's Economic Session in 1969.<sup>45</sup> Sheikh Zayed also visited several Arab States and expressed his solidarity with the key Arab causes such as Palestine.<sup>46</sup> Britain encouraged the growing acceptance of Abu Dhabi within the Arab States and agreed to Abu Dhabi's participation in Arab League activities.

After the January 1968 withdrawal announcement, King Husain was the first Arab head of State to pay an official visit to the Trucial States, in April 1968, which probably paved the way for the Emirates to begin to assume responsibility for their own foreign affairs.<sup>47</sup>

A more important role in the affairs of the Trucial States was played by Saudi Arabia. Even though Saudi Arabia at that time was not on good terms with either the Trucial States or Britain, relations improved with both of them after the Yemen Revolution in 1962. Britain encouraged Saudi Arabia to play a more positive role

in the affairs of the Trucial States because that was conducive to her own policy of stabilizing the area. Thus, in August 1964 Mr. R.A. Butler, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, welcomed the suggestion of the Saudi Arabian government for a settlement of the Buraimi question, and he regarded this as a return towards the close friendship and cooperation that had existed between the British government and King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud the founder of Saudi Arabia<sup>48</sup> (see chapter 7). He also considered the Anglo-Saudi relationship, "not only as most valuable in itself but also as providing an important contribution to that stability of the Arabian Peninsula which is needed to permit its peaceful progress and development."<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the Foreign Secretary suggested that the Government of Saudi Arabia should cement brotherly ties with Abu Dhabi in order to facilitate the peaceful development of the area and that, "H.M. Government, as the friend of both parties, would be very happy to see such ties established between them."<sup>50</sup>

What also symbolized the opening up of the Trucial States was their enrolment in UN Organizations like WHO, FAO and UNESCO.<sup>51</sup> The rulers requested to participate in these organizations and Britain readily agreed and indeed offered much encouragement.

### **4.3 Legal retrocession**

The traditional judicial system in the Trucial States revolved around the Shari'ah courts that were presided over by a qāḍī. But the British Government had worked out a different code for British nationals and other foreigners living in the Emirates. British jurisdiction, covered almost everyone and everything with the exception of the actual subjects of the Trucial States and what were strictly

local matters.<sup>52</sup> Its basis was the Indian Legislature and Bombay Legislature and a successive wave of Orders in Council which were issued in the 1950s.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly courts were established in the Trucial States under the Political Agent, who acted as judge, and his deputy who acted as an assistant judge. Further to this there was a Higher Appeal Court established in Bahrain under the Political Resident.<sup>54</sup>

However, by the 1960s the situation had changed and the British authorities gradually encouraged the rulers to develop their own judicial system. At the beginning of the 1960s the British authorities ~~cessed~~ jurisdiction over non-national Arab Muslim residents in the Emirates to the rulers and any legal issue arising was dealt with either by the *Shari'ah* courts or through judgements made by the ruler himself in accordance with *'urf* (convention). Also, in 1964 Aḥmad al-Baiṭār, a Palestinian, was appointed by the Political Agency in Dubai as a legal adviser to the Trucial States, with the exception of Abu Dhabi. Accordingly, al-Baiṭār drafted a number of ordinances for the rulers, and legislation to set up three courts to cover the Trucial States: a Court of First Instance, a Criminal Assize, and a Court of Appeal.<sup>55</sup> However, his recommendations were not accepted by the rulers because each ruler wished to establish a court for his own emirate with an Arab legal expert as an adviser. By 1968 Dubai and Sharjah had established their own courts and Abu Dhabi had established its first Traffic Court in 1966, with a Jordanian lawyer as legal adviser. The other emirates did not establish their own courts until a few months before the British withdrawal.

Therefore, H.M. Government began ~~cessed~~ to the local courts of the rulers, jurisdiction over persons of various nationalities and over various matters.<sup>56</sup> For example, in February 1966 various laws were retroceded to the court of Abu Dhabi such as Traffic Law, Workmen's Compensation Law and a Labour Law.<sup>57</sup> By the

end of July 1971 a total of 38 enactments were retroceded to Abu Dhabi. The jurisdictions that were transferred to Dubai by July 1971 were as follow:

- Workmen's Compensation Law of 1965.
- Customs Law of 1966.
- Police Regulations Law of 1966.
- Traffic Law of 1967.
- Income Tax Law of 1969.
- Penal Code and Law of Criminal Procedures of 1970.
- Code of Civil Procedure of 1971.

In Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah similar laws were retroceded too, but in the other Emirates of Ajman Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah the courts were not ready yet to recieve full jurisdiction from the British courts in the Gulf. Nevertheless, the retrocession process was completed in haste, just before the withdrawal at the end of 1971, which gave little chance for the Trucial States to work out their own laws. For example, the extra-territorial jurisdiction regarding Immigration; the Civil Airport Ordinance; the Dangerous Drugs Law; the Liquor Law; the Control of Fire Arms; the Ammunition and Explosives Law; the Law of Contract; and the Law of Civil Wrongs, were not retroceded until the end of 1971.<sup>58</sup>

At the same time British subjects in the Trucial States were immune to these laws. According to what had been laid down in the Political Agent's letter to the ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, even after the termination of British jurisdiction in Ras al-Khaimah, "the status of United Kingdom military and certain civilian personnel

and the Trucial Oman Scouts" would be continued under H.M. jurisdiction.<sup>59</sup> This understanding between Sheikh Şaqr and the Political Agent, Mr. J. Walker, continued for some time after the general retrocession of H.M. jurisdiction for the Trucial States in 1971, and the same understanding was given by other rulers. The people to whom British jurisdiction was still to apply in the aftermath of the British withdrawal were the following:

1. Members of H.M. Armed Forces in the Trucial States including those British soldiers and Officers working in the local forces and their dependents;
2. Any person serving in those organizations, specifically those accompanying H.M. Armed Forces;
3. TOS members;
4. Any employee of H.M. Government and their dependents, registered by the Political Agents.<sup>60</sup>

The groups mentioned above were also exempt from paying customs duties and were exempt from import and export restrictions, driving licences and exchange controls. They enjoyed the freedom of entry and stay in the Emirates and departure thereafter should they so wish.<sup>61</sup>

With the establishment of the UAE, a similar understanding was reached with the United Kingdom military personnel, their dependents and accompanying civilian personnel, besides the British, who were serving with the Union Defence Force or the forces of any member-state of the UAE. This included British military personnel who came to the UAE either for a visit; such as Major General R.E. Coaker, Director of Military Operations in the U.K. Ministry of Defence; those



engaged in trials like that of the "Scorpion" light tank in Abu Dhabi; and those personnel providing training for the UAE forces; for example, the British Military Assistant Team (MAT).<sup>62</sup>

As a result, even though jurisdiction had been retroceded to the courts of the Trucial States, Britain continued to have some jurisdiction in this area. Besides reserving some legal rights, the Political Agents played a strong role in the retrocession process. For example, the Trucial States Council, on suggestions from the Political Agent, established a Retrocession Committee that was responsible for the general retrocession jurisdiction. It had among its members at least one representative from each Emirate as well as a representative from the Political Agency. Furthermore, the rulers' legal advisers participated in the Committee meetings: al-Baiṭār (Dubai) Mūsā Jayoussi (Fujairah) Y. Dweik (Sharjah) T. Rimawi (Ajman) Ṣāliḥ Faraḥ (Abu Dhabi) K. al-Safreni (Ras al-Khaimah) together with Judge Cameron of the British Political Agency.<sup>63</sup> These legal advisers, as we have mentioned before, were either brought in by the British authorities to work with the rulers or were employed by the Trucial States Council such as al-Baiṭār.

Since most of the local members of the Retrocession Committee did not have any legal training, the rulers' legal advisers together with the Political Agent conducted separate meetings to discuss the retrocession of H.M. jurisdiction to the Rulers's courts. It was the responsibility of the legal advisers to the rulers to bring to the Political Agent and his legal adviser drafts of new laws formulated for each emirate. The Agent in his turn would study them with the other British legal experts of H.M. Courts and sometimes they would ask the rulers' adviser to amend certain sections of a law before accepting it. Once amendments had been made the law would be accepted for retrocession.

However, the enactment of those laws which the Political Agent assumed to be part of the new federal legal system as slightly different. As the record of the Retrocession Committee explained:<sup>64</sup>

As far as the Immigration, Public Security Liaison Office and Identity Card Laws were concerned, these would be amended slightly to take into account the fact that they would not now be enacted in the Council [TSC], and that they would anticipate Federation Laws. The Political Agent would then take them round individual Rulers and get them to sign.

In the record of one retrocession meeting, held in July 1971, the Political Agent and the legal advisers found out that some laws required a lot of careful preparation before legislation could be produced.<sup>65</sup> For instance, there was a controversy over an immigration law that was drafted in 1971.<sup>66</sup> Dubai wanted to exempt Iranian subjects from visa entry as the Committee had recommended for the subjects of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait. This, however, was not accepted by Abu Dhabi because, as Ḥamūdah bin ‘Ali the representative of Abu Dhabi pointed out, it would cause some embarrassment for the newly proposed federation vis-à-vis the Arab countries.<sup>67</sup>

In sum, the legal structure of the Emirates was strongly influenced by the British authorities. The previous Order in Council regulations remained in force in the Emirates and the Arab legal advisers remained actively involved.

#### **4.4 Military and Security Forces**

The post-1965 era witnessed various military developments in the Trucial States. It coincided with the British withdrawal from Aden and with the anticipated withdrawal from the Gulf, that was eventually announced in January 1968. As we have seen in the legal and political sectors, Britain had encouraged a military build up in the area too. Besides strengthening the Trucial Oman Scouts

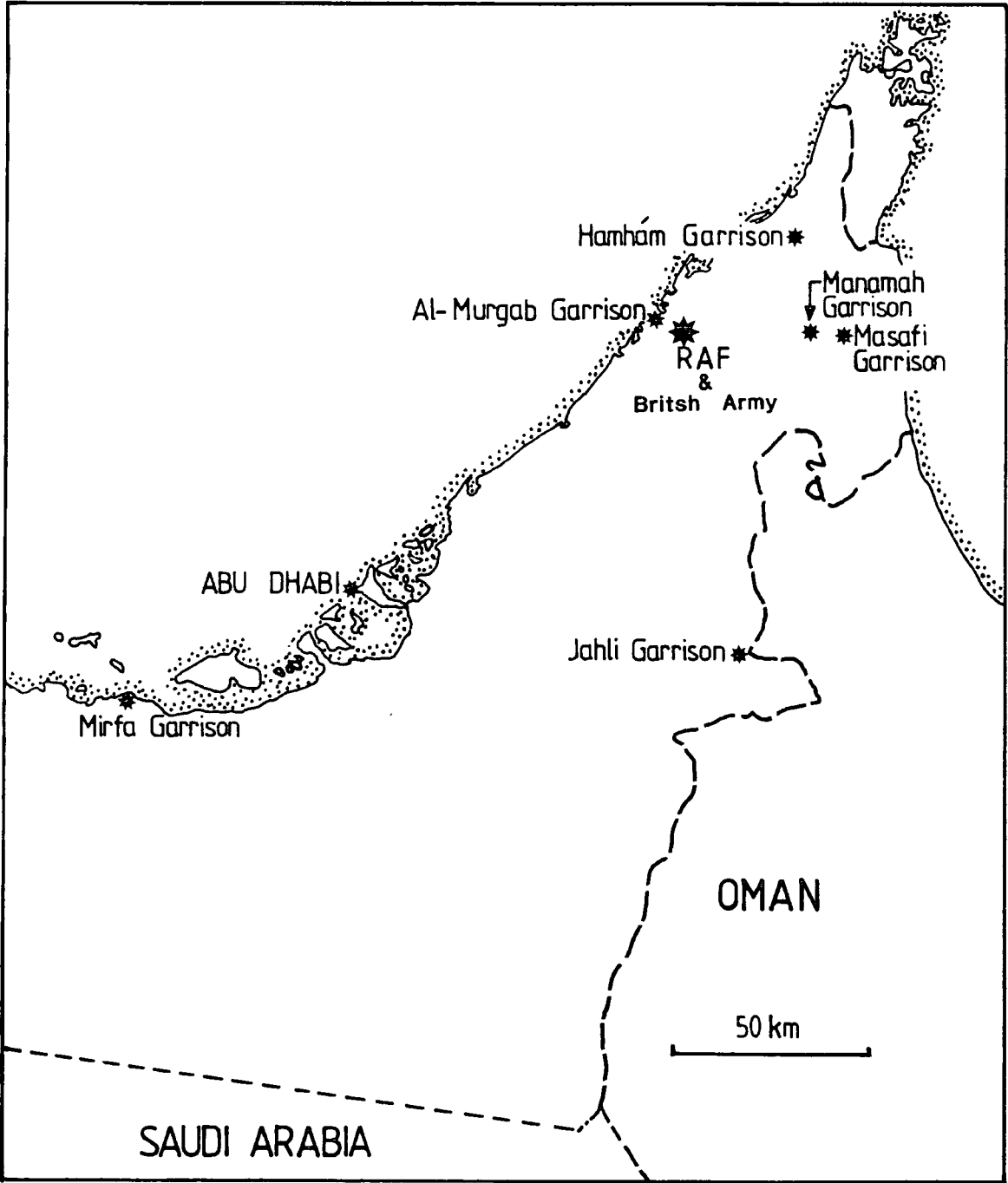
(TOS) and permitting the rulers to establish private forces, Britain later strove to unite the area's defence forces through Colonel Sir John Willoughby's Mission in 1969.

#### **4.4.1 The Trucial Oman Scouts (T.O.S)**

The TOS, which dates back to February 1951, was the first local institution created by Britain in the Trucial States. Its establishment was due to a number of reasons.<sup>68</sup> One of the main reasons was the need to protect the oil companies that were surveying the area for oil. As we have mentioned before, the Persian oil dispute of 1951 had encouraged the oil companies to look for oil in the Gulf. Since no territorial boundaries had been established among the Emirates disputes did occur from time to time. As a result, the British Government established the Trucial Oman Scouts in 1951, renamed TOS in 1956.<sup>69</sup> This policy of interfering in the internal affairs of the Gulf Emirates was a radical departure from the old view that regarded the Gulf as merely an out-post of India.

Besides protecting the oil survey parties and interfering in internal tribal disputes, the TOS was supposed to protect the Political Agents and any other British politicians who happened to be travelling in the Trucial States. In addition, according to Brigadier De Butts, TOS Commander from 1964-67, the purpose of forming the TOS was "to keep the peace in the Gulf States because of disputes over territories due to oil discoveries."<sup>70</sup>

Due to these factors it was decided to establish military garrisons in various strategic areas throughout the Trucial States; for example, the Mirfa' garrison was in close proximity to Saudi Arabia so as to meet any threat that may have come from that side.<sup>71</sup> According to Colonel Tug Wilson, the purpose of Mirfa' was to



Map 4.1 TOS Garrisons

guard the western part of the Trucial States because the tribes in Līwā were in a remote region and thus if the TOS did not have a garrison there, could easily be influenced by the Saudis.<sup>72</sup> Colonel Wilson also added that the Mirfa‘ garrison was intended to protect the installations of the oil companies which had started to build up around Jabal Dhannah.

Another purpose of the Scouts was to contribute to the internal security of the Emirates. Since the area had come under British protection in the nineteenth century, Britain had sought to maintain the existing state system and prevent any Emirate increasing its territory at the expense of another.<sup>73</sup> The only exception was the case of Fujairah that was recognised by Britain in 1952 instead of the state of Kalbā (see chapter one). According to Major Jack Briggs, former Commissioner of Dubai Police, one of the purposes of the TOS was to maintain the old *status quo* by preventing ambitious rulers such as Sheikh Rāshid al-Maktūm from seizing territory from the weaker states.<sup>74</sup> However, serious internal disputes still arose between the Emirates due to the fact that those exploring for oil needed to know with whom to negotiate. One such dispute occurred between Fujairah and Ras al-Khaimah who both claimed the small village of Masāfī. The division of the village between the two Emirates by the representative of the Foreign Office created a perpetual enmity among its inhabitants. In order to solve the problem, the Political Agent established a TOS garrison in that village and eventually a Scouts squadron was set up permanently at Masāfī.<sup>75</sup>

The Scouts also played a strong role in protecting the Trucial States from any outside threat from Saudi Arabia throughout the disputes over Buraimi. To this end, a permanent Scouts garrison was established at al-Jāhlī, one of the settlements in the Buraimi oases under the sovereignty of Abu Dhabi [today in the province of

al-‘Ayn].<sup>76</sup> The Scouts also participated in the Imamate Civil War from 1957-1959 (see chapter two).<sup>77</sup>

The Scouts, trained and officered by the British, were able to strengthen Britain's hold on the Trucial States. In general, while the majority of soldiers were recruited from the tribesmen of the Trucial States and Oman, a number of soldiers (106 out of 1,504 in 1970) was recruited from other Arab countries. When it suited Britain the Scouts were used to interfere in the internal affairs of the Emirates and indeed to depose uncooperative Sheikhs, as for example, Sheikh Ṣaqr in 1965, and Sheikh Shakhbūṭ in 1966.

The process of building up the Scouts, (which had grown from 500 troops in 1956 to 1504 strong in February 1970<sup>78</sup>) into a national force followed a number of steps. Initially a slow process of shifting the loyalty of the TOS away from the Political Resident to the rulers was introduced through the participation of the Scouts in the Trucial States Council meetings. At first, British officers represented the Scouts, whereas later efforts were made to bring in Arab officers to deliver their annual report to the Council as any other department of the organisation. At the same time, the rulers were encouraged to participate in the social and military activities of the Scouts. Furthermore, the funding of the Scouts was not totally paid by the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence (as had previously been the case) because the rulers had started paying a certain percentage through the TSC before the withdrawal. According to a communiqué issued by the TSC in March 1970, the Council of Rulers "approved the expenditure of funds, accumulated from bank interest on the contribution of the rulers to the salaries of the members of the TOS, to cover the cost of making the medals, and to spend the balance for the welfare of the force."<sup>79</sup> This kind of participation by the rulers in the affairs of

the Scouts reveals that Britain was successful in forging closer links between the Scouts and the rulers. With the establishment of the UAE in December 1971 the TOS were incorporated in the new defence force of the Federation.

The other step that symbolized the retrocession of the Scouts was a policy that increasingly saw British Officers being replaced by Arab ones. Colonel Ive, former TOS Commander, mentioned that the Scouts had already removed some of its British Officers serving in the administrative sector. In addition it was decided that the Scouts should purchase their supplies from local Arab traders: as Colonel Ive stated, "We intend to buy our own materials through local agents."<sup>80</sup> As has been mentioned previously, the number of British Officers and NCOs was gradually decreasing and the number of Arab Officers was increasing. In 1968, *The Financial Times* put the British Officers serving in the Scouts at 100 personnel<sup>81</sup>; a number which was reduced to 43 by 1975.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand the number of Arab officers was increased from 20 to 29 in only one year that is in between 1969-1970.

In spite of the increase in the number of Arab officers in the Scouts, the evidence suggests that British influence remained strong. Many of the new Arab officers were from Aden and Jordan where they had been trained by the British. Others were ex-students of the British-run Scouts Boys' School, which had been established in 1958 in the TOS's main military garrison at Sharjah. By 1970 more than 101 students had graduated from the Boys School<sup>83</sup> and a high percentage of them eventually rose to officer rank in the Scouts. Consequently, the British style of running the Scouts continued even though the number of British officers declined.

After the British withdrawal announcement in January 1968, the Scouts be-

came concerned about their future, and consequently many joined the Abu Dhabi Defence Force instead. In 1970, the commander of the Scouts urged the rulers to contemplate the fate of the Scouts after 1971.<sup>84</sup> A number of measures were introduced such as: awarding a Long Service Medal to eligible member of the Force<sup>85</sup>; the construction of cement barracks instead of tents, as in the Himhām garrison at Ras al-Khaimah; increasing the salaries of both officers and men; introducing automatic guns as opposed to the old rifles; and TOS personnel assisted in the training of the new military forces created by individual Emirates.<sup>86</sup> These changes certainly helped to lessen their apprehension. However, the Scouts were losing their hegemony in the Trucial States and they began to be replaced by the military forces of the Sheikhs. In the following pages, these forces will be considered so as to attempt to identify the reasons for their establishment together with the connection between the establishment of the forces and the British withdrawal.

#### **4.4.2 The Military Forces of the individual Emirates**

In the early sixties, Britain had encouraged Abu Dhabi to build up its own forces because by that time Abu Dhabi, unlike the other Emirates, was receiving substantial oil revenue. It was not until the withdrawal announcement in January 1968 that the rulers of other Emirates were encouraged to develop their forces.

The initial reason for the establishment of military forces in the major Emirates was the need for security to fill the vacuum that was left by the withdrawal of British troops. The security of the area was looked upon from different angles by Britain and the rulers. Britain for her part, was concerned about internal subversions inspired and encouraged by one or more foreign powers based on their experience of the Egyptian role in the nationalist movement in Aden. Britain's



**Table 4.1: The Trucial States' Forces**

Place	Name of the Force	Year established	Strenght by 1970
Trucial States	TOS	1951	1500
Abu Dhabi	ADDF	1964	6000
Dubai	DDF	1968	360
Sharjah	National Guard	1968	230
Ras al-Khaimah	RAK Mobile Forces	1968	210

**Sources:**

J.C. Hurewitz, *The Persian Gulf: Prospect for Stability*, Headline Services Published by Foreign Policy Association, no. 220, (Washington, D.C., April 1974); Otto Von Pivkar, *Armies of the Middle East*, (London: Book Club Association, 1979) pp. 125-142; TSDO 23/6/2, "Colonel Ive's report." Dubai, 1970.

response to this security problem was at two levels. The first, was to encourage the main Emirates to develop their own military forces to be responsible for internal security; since, without the build up of the forces of the individual Emirates, Britain might have found it necessary to increase the size of the TOS, who were of course funded by Britain. Second, Britain, together with the United States encouraged Iran and Saudi Arabia to cooperate in order to play a more important role in regional security (see chapter 7).

For the rulers, however, it is possible to identify a number of reasons why they sought to develop their own military forces. Their main concern was not internal subversion but the threat from Iran and Saudi Arabia or indeed from one

or other of the Emirates themselves. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia had well-known territorial claims over territory within the Emirates. Saudi Arabia was claiming the Buraimi oases and Iran was claiming a number of islands belonging to Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah (see chapter 7).

Abu Dhabi, which was under threat from Saudi Arabia over Buraimi, tried to convince Britain not to leave the Gulf, and expressed its willingness to pay the cost of maintaining the British troops. In addition, Sheikh Zayed in 1969 tried to persuade the British Opposition Leader Edward Heath to enter into a defence treaty with Abu Dhabi once the Conservative Party had gained power.<sup>87</sup> However, when all his scheming had come to nought, Sheikh Zayed began to expand his defence forces that were originally established in 1964.<sup>88</sup>

The second reason for a proliferation of private defence forces in the Trucial States was that the rulers were suspicious of the Trucial Oman Scouts. While the Scouts in theory belonged to the Trucial States, they were under British control, through the Political Resident, who was ultimately responsible for their finance. There were a number of reasons for the rulers' suspicion of the Scouts : (a) the removal of Sheikhs Ṣaqr and Shakhbūṭ had been carried out by the Scouts in 1965-66; (b) the soldiers of Aden and the Protectorates, who were organized by Britain and were supposed to form the federal army, had mutinied against their *Sultāns* before the British withdrawal from Aden in 1967; (c) there were pockets of Dhofari rebels in the Scouts (see chapter 2); and, (d) the impact of the 1967 war. This last point needs greater clarification.

After the out break of the 1967 June War between the Arabs and Israel, the TSC held an emergency meeting to discuss the situation. The President of the

TSC, Sheikh Şaqr bin Muḥammad, Ruler of Ras al Khaimah, explained the reason for this emergency invitation, by saying:<sup>89</sup>

I called for this emergency session on account of the present circumstances which our Arab Nation is experiencing and in order to study and discuss together these circumstances so as to come to a unified position regarding them ....it is a duty incumbent on the the Trucial States to assist their brother-Arab States in their war against the Israeli gangs....and since it is known that the TOS are forces that belong to the Trucial Coast; (Sheikh Şaqr, the President of the TSC had suggested) sending these forces to fight against Israel as an assistance from the Trucial Coast to the sister Arab States.

It was a suggestion motivated either by the need for the Sheikhs to express their solidarity with the Arab States fighting Israel, or due to the demonstrations that took place in the streets of the Trucial States, or perhaps for both reasons. However, the Political Agent rejected the suggestion and explained that the Scouts were paid by H.M. Government to keep peace and stability on the Trucial States and that any decision to send the Scouts outside the States remained in the hands of the Political Resident in Bahrain.<sup>90</sup> This demonstrated that the real authority over the Scouts was with Britain and this was probably one of the reasons why the rulers turned their backs on the Scouts and developed their own armies willing to accept their commands.

The third reason for establishing individual forces may be explained by the prestige that the rulers attached to military strength.<sup>91</sup> The establishment of a strong military force using the wealth from oil revenues could be seen by rulers to enhance their status in the eyes of neighbouring rulers, and indeed, in the wider Arab World.

The rapid expansion of individual forces in each emirate and in particular in Abu Dhabi (see table 4.1) meant that substantial contracts for arms and equipment were obtained by British companies. For example, the Land Rover Company sold

hundreds of vehicles to the military forces of the various Emirates.<sup>92</sup> There was also in Abu Dhabi's Defence Force in 1970, British-supplied equipment in the form of Saladin armoured cars, Ferrat Scout cars and 25-pound guns for artillery support. In addition, Abu Dhabi had contracted British companies to provide training and maintenance services for its Air Force.<sup>93</sup> Indeed the British companies had won a substantial amount of Abu Dhabi military spending which rose from a few thousands *dinārs* in 1965 to BD 40 million in 1969.<sup>94</sup>

At the same time there were many British officers serving in the new military forces established by individual Emirates; for example, the commander of Ras al-Khaimah Mobile Forces was Major David Neal, who had served in the Scouts,<sup>95</sup> and Captain Tim Ash, former TOS officer, became a Major in the Ras al-Khaimah Mobile Forces.<sup>96</sup> Other British nationals served in the upper ranks of ADDF such as Colonel Wilson, who was commander of the Army; Mr. Pool, the Navy; Mr. Storey, the Airforce; Charles Winter, the Royal Guard; and Arthur Clements who became Chief Intelligence Officer.<sup>97</sup> In addition to those who joined the local forces, there were some British soldiers from the British Army who helped in training and establishing the private Defence forces. For instance, in June 1972, a group from the British Military Assistance Team (MAT) in Sharjah agreed to train officer-candidates for the ADDF's infantry battalions.<sup>98</sup> As a result, more British Officers, often after their retirement, found jobs with high salaries in the private defence forces of the Trucial States.<sup>99</sup> Besides, there were several Jordanians among the lower officer ranks, but most of the non-commissioned officers and lower ranks were recruited from Omanis and local Arabs.

A further example of British influence was evident in the way that the soldiers dressed. This followed British traditions to the extent of uniforms, medals and

badges, as well as in the names of the various ranks and in the administration. Thus, it is clear that Britain played an influential role in establishing the Sheikhs' separate armies.

Britain allowed development of the private forces because it was believed that they might have a useful role to play in controlling internal security. Unfortunately, the build-up of the private forces within the Emirates provoked a degree of rivalry between individual Emirates. Indeed, Albert Hourani in 1968 had envisaged that Britain's assistance in training and equipping local military forces might lead to negative results and cause intensive rivalry between the Sheikhs.<sup>100</sup> Examples of the clashes between forces of individual Emirates included a conflict between Dubai and Sharjah over the village of Nazwa that occurred once Britain's authority in the area came to an end in 1971. Also, these different forces could be a direct threat to the rulers themselves as was evident by the example of Sheikh 'Abd al-'Aziz, the Commander of Sharjah National Guard, who tried to depose the Ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan, in 1986. The other disadvantages of these private forces was that their rapid expansion naturally weakened the position of the TOS which could have formed the nucleus of a federal government force.<sup>101</sup> Finally, the emergence of five different defence forces in the Trucial States led to the duplication of military installations, personnel and training programmes which greatly increased military expenditure.

#### **4.4.3 Willoughby and the question of the Federal Defence Force**

During the second meeting of the rulers of the nine Emirates to form a federation in Doha, Qatar, from 20-22 October 1968, the defence and security needs of the federation were discussed and as a result the rulers agreed to appoint a

senior military adviser to prepare a study on the subject, (see chapter 6). Major General Sir John Willoughby, a former commander of British land forces in the Middle East and a former security commander in Aden 1965-67, was invited to be the defence adviser to the federation. After spending over two months in the Gulf, Sir John submitted his report on 20th April 1969. He believed that the nature of the threats against the federation of Arab Emirates after the withdrawal of British forces from the area in 1971 could come from two sources. Firstly, through internal subversion from:<sup>102</sup>

- (a) Dissatisfied elements in the densely populated centres.
- (b) Foreign labour.
- (c) Illegal immigrants.
- (d) The illicit importation of arms and explosives.
- (e) A deliberate programme of subversive propaganda.

Secondly, Willoughby beleived that a threat to the federation might come from external sources but not until:<sup>103</sup>

The Union has been weakened by subversion and in particular by the sowing of discord between member states by subversive elements.

In the light of this, the Willoughby report emphasized the internal rather than the external factors as the main threat to the stability of the federation. In addition, the report suggested that the people of the Emirates, illegal immigrants, or foreign labour could be influenced by a foreign power, such as Egypt, Iraq, PDRY or the Soveit Union, and thus attempt to overthrow the federation government. Taking into consideration: (a) the problems of the Arabian Peninsula at that time: civil war in North Yemen, radical government in South Yemen and the Dhofar revolution in Oman (see chapter 2); (b) the policy of mutual understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran over Gulf security (see chapter 6); and (c) the previous experience of Willoughby in Aden as a former security commander from

1965-67, then it was no surprise that Willoughby emphasized internal factors as the main threat to the stability of the federation. However, it could be argued that the report over-emphasized the internal threat against the federation because the subversive elements identified by Willoughby i.e. illegal immigrants, foreign labour and the nationals of the Emirates, were hardly capable of posing such a threat (see chapter 2).

Accordingly, the report recommended the establishment of a small Union Defence Force (UDF) that would contain 2000 men in the army,<sup>104</sup> 8 medium-sized patrol craft for the navy,<sup>105</sup> 9 Tigercat Ground-based missiles to be deployed around important targets and 18 Haucker-Hunter Aircraft.<sup>106</sup>

As far as the fate of the TOS was concerned, the report did not ignore its role, as Taryam has suggested,<sup>107</sup> nor, on the other hand, was making the TOS the nucleus of the federation force the most important point in the report, which al-Sayyār has incorrectly stated.<sup>108</sup> In fact, the TOS was to play a role in the new federal force but a minor one. For example, in Article 66 the report recommended:<sup>109</sup>

- (a) Existing TOS training facilities should be used to the full.
- (b) The British Government should be asked to agree that the TOS should help in training the first Union battalion.

The report envisaged that the TOS would eventually be absorbed within the new force.

However, it can be argued that the forces that were to play a particularly important role in establishing the proposed UDF were the British forces in the Gulf. In Article 58, the report stated the necessity of a body of foreign troops in training and forming the UDF and that was "preferably a British Army training team."<sup>110</sup> Also the report suggested that the UDF's proposed Command be established at

Sharjah because, "it will be useful to liaise with British forces during the formative period and be near a centre of communication in order to obtain expert specialist advice."<sup>111</sup> Finally, the report recommended that "a number of foreign nationals will be required in forming the UDF"<sup>112</sup> presumably British officers. Willoughby himself in the report commented that the UDF could be criticized as being "British inspired and British-trained and could be interpreted as an attempt to continue British Military influence on the Gulf."<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the British Military Training Team (MAT) that was stationed in Sharjah became responsible for training the federation forces. They gave advice regarding reconnaissance, artillery, engineers etc.<sup>114</sup>

The above arrangements were meant to prepare the area for the withdrawal but there was some disagreement. The British, including Sir John Willoughby, Colonel Tug Wilson, (Commander of Abu Dhabi Defence Force) Mr John Butler, (Abu Dhabi Financial Adviser)<sup>115</sup>, John McCarthy of the Foreign Office<sup>116</sup> and several other notable figures, supported the establishment of a smaller army as the report recommended. However, some of the rulers such as Sheikh Zayed, who had a dispute with Saudi Arabia over Buraimi (see chapter 7) did not agree with the report. They favoured the establishment of a stronger defence force instead. The rulers' views were reflected in the Military Committee discussion during the meeting that was held in Bahrain from 15-16 June 1969.

The rulers' representatives in the Military Committee during their discussion concerning the federation of the nine states (see chapter 6) recommended, (contrary to the Willoughby report) the establishment of a stronger defence force. Furthermore, the Committee recommended inviting a military training team from a friendly Arab country to take the responsibility of training the UDF.<sup>117</sup> At the



same time the Committee recommended that:<sup>118</sup>

a request be made to one of the Arab Kings or Presidents to second a number of high-ranking officers and to elect one from them to command the UDF.

After the failure of the attempt made by the nine Emirates to federate, a mixture both of the Willoughby report and of the Military Committee recommendations became the basis on which the UAE defence forces were eventually built. For example, the Emirates' defence forces went along with the Committee's recommendations in building up a stronger defence force but at the same time it followed the report in inviting the British to train and command the UAE forces (see 4.4.2).

#### 4.4.4 The Police Force.

The first police force was set up in the Trucial states in the 1950s. This was at a time when the exploration for oil was taking place which was attracting foreign labour to the region. The expansion of the educational system brought teachers from other countries, particularly from Egypt. This was also a time when Arab nationalism was spreading into the region. The latter rather worried the British authorities who had been responsible for issuing entry visas, controlling immigrants, organizing jurisdiction over foreigners, and protecting British subjects working in the oil installations. Because the British were worried about these developments, the rulers of the Trucial States were encouraged to form their own police forces. Consequently, Dubai in 1956, was the first Emirate to establish a police force, under the command of a British officer. The first officer was an ex-TOS officer, Captain Peter Clayton, and he was followed by Major P. Lorimer, who served until 1965; his successor from 1965-75 was Major Jack Briggs. Abu Dhabi Police Force, established in 1957, was also under a British officer, Mr. C. Stokes.<sup>119</sup> The rest of the Trucial States' police forces were set up in 1967-68, and

were mostly under British officers.<sup>120</sup>

The idea of a federal police force was first suggested by the Political Resident in Bahrain. In 1959 he had summoned police officers from all the Trucial States to discuss with them ways of establishing a federal police force in the Trucial States,<sup>121</sup> after which a police expert came from Aden to see how such a force might be established in the area. However, the proposal was rejected at that time by the rulers and the initiative came to nought. The reason was that while the individual police force of each Emirate was under the control of its ruler, the federal police would not only be staffed by British police officers, but it would also be under the control of the Political Resident. Major Jack Briggs, former commander of Dubai police force, explained that "the rulers did not want a police force with a British officer looking over their shoulders"<sup>122</sup> particularly an officer who had not been appointed by and was not responsible to them. At the same time Britain did not proceed with the plan because, at that time, it was not thinking of a withdrawal.

Nevertheless, from the middle of the 1960s Britain began to encourage the rulers to strengthen their police forces. In 1966, the Political Agent in the Trucial States, Sir David Roberts, was given the responsibility of reinforcing the existing police forces in the Emirates by bringing in senior British officers and by establishing new police forces in Ajman, Sharjah, and the other smaller states. The reason for this action was linked to the events in Aden and the transfer of British troops to the British base in Sharjah, which the British Government felt necessitated a stronger police force in the area to protect British military personnel and their families. Sir David stated that "I had to consider the security of the British people because of the troubles in Aden."<sup>123</sup>

Further efforts to federate the police forces in the Trucial States came about as a result of the Deliberative Committee of the TSC's recommendation on 16th March 1967 calling for the unification of the police forces of the Trucial States. The TSC, in its 28th session in April 1967, accepted the above recommendation and passed a resolution calling on:<sup>124</sup>

The police commissioners of the Trucial States to hold meetings for the purpose of harmonizing rules and regulations of the police forces of the Trucial States as well as coordinating their policies.

Thus, the first meeting of the Trucial States' police commissioners, was held in July 1967 and was attended by the following representatives: Major Barnum representing Abu Dhabi, Major J. Briggs representing Dubai, Major Robert Burns representing Sharjah, Major Trevor Bevan representing Ras al-Khaimah, Major Henschman representing the TOS, Captain Humphreys from Dubai Police and al-Baiṭār in his capacity as Secretary General of the TSC.<sup>125</sup> They tried to coordinate, harmonize and strengthen the laws of the police forces. They also passed some recommendations for the rulers of the Trucial States to discuss.

The police commissioners recommended three points. The first was concerned with illegal immigrants who came in increasing number after the discovery of oil in the area. They recommended that: (a) each Emirate should issue its own immigration law to replace the British law; (b) the issue of immigration cards and work-permits for foreigners; (c) to deport illegal immigrants and (d) to be more severe with the owners of boats who smuggled in illegal immigrants.<sup>126</sup> Although these recommendations were accepted by the Deliberative Committee in its 20th session on 19th August 1967<sup>127</sup>, they did not, however, obtain the consent of the rulers in the Council meeting of 29 August 1967, and thus no unified position was reached on the immigration issue. The rulers nevertheless agreed to issue immi-

gration laws similar to those of Abu Dhabi. The Council's latter resolution on immigration had, however, "reserved the right of each ruler to amend the Abu Dhabi immigration law to fit each particular Emirate"<sup>128</sup> and such an amendment to the immigration law might provide an opportunity for certain Emirates to increase their income by selling passports to illegal immigrants. Also for political reasons some of the rulers felt that it was appropriate to increase the population of their respective Emirates by naturalizing a number of illegal immigrants. Furthermore special privileges were given by Dubai to Iranian immigrants because of the friendly relations which existed between Iran and Dubai.<sup>129</sup> On 1st April 1971, the deputy commissioner of Abu Dhabi's police force, Ḥamūdah bin 'Ali, had explained to his Government how Dubai was embarrassing them by allowing Iranians to enter Dubai without restrictions. He further explained:<sup>130</sup>

I, as a representative of Abu Dhabi, raised my objections to the matter and explained to them that we in Abu Dhabi have certain rules and we are not intending to violate them. The reason for my objections is that Dubai, by favouring certain people like Iranians, would put us in an embarrassing situation vis-a-vis the other Arab countries.

The second recommendation that came out of the commissioners meeting was the unification of the laws and regulations of the Trucial States' police. This suggestion was seconded by the Deliberative Committee who asked the Emirates to make their police rules conform to a similar pattern.<sup>131</sup> This recommendation was also duly accepted by the rulers in their 29th Session as above<sup>132</sup>.

The third recommendation of the commissioners was a controversial issue as far as the rulers were concerned. The commissioners called for the establishment of a central jail, a police college, a central office for criminal registration and an annual bulletin for the Police.<sup>133</sup> The rulers did not accept that recommendation for the reason that it had sounded too federal at the time seeing that the withdrawal had

not yet been conceived. Also the rulers felt that each Emirate should supply its own police requirements.

The spirit of co-ordination among the police departments of the Trucial States had not improved enough to stop the waves of illegal immigrants which arrived in the area. Furthermore, with the absence of legal provisions for deciding on nationality many illegal immigrants were able to buy passports and this entitled them to nationality.<sup>134</sup> As a result, the police commissioners of the Trucial States failed to arrive at a clear conclusion with respect to federating the police forces of the Emirates.

There were, however, further meetings of the police commissioners during the time leading up to the withdrawal. For example, on 25th March 1971 a meeting was held in Dubai, and was attended by the police commissioners of the Trucial States, as well as by the Political Agent in the Trucial States, Mr. J. Walker<sup>135</sup>, and Major Briggs, representative of Dubai, presided over the meeting. He suggested the establishment of a central registration office for crimes, unifying regulations and laws of the police, unifying dress, salaries of the police and so on.<sup>136</sup> He also pointed out that his urgent message was totally supported by H.M. Political Agent Mr. J. Walker. The Political Agent explained to them ways of enhancing the security of the area by proposing some recommendations and promised to ask for support from H.M. Government with a view to developing the Emirates' Police.

The first recommendation by Walker was to establish a general security council which would co-ordinate the police forces of the Emirates. The second recommendation suggested connecting the whole area to one radio network; and the third was to establish 'a special branch' to deal with crime investigation in each

Emirate. He was keen to form a radio network for the police by providing extra facilities for the police forces in Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah and also to establish a special branch in any Emirate which did not possess one at that time.

The success of the general security council idea was doubtful since the representative of Abu Dhabi, Mr. N. Ḥamūdī, questioned the reason why it should not be established in Abu Dhabi.<sup>137</sup> Ḥamūdī had thought that it was part of the British plan to make Dubai the focal-point of power. The commissioners recommendations for a central jail, general security council and the unification of the police regulations were on the agenda of the rulers' 33rd Session in July 1971, but the rulers were too busy negotiating the actual formation of the UAE and therefore their final communiqué did not mention these issues.<sup>138</sup>

The other important issue that the police representatives discussed in their March 1971 meeting was the subject of illegal immigration. Their response to this was to ask Abu Dhabi to deploy its coastal guards to inspect the coasts of the whole Emirates in order to restrict illegal immigration, together with drugs and gun-running. They also discussed an immigration law and this was duly passed in November 1971.<sup>139</sup>

## 4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to study developments within the Trucial States in the political, legal, security and military contexts of the sixties. The subsequent aim was to analyse the process of retroceding those responsibilities from H.M. Government to the authorities within the Trucial States.

In order to create some political coordination among the rulers of the Trucial

States three political points were studied. The most important was the emergence of the Trucial States Council which was to form the basis of a new federal state. Besides its annual sessions, which were attended by the rulers of the Seven Trucial States and the Political Agent, the Council also supervised the economic development of the area.

However, due to various obstacles such as the boundary disputes between the emirates, the TSC was prevented from becoming a strong political body. The latter problem had been recognized earlier by the British authorities in the Gulf and so they had made the Sheikhs promise to accept the findings of several British missions. The third political development involved opening up the country to outsiders such as the American oil companies, the Arab League and the various UN organizations.

This of course increased the judicial burden and as a result the rulers were encouraged to take over the whole area and the old practice of foreigners being tried by H.M. courts was abandoned. However, the gradual retrocession of legal rights to the courts of the rulers had created a certain amount of confusion which had enabled illegal immigrants to settle in the area. Even though it was the task of the police to prevent illegal immigrants getting into the Trucial States, they were unable to do so, due both to the lack of appropriate laws, and the absence of cooperation among the police forces of the Emirates.

As far as security of the area was concerned, Britain had first created the Trucial Oman Scouts in 1951. It had then encouraged the rulers to build up their own private forces and finally the British tried to unite the area's military forces through the efforts of Sir John Willoughby in 1969.

The purpose of all this effort was to prepare the Emirates to rule themselves after the withdrawal of British troops in 1971. It is interesting to see that Britain was successful in her attempt to retrocede her responsibilities for law and order, the police and the military to the rulers of the Trucial States. However this was obtained not without cost. The highest price that the Emirates paid was the significant number of illegal immigrants, mainly from Iran, who settled in the area. Furthermore, multiplication of military forces in the Emirates was a possible source of instability instead of the intended aim of stabilizing the area. Finally, Britain was not entirely successful in solving the numerous boundary disputes both between the Emirates themselves and also between them and neighbouring States which again represented a potential destabilizing force in the area.



## 4.6 Notes and References

1. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 29th Session of the TSC, 28.8.1963, pp. 4-5.
2. The Council decided to apply for membership of W.H.O., F.A.O., UNESCO, and Save the Children Fund. TSDO 23/6/2, Communique issued by the TSC, Appendix A. Dubai, 3.3.1970, p. 2.
3. For background on the TSC see: Hawley, op. cit., pp. 176-178; al-Mutawa, op. cit, pp. 176-179; and A. al-Sayyār, *al-Uṣūl al-tārīkhiyyah wa-'l-taṭawwurāt al-mu'āṣirah li-l-wiḥdah bayn imārāt al-sāḥil al-'Umānī*, (The historical origins and contemporary developments for unity among the emirates of the Omani coast) (University of 'Ayn Shams, Ph.D. thesis, 1983) pp. 377-383.
4. TSDO 23/8/1, Distribution of Responsibility, Dubai 1966.
5. Letter from Brian Kendall. Oxford, 16.7.1991.
6. See TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 27th Session op. cit., p. 5; and, TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 26th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 8.6.1966, Clause 14th.
7. TSDO 23/8, The 10th Session of the Deliberative Committee. Dubai, 31.1.1966.
8. TSDO 23/9, Letter from Sheikh Shakhbūt to the TSC General Secretary, op. cit.
9. TSDO 23/8, vol. 1, Minutes of the 26 Session of TSC. Dubai, 8.6.1966; See also TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 25th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 23.5.1966.
10. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 28th Session, op. cit., p. 9.
11. Hawley, op. cit., p. 178.

12. TSDO 23/8/1, Distribution of responsibility, Dubai 1966.
13. Trucial States Council Report 1969, op. cit., p. 49.
14. TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 24th Session of the TSC. Dubai, 23.11.1965.
15. TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 25th Session of TSC. Dubai, 2.3.1966.
16. Ibid.
17. TSDO 23/8/1, Minutes of the 29th Session of TSC, op. cit., p. 18.
18. TSDO 23/6/1, *Round up of News*, for the fortnight ending 18th Oct. 1968.  
p. 1.
19. TSDO 23/6/2, Communique Issued by the Secretariat of the TSC. op, cit.,  
p. 3.
20. TSDO 23/6/3, Memorandum prepared by H.M. Political Agent, regarding  
the boundaries between the Trucial States. Dubai, 1968.
21. MFA 1/3/3 Letter from Mr. C.J. Treadwell, British Ambassador, Muscat,  
to Mr Qais al-Zawāwī, Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Muscat,  
21.9.1979.
22. For further information on the boundary issue see: Moḥammad Rāshid al-Fil  
"The Boundary disbutes between the Emirates of the United Arab Emirates  
and her neighbours," *Journal of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, vol.  
2 no. 8, (Oct. 1976) pp. 25-64.
23. BDU 2/31 letter from Man to Sheikh Shakhbūṭ, op. cit.; BDU 2/37 letter  
from Sir William Luce to Shakhbūṭ, op. cit.

24. BDU 14/119 letter from Sir William Luce, H.M. Political Resident in Bahrain to Sheikh Rāshid bin Sa'īd Ruler of Dubai. Bahrain, 27.5.1961. See also the Arabic Translation of the letter op. cit., and see also BDU 2/31 letter from Sir William Luce to Sheikh Shakhbūt, op. cit.
25. BDU 2/31 Letter from Sheikh Shakhbūt, Ruler of Abu Dhabi to Sir William Luce, op. cit.
26. BDU 14/119 Letter from Sheikh Rāshid bin Sa'īd, Ruler of Dubai to Mr. J. Craig, H.M. Political Resident in Dubai. Dubai, 10.5.1962.
27. BDU 14/119 Letter from H.M. Political Agent, Mr. J. Craig to Sheikh Rāshid, Ruler of Dubai. Dubai, 3.2.1963.
28. Ibid.
29. TSDO 23/6/1, Communique signed by Sheikh Rāshid, Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Aḥmad bin 'Ali Ruler of Qatar. Dubai 18.2.1969.
30. *The Financial Times*, 3.2.1969.
31. BDU 15/117 Letter from J.P. Tripp, H.M. Political Agent Trucial States to Sheikh Sa'īd bin Maktūm Ruler of Dubai and Sheikh Rāshid bin Sa'īd Regent of Dubai. Dubai, 2.4.1956.
32. BDU 15/117 Letter from Sheikh Sa'īd bin Maktūm al-Ḥasher to C.M. Pire-Gordon, Political Agent, Trucial States. Dubai, 18.3.1955.
33. BDU 15/117 Letter from Sa'īd bin Maktūm to Mr. Peter Tripp. Dubai, 5.6.1956.
34. See BDU 15/118 Agreement between Sultan of Muscat & Oman, Sa'īd bin

Taymūr and Sheikh Rāshid bin Sa'īd al-Maktūm Ruler of Dubai, regarding their frontier, 1959. And see BDU 14/76 The Frontier Agreement between Sultan of Muscat & Oman, Sa'īd bin Taymūr and Sheikh Rāshid bin Ḥumayd Al-Nu'īmī Ruler of Ajman, 1959.

35. BDU 14/75 Letter from M.C.G. Man, Acting Political Resident, Bahrain, to Sheikh Rāshid bin Ḥumayd Al-Nu'īmī, Ruler of Ajman. Bahrain, 13.8.1959.
36. MFA, Memorandum: Frontiers between the Emirates and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.
37. BBC, *SWB*, ME/4017/A/6, 17.6.1972; BBC, *SWB*, ME/4015/A/3, 15.6.1972; and BBC, *SWB*, ME/4014/A/7, 14.6.1972.
38. J. Walker drew the boundaries of the Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman in the 1950s. J. Walker "The Boundaries of the UAE and Oman," Lecture given at Durham University, Durham July 1991.
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40. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-116.
41. *The Financial Times*, 22.5.1968. See the Agreement in al-Otaiba, *The Petroleum concession Agreements of the United Arab Emirates*, op. cit., pp. 117-145.
42. *Al-Ḥayāt*, 4.3.1969.
43. *Al-Akbār*, 22.1.1969; and *ARR*, 'Abu Dhabi 1969,' op. cit., p. 4.
44. *Al-Anwār*, 26.1.1969.

45. *Al-Ahrām*, 20.1.1969; *Akḥḥer Sa‘ah*, 29.1.1969; and *Al-Ittiḥād*, 23.1.1969.
46. Abu Dhabi: on the fifth anniversary of H.H. the Ruler of the Emirate, op. cit., pp. 49-54.
47. *Arabian Gulf Trade*, vol. 1, no. 2, Sep. 1968, op. cit., pp. 38-39; and *The Times*, 17.4.1968. It was stated that Abu Dhabi assisted Jordan with £14m. in 1968. See *al-Shams*, 26.1.1969.
48. BDU 2/33 Letter from R.A. Butler H.M. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Prince Fayṣal bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Saūd, Viceroy of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. London, 14.8.1964.
49. Ibid
50. Ibid
51. TSDO 23/8, The 30th session of TSC, op. cit.; and TSDO 23/6/2, Communique, op. cit., and see Footnote 2.
52. Balentine, op. cit., p. 8.
53. *The Persian Gulf Gazettee* (supplement). (London: H.M.S.O, 1959-1969).
54. Al-Baharna, *The Arabian Gulf States*, op. cit., p. 10.
55. Hawley, op. cit., p. 181.
56. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit. p. 316; and Balentine op. cit., pp. 8-9.
57. TSDO 23/6/3, Memorandum on jurisdiction retrocession to Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi, 7.4.1971.

58. TSDO 23/6/1, Record of Retrocession Meeting Held on Tuesday. Dubai, 20.7.1971.
59. TSDO 23/9/4, Letter from J.F. Walker, H.M. Political Agent, Trucial States to Sheikh Şaqr bin Muḥammad al-Qāsimī, Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah. Dubai, 11.11.1971.
60. Ibid. And see TSDO 23/6/3, Memorandum on Jurisdiction Retrocession to Abu Dhabi, op. cit.
61. TSDO 23/9/4, Walker to Sheikh Şaqr, op. cit.
62. MFA 1/1/3, Letter from E.J. Treadwell, U.K. Ambassador, in the UAE to the President of the UAE Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Āl Nahayān, Abu Dhabi, March 1972; and its reply in MFA 1/1/3, Letter from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Āl Nahayān, President of the UAE, to Mr. E.J. Treadwell, H.M. Ambassador to the UAE. Abu Dhabi, 15.3.1972.
63. TSDO 23/6/2, Recommendations of the Trucial States' representatives. Dubai, 13-14.3.1971; and TSDO 23/6/1, Records of Retrocession, op. cit.
64. TSDO 23/6/1, Record of Retrocession, op. cit.
65. TSDO 23/7 Immigration Draft, no. (1), 1971. Dubai, (Secret).
66. Ibid.
67. TSDO 23/8/2, Minutes of Immigration and Retrocession process. Abu Dhabi, 1.4.1971, (Secret). See also: TSDO 23/6/2, Letter from N. Ḥamūdī to the Minister of State regarding the 33 session of the TSC. Abu Dhabi, July 1971, (Top secret).

68. For background on the TOS see: "Trucial Oman Scouts - Handbook," Dubai, 24 June 1969; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, op. cit., pp. 312-314; al-Mutawa, op. cit., pp. 151-154; and FO 3711/121370, Letter from Rupert Hay to Churchill, op. cit.
69. Fenelon, op. cit., pp. 14-21; and TOS Handbook, op. cit., p. 5.
70. Interview with De Butts, op. cit.
71. See MAP no. 4.2.
72. Colonel Wilson, op. cit.
73. John Duke Anthony, *Arab States of the Lower Gulf: People, Politics, Petroleum*, (Washington, DC: the Middle East Institute, 1975) p. 202.
74. Interview with Major Jack Briggs. Dubai, 15.9.1986; and TOS Hand-Book, op. cit.
75. Ibid.
76. Colonel Wilson, op. cit.
77. *The Times*, special report, "The Union of Arab Emirates," 3.3.1969. TOS Handbook, op. cit.; and Stanford Research Institute, *Area Handbook for the Peripheral States of the Arabian Peninsular*, (Washington DC: US Govt. Printing Office 1971) p. 152; and Hawley, op. cit., p. 175.
78. TSDO 23/6/2, Report of Colonel P. Ive, Commander of TOS to the TSC. Dubai 1970; and see also Fenelon, op. cit., p. 14.
79. TSDO 23/6/1, Communique 1970, op. cit., p. 1. Regarding the amount that

was paid by the FO & MOD, *The Financial Times*, stated that it was £1.5m in 1968, 23.2.1968.

80. TSDO 23/6/2, Colonel Ives Report, op. cit., p. 2.
81. *The Financial Times*, 23.2.1968; and see also *The Times*, 3.3.1969.
82. Halliday, *Arabia without Sultan*, op. cit., p. 72.
83. TSDO 23/6/2, Colonel Ives Report, op. cit., p. 2
84. *The Financial Times*, 23.2.68; and TSDO 23/6/2, Colonel Ives Report, op. cit., p. 4.
85. Ibid., p. 3.
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87. Private papers of Mr. Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum‘a , File no. 10, Minutes of Meeting between Sheikh Zayed and Mr. E. Heath. Al-‘Ayn, April 1969.
88. Notes on Abu Dhabi, op. cit., pp. 23-24.
89. TSDO 23/8/4, Minutes of the Emergency Session of the TSC. Dubai, 6.6.1967.
90. Ibid. p. 2.
91. See *al-Bayan*, 29.7.1989; and *The Times*, 17.7.1969.
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93. R. Nyrop, ed. *Persian Gulf States: Country Studies*, (Washington D.C.; US



Govt printing Office, 1984) pp. 406-407.

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97. John Butler, *Uncivil Servant: In India, Pakistan, Kenya and Abu Dhabi*, (Edinburgh: the Pentland Press Ltd. 1989) p. 136.
98. MFA 1/1/3, Government of Abu Dhabi, Ministry of Defence, Letter from the Ministry of Defence, to the British Embassy in the UAE, Abu Dhabi, signed by Major Zaki Shuwayhat, 7.6.1972; MFA 1/1/3 Letter from UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs to UAE Ministry of Defence. Abu Dhabi, 3.5.1972.
99. The payments to the British Officers, seconded to the UAE various forces, were increased in April 1972 between £5,200-£9,000 per year. MFA 1/1/3 Letter from the British Embassy in Abu Dhabi to the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Abu Dhabi, 10.6.1972. Note No. AD.3.72. See also Anthony, *Arab States of the Lower Gulf*, op. cit., p. 145.
100. The Centre for Strategic & International Studies, *The Gulf: Implications of British withdrawal*, (Washington DC. Georgetown University, Special Report, no. 8, 1969). p. 17.
101. *The Guardian*, 16.4.1970; and interview with Brigadier De Butts, op. cit.
102. F 9/1, Report of the Advisory Mission on Defence to the Union of Arab Emirates, by Major-General Sir John Willoughby, 20.4.1969. (Secret).

103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., Article 77; See *The Times*, 17.7.1969.
107. Taryam, op. cit., p. 114.
108. Al-Sayyār, op. cit., p. 385.
109. F 9/1, Willoughby Report, op. cit., Article 66.
110. Ibid., Article 58.
111. Ibid., Article 33.
112. Ibid., Article 14.
113. Ibid., Article 59.
114. Ibid., Article 61.
115. Butler, op. cit., p. 136.
116. Private notes from Mr. McCarthy, type-written. 18.2.87.
117. F 9/1, Communique of the Federal Military Committee. Bahrain, 16.6.1969.
118. Ibid.
119. Hawley, op. cit., p. 248; Fenelon, op. cit., p. 14; and interview with Major Jack Briggs. Dubai, 15.9.1986. Major J. Briggs served as advisor to the Dubai Police Force from 1975 until his retirement in 1987 to live in England, then

again moved to Dubai in 1991.

120. Hawley, op. cit., p. 250.
121. Ibid.; and Fenelon, op. cit., p. 14.
122. Interview with Major Jack Briggs. Dubai, 17.9.1986.
123. Interview with Sir David Roberts. Hereford, 17.1.1987.
124. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 28th Session of the TSC. Dubai 6.4.1967.
125. TSDO 23/5/1, Minutes of the 1st Session of the Police Officers, op. cit.
126. Ibid.
127. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 20th Session of the Deliberative Committee.  
Dubai, 19.8.1967, Article 3, p. 6.
128. TSDO 23/6/2, Communique, op. cit., p. 2.
129. Dubai was favouring a resolution to treat Iranian subjects like that of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman regarding the entry into the Emirates without a visa, See TSDO 23/8/2, Minutes of immigration & Retrocession process, op. cit.
130. TSDO 23/8/2, A meeting of Abu Dhabi Government officials, headed by A.K. al-Suwaydī. Abu Dhabi, 1.4.1971. (Secret).
131. TSDO 23/8, Minutes of 20th Session of the Deliberative Committee, op. cit.
132. TSDO 23/8, Minutes 29th Session of TSC, op. cit.
133. Ibid., p. 7; and TSDO 23/8, Minutes of the 20th Session of the Deliberative

Committee, op. cit.

134. Taryam, op. cit., p. 34.

135. TSDO 23/5, Minutes of the Police Commissioners' Session. 25.3.1971.

136. Ibid.

137. TSDO 23/6/2, Report from Mr. Ḥamūdī to Minister of State, Abu Dhabi Government (No date,). Also see TSDO 23/5, Abu Dhabi *Diwān Amīrī*, Letter from Mr. Ḥamūdī to Abu Dhabi Minister of State. Abu Dhabi, 8.7.1971.

138. TSDO 23/6/5, Communique. Dubai, 17.7.1971.

139. TSDO 23/5, Minutes of the Police Commissioners' Session, op. cit.; see also TSDO 23/7, Immigration orders, no(1) 1971 (secret); and TSDO 23/1, Notes regarding Immigration Law, 1971.

## Chapter V

### British Economic Interests in the Emirates

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss British economic interests in the Emirates and how they interacted with the withdrawal issue of 1971.

As we have seen, Britain was initially in the Gulf to protect her Indian Empire, but after the Second World War the economic resources of the Gulf and oil in particular, became an essential element in Foreign Office planning. The protection of this oil wealth was a key factor in determining British policy towards the region such as the formation of the Baghdad Pact, the Kuwait operation and the extension of military bases in Aden and the Gulf. (see chapters 1 and 2). Lastly, future security of oil investments and supply represented an important factor in Britain's decision to withdraw from the Gulf in 1968.

We intend in this chapter to clarify the argument that seeks to connect the protection of British economic interests in the Gulf with the presence of British troops. To what extent was this argument valid by the end of the 1960s? What was the British Government's position and that of the Opposition on the matter? Finally, what were the substitute ideas that had been introduced in its place? The second part of the chapter will discuss the role, policies and reaction of the oil companies towards the new policy of withdrawing the troops. This chapter will also consider not only other British economic interests in the areas of trade and

non-direct investments but also the Emirates investments in Britain, and their connection with the withdrawal policy.

## 5.2 Security of the Gulf oil

After Britain had granted India independence in 1947, her vital overseas interests were located in the Gulf which by the beginning of the 1970s contained 55% of the World's proven oil reserves at that time, outside the Communist World.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, Britain had an important stake in the oil industry of all Gulf States, with the exception of Saudi Arabia whose oil interests were under American control in the form of the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO). British companies owned thirty per cent of the petroleum rights in the Gulf, an investment that equalled £900m.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, Britain's total oil imports from the Gulf in 1967 amounted to about 50% of her total consumption, with Kuwait alone accounting for 35% in 1966.<sup>3</sup> The other Western European countries and Japan were also heavily dependent upon the Gulf for their crude oil.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Britain's industrial economy was dependent upon the flow of Gulf oil and any disturbances could easily create a significant problem for the British economy, not to mention the economies of other Western European countries and Japan.

In addition, earnings from the oil industry were considered an important factor in the British balance of payments and the gold and dollar earnings of the sterling area. According to *The Times* of 11 November 1967, £200 million a year in foreign exchange was earned by Britain through the oil companies' activities in Gulf oil.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, most of those oil producing Emirates were members of the sterling area and kept their sterling reserves in London.

For a long time, the security of this area had been guaranteed by the British

base in Aden and the other smaller bases in the Gulf. When Britain decided to withdraw from Aden, extensions to her bases in Sharjah, Bahrain and Masīrah were carried out in 1966-67. The future security of Gulf oil came under discussion and one can identify three different arguments.

The first argument was that the British presence in the Gulf was essential for the security of the oil industry there. The supporters of this argument pointed out that in 1961 Kuwait was saved from Iraqi aggression only by the presence of British troops in the area. Furthermore, they predicted that if Britain withdrew from the Gulf her oil interests would be jeopardized because a power vacuum would be created which might bring chaos and war that ultimately would stop the flow of oil.<sup>7</sup> The troops' presence in the Gulf, they pointed out, was costing only £20 million annually which was very low in comparison with the huge investments.<sup>8</sup> This was the official view held by the Labour Party until January 1968 and the Conservative Party until March 1971.<sup>9</sup>

The second argument threw doubts on the role of the British military presence in the Gulf and argued that it actually undermined the security of the area instead of safeguarding it. There were indeed changing attitudes in British official circles towards the problem. This view was held by a number of academics,<sup>10</sup> junior civil servants in the Foreign Office<sup>11</sup> and by the fact that a Labour Minister, Christopher Mayhew, actually resigned over the issue. In his resignation speech to the House of Commons on 22 February 1966 he pointed out that the British military presence in the east of Suez was actually "defeating its own ends because it arouses suspicions of colonialism and weakens the will of free Asian people to stand up for themselves."<sup>12</sup>

This argument took account of the changing political climate in the region. In the Gulf nationalist feeling was growing and beginning to be expressed openly. Young people in the Gulf, who were becoming more aware and educated, were beginning to believe the Egyptian accusation that their rulers would be simply Western lackies as long as the British troops remained there.<sup>13</sup> The example was given of Aden, which it was argued, should be seen as a warning to Britain that keeping troops in a foreign land without the agreement of its people would not be tolerated and would only undermine British interests.<sup>14</sup> According to this argument the Aden case would probably be repeated in the Gulf if Britain insisted on keeping her troops in the area. It would result in a disaster for the oil companies and other British interests which would suffer the same fate as the BP refinery in Aden which was nationalised immediately after independence.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, according to this argument the British military presence would provide a pretext for nationalists to lean towards the Communist World as in the case of Dhofar. This would endanger the very regimes in the Gulf that the oil companies were intent on keeping stable. Qāssim in Iraq and the NLF in Aden came to power, it was argued, by using the British presence in their countries as an essential ingredient of their political strategy.<sup>16</sup>

These arguments clearly affected the thinking of the Labour Government which finally announced in January 1968 the withdrawal of British troops from the Gulf by the end of 1971. Denis Healey, Defence Secretary 1964-1970, as well as Sir William Luce, Political Resident in the Gulf 1961-1966, were both against the idea of withdrawal but their position had become less rigid by the end of 1967. Mr. Healey, for example, in 1964 emphasized the role of British troops in protecting British interests overseas, in particular east of Suez.<sup>17</sup> Three years later, however,



he had his doubts, pointing out that the presence of British troops in the Gulf "can be as much an irritant as a stabilising factor. The problem in the Gulf really is to decide when the disadvantages of remaining are greater than the advantages, and this is a very difficult question of political judgement."<sup>18</sup> Sir William Luce also changed his position by emphasising the commercial nature of oil supplies which he recommended be left to the oil companies, (see Luce's opinion in chapter 6).<sup>19</sup>

The third argument that appeared to have been accepted as a new strategy for protecting British economic interests in the Gulf relied on three major points:- (a) A political solution: by creating a federal system among the smaller emirates, solving the problems over the Islands and encouraging an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran. (b) An economic development of the area, (as we have seen in chapter 3). (c) The encouragement of the British-dominated oil companies to rely for survival on their own strategy. What we shall examine here is point (c) since we intend to discuss the political solutions in the coming chapters.

### **5.3 The Strategy of the Oil Companies**

Before discussing the policy of the oil companies in the Emirates and how they managed to rely on their own initiatives, their historical concessionary background will be briefly outlined. Then we shall study the policies that the oil companies had introduced in order to survive without the protection of British troops. Finally, the scope of the success of these policies will be evaluated.

In 1922 the rulers of the Trucial States signed a new agreement with the British authorities that obliged them to restrict oil concessions solely to companies which had the backing of the British Government.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly each of the concession agreements that were signed during the 1930s, (Dubai, 1937; Sharjah,

1937; Ras al-Khaimah, 1938; Kalbā, 1938; Abu Dhabi, 1939; Ajman, 1939; Umm al-Qaiwain, 1945) were granted to the Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) a subsidiary of IPC, (23.75% were allocated to BP, Shell, CFP and Near East Development Corporation (USA) and 5% to the Gulbenkian Estate).<sup>21</sup> However exploration for oil in the Trucial States was stopped because of World War II. But with the oil dispute in Iran in 1951 a massive effort was made to find oil in Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi. In 1950 oil was discovered first in the Ra's al-Şadr area (in Abu Dhabi territory) but not in commercial quantities.<sup>22</sup> However, Umm Shaif and Bab oil fields in Abu Dhabi commenced producing oil in commercial quantities in 1958 and 1960 respectively.<sup>23</sup> In 1962-1963 the first oil shipments from Abu Dhabi's oil fields found their way onto the world market.<sup>24</sup> Oil operations in the other Emirates were given up and activities were concentrated on Abu Dhabi. Petroleum Development changed its name to Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (ADPC).<sup>25</sup>

The other company with a major oil concession in Abu Dhabi was the D'Arcy Exploration Co. Ltd., that had negotiated a 30,730 square kilometres concession in Abu Dhabi's offshore area in March 1953.<sup>26</sup> Two years later, D'Arcy Co. gave up its concession in favour of Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Limited (ADMA) a newly formed operating company set up in joint partnership by British Petroleum (BP) and Compagnie Francaise des Petroles (CFP) to run the concession.<sup>27</sup> It discovered oil in 1958 and started to export it from Dās Island terminal in 1962.<sup>28</sup>

In Dubai too, BP gained a minor share in Dubai Petroleum Company that was owned by a group of international oil companies which discovered oil in commercial quantities in the offshore area in 1966.<sup>29</sup>

By and large the British oil companies were dominant firms in the oil economy of the Trucial States; BP and Shell each owned 23.75% of ADPC and BP owned 66.66% of ADMA.<sup>30</sup> This meant that both companies owned a substantial percentage of the Abu Dhabi petroleum industry and thus were the dominant firms until the participation agreements in the 1970s.<sup>31</sup>

They were in a position to determine the terms of oil exploration, the rate of royalties and taxes and the levels of production. Because development in the oil industry was relatively recent in Abu Dhabi compared to other countries in the region, the position of the oil companies was stronger. Nevertheless, the oil companies were clearly conscious of changing political circumstances in the region and realized that it would be a mistake to place complete reliance on protection by British troops and so they sought to take steps to ensure their own protection.<sup>32</sup> This essentially took the form of policies by oil companies to ensure good relations with the host governments.

One such step was the relinquishment by ADMA/ADPC of large parts of their original concession areas. In the in-shore concession that covered the whole of Abu Dhabi's territories, ADPC had relinquished most of its concession rights in stages. In 1965 the Ruler of Abu Dhabi signed an agreement in which ADPC agreed to relinquish 63,000 square kilometres of its concession and agreed to relinquish further areas within 15 years.<sup>33</sup> ADMA also signed an agreement, in November 1966, in which it was to relinquish two areas in 1967 and agreed to relinquish further areas every three years.<sup>34</sup> The areas relinquished by both companies were taken up by Japanese and American companies.<sup>35</sup>

The advantages for the oil companies of this policy were as follows. First of all,

the major producing fields in Abu Dhabi remained in ADMA/ADPC hands and what they had relinquished were not highly productive fields. Secondly, by allowing other oil companies access to the Trucial States, the vulnerability of ADMA/ADPC to nationalist criticism would be reduced. For example, Dhofari rebels were capitalizing on the issue by claiming that oil companies were exploiting the resources of the area: such propaganda might win them more supporters. If other oil companies were allowed to produce oil in the area, nationalist groups would have several companies to point their fingers at instead of only two. At the same time, the arrival of Americans and Japanese in the area had involved their governments, especially the US, in the security of the Gulf. Thirdly, the entrance of the new oil companies, which had offered better financial terms, had increased the financial ability of the rulers to spend on developments which would, consequently, enhance their political stability.

The second development that took place in order to secure the oil companies' future was a revision of the financial agreement. In 1965 the oil companies agreed to pay 50% of the profits to the ruler of Abu Dhabi.<sup>36</sup> The 50-50 profit-sharing formula was a necessary deal not only for the security of oil activities against the threats of the nationalists but also in the sense that the host governments became partners with them. At the same time the formula increased Abu Dhabi's revenue which Sheikh Zayed then used to develop Abu Dhabi and the other Trucial States.<sup>37</sup>

The third development was the participation of the oil companies in the economic and political changes of the Trucial States. However this role was performed indirectly because the oil companies' participation in domestic development was seen by the nationalists as an attempt to dominate the host country. This policy of

indirect association with development in the Trucial States went hand in hand with the Foreign Office recommendations that "oil companies should confine themselves to the production of oil and should not play a direct part in development projects which might involve them in domestic politics thereby spoiling the harmony of their relations with the governments concerned."<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, the oil companies had participated directly in the economic development of the area although on a small scale, by building houses, roads, schools and by teaching the local people certain technical skills. The merchant communities of both Abu Dhabi and Dubai also benefited from the activities of the oil companies on a daily basis (such as the purchase of foodstuffs, consumer goods, small equipment etc.) even though most of the heavy equipments used by the companies for these projects were imported directly from abroad.<sup>39</sup> Politically, there is some evidence that the oil companies had assisted the Abu Dhabi government in appointing advisers from the Arab countries such as the oil expert Nadīm Pāchachī, ex-chairman of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) who was oil adviser to the Abu Dhabi Government from 1967-1973.<sup>40</sup>

The fourth development was the oil companies' emphasis on their personal relations with the host governments. They worked hard to gain the confidence of the rulers, which they had failed to get from Sheikh Shakhbūṭ. However, with the latter's deposition in 1966 the oil companies again enjoyed a harmonious relationship with the Abu Dhabi government. According to ADPC representative, Mr. David Heard, the relationship between his company and the ruler was extremely good, "our manager could go to the Ruler any day."<sup>41</sup> This sort of approach greatly helped the survival of the oil companies: since the Sheikhs in the Emirates held the reins of power, it was obviously in the supreme interest of the companies that

they should forge close links with them.

To what extent, however, did the oil companies succeed in their new strategy? First of all, the Emirates were not in a position to produce, distribute and market their oil, which made them heavily dependent on the oil companies to carry out these tasks. In contrast with other oil producing countries such as Iran, Iraq and Algeria that had had oil for many years and had thus trained its own people in oil skills. Abu Dhabi had just discovered oil and so had not yet had sufficient time to educate its people in the acquisition of oil skills. In the case of Dubai, oil was only discovered in 1966 and began to be exported in 1969; clearly too short a period for Dubai to be able to manage its own oil production by itself.

Secondly, the withdrawal of the troops would not affect the oil companies because the Emirates were under pressure to develop. The Emirates needed the oil companies to ensure increased oil production, in order to fund social and economic development and also defence expenditure. Clearly, to support these ambitious development programmes the Emirates needed to increase oil production and thus revenues.

Thirdly, after the Arab defeat in the 1967 war, the oil producing states were asked at the Khartūm Arab League Conference to offer financial assistance to those countries defeated in the conflict with Israel: Egypt, Jordan and Syria. This meant that the oil producing states had to increase their oil production in order to meet these additional financial obligations. In return the so-called "progressive states" like Egypt had to reduce their propaganda against the Gulf rulers which in turn strengthened the position of the oil companies. Finally, the survival of the oil companies was also in the interests of the rulers whose own survival was largely

dependent on their ability to develop the Emirates in the face of radical changes. Such development needed huge financial support so the rulers were obliged to cooperate with the oil companies. Therefore the survival of the oil companies was also in the interests of the rulers of the Emirates.

The above arguments were well understood by the oil companies, hence they did not panic when the British Government decided to withdraw the troops. On the contrary, it could be argued that the oil companies favoured withdrawal because they realized that nationalist and extremist activities would eventually be directed not only against British bases but also against the oil installations<sup>42</sup> should the troops remain. Besides that, the survival of the oil companies was in the interests not only of the Emirates but of the progressive Arab States as well, who were now dependent on subsidies from their oil rich neighbours. Clearly, therefore, British oil interests could be preserved without the presence of British troops.

#### **5.4 Other economic interests**

While Britain's primary interest was the protection of her oil interests, once the Emirates began embarking on social and economic programmes then, of course, an important market was created for British companies. At the same time, the Emirates looked to Britain as the most important area in which to invest surplus oil revenues. According to Sir Steward Crawford, H.M. Political Resident in the Gulf 1966-1970, Britain was in the Gulf to pursue peace and stability, and to protect her economic interests as well as in fulfilling treaty obligations. Those interests were oil supply and the growing market of the Gulf.<sup>43</sup> The Gulf market as well as direct investment of the Gulf's oil wealth in Britain were stressed by Donald McCarthy, head of the Arabian Department at the Foreign Office 1967-68, who

saw in these two factors a partial explanation of why the British Government was hesitant in fixing a date for withdrawal.<sup>44</sup> In addition to this, the Mission of the London Chamber of Commerce to the Gulf in 1963 revealed that the Gulf was "one of the most interesting and attractive markets in the whole of the Middle East."<sup>45</sup> This meant that at this early stage of development, the British businessman was aware of the Gulf's potential as a market for British products. Indeed by the 1980s the Gulf had become Britain's third most important market after Europe and North America.<sup>46</sup> As Lord Selsdon, chairman of the Committee on the Middle East Trade (COMET) explained in 1981 when talking of the importance of the Gulf market for British trade, "Qatar may be the size of Enfield but it has more to offer in the short and medium-term than China."<sup>47</sup>

However, despite these huge economic interests by 1968 Britain had decided to withdraw her troops. What we should like now to assess is the impact of that decision on the above mentioned interests. Was it in the interests of these British firms for the British troops to stay or to be withdrawn? How did they manage to survive without the protection of British troops?

#### **5.4.1 Advantages for British companies**

Let us consider at the outset the factors that made British products and companies win the lion's share of the market and development projects in the Emirates before and after the withdrawal announcement. First, the British historical connection with the Gulf was clearly an advantage to British firms when seeking to establish themselves in the Emirates. That is to say, those multi-national British corporations like Sir William Halcrow & Partners, the British Bank of the Middle East (BBME) Gray Mackenzie, Sir Alexander Gibb & partners, Richard Costain,



John Harris, Cable & Wireless and so on, had entered the Gulf in the wake of their country's influential and powerful presence. For example, in the first quarter of 1962 a total of 32 British businessmen had visited Abu Dhabi in comparison to a mere 15 businessmen from other nations to visit the area at the same time. In the last quarter of 1962 only 13 non-British businessmen visited Abu Dhabi in comparison with 26 from Britain.<sup>48</sup> This suggests to us that it was easier for British businessmen to enter the Gulf market because of Britain's control over foreign relations of the the Emirates. This meant that the British had the power to exclude foreign interests by refusing to issue visas. Hence it was difficult for others to enter because of visa restrictions and so forth. Therefore, in the early stages of oil production the market in the Emirates was accustomed to British products and the businessmen who sought to promote them.

These historical privileges also made it easier for various British commercial enterprises to take over functions which fell outside their specific domain. For example, the BBME officials were involved in Development Committees, Creek and Harbour Schemes, Electricity Company development and similar activities in Dubai. The Bank also collected Customs Duty on behalf of Dubai Government for many years.<sup>49</sup> Other British firms were also monopolizing the market: Gray Mackenzie were running Dubai port on behalf of the Dubai Government; Richard Costain won most of Dubai's construction tenders; and Sir William Halcrow supervised most of the Dubai projects. Indeed from 1946 until 1963 BBME had a written agreement from Dubai whereby the ruler agreed not to allow any other bank to operate in Dubai.<sup>50</sup> Thus past ties between Britain and the Emirates paved the way for the continuous involvement of British firms in the area.

The second advantage for British enterprises was that English was the second

language in the Gulf. Knowledge of English was on the increase with so many students going to the United States and Britain for their education. Furthermore, because of the English language many people from the Emirates probably preferred Britain to other countries for their business transactions, and a substantial number of them chose to come to Britain for their summer holidays.<sup>51</sup>

The third advantage was that the presence of British consulting engineers, contractors, surveyors and architects and a good number of British expatriates, (many of whom held high ranking jobs in sensitive places in the sheikhs' governments) had undoubtedly influenced the granting of contracts to British companies.<sup>52</sup> This British presence was most evident in Dubai which had the biggest British community in the Emirates. Their presence in Dubai dated back to before the oil era, hence over the years the British had been able to forge personal links with the inner circle of the Emirates. Major Jack Briggs of the Dubai police hinted that their presence sometimes smoothed the way for British firms to win contracts.<sup>53</sup>

The fourth factor that helped British companies gain a high percentage of the contracts awarded in the Emirates was a result of a diplomatic efforts on the part of British officialdom, exemplified in the warm welcome that the Sheikhs enjoyed during their frequent visits to Britain. Also the continual visits of high-level British officials to the Emirates had encouraged the continuation of the old historical connection. These diplomatic visits were clearly manipulated in order to win contracts for British companies. According to some officials in Abu Dhabi, al-Suwaydī, Chairman of Abu Dhabi's *Amīrī Dīwān*, and other officials close to the rulers, were approached by British delegations to award tenders to British firms.<sup>54</sup> Thus, diplomatic channels were used to serve business contracts.

It is interesting to note that after the withdrawal of the British troops and the establishment of the United Arab Emirates in December 1971 the British companies maintained their network of contacts with their old friends (such as 'Īsa al-Gurg and Mahdī al-Tājir in Dubai<sup>55</sup>) in each Emirate but were not in a strong position at the Federal government level. This probably influenced the allocation of contracts at the federal level to non-British companies whereas substantial number of contracts were awarded to British companies by individual emirates.

British firms with a long history of involvement in the Emirates do not appear to have been too concerned about the news of the withdrawal. Mr. Arnold of Sir William Halcrow, Consultant Engineering, explained that "It never really worried us and our work continued, after the PWD left the Trucial States, as consulting engineers to the various Rulers of the U.A.E."<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, these companies saw an opportunity to increase their commercial activities because of the large development programmes that the newly established state would need. Mr. D. Paterson, ex-BBME director, stated that his Bank had:<sup>57</sup>

recognised that the special position of Britain in the area gave the bank the edge in commercial operations but it was obvious that the emergence of independent states and the large scale development related to the oil industry gave excellent opportunities for commercial advancement.

However, some other firms reacted strongly to the withdrawal decision. *The Guardian* reported that the withdrawal announcement had "thrown many people, especially the average British businessman, into a sort of coma,"<sup>58</sup> because they were afraid that they would be left alone to face competitive businessmen from Japan, West Germany and the United States. Another criticism was reported in *The Times* by one of Britain's aircraft salesmen, Glen Hobday of the British Aircraft Corporation, who said "my own opinion is that the decision was

crazy.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, on the one hand the withdrawal announcement had created concern among some British companies, especially those firms that had entered the Emirates market in recent years. On the other hand the old established British firms like Costain and Halcrow saw in the withdrawal an opportunity to advance their commercial transactions since the Emirates would need a large development programme to be carried out during and after withdrawal.

#### 5.4.2 Trade

The importation of consumer goods and machinery by the Emirates from Britain notably increased during the withdrawal period. This gives an indication that the Emirates were changing their pattern of expenditure. With British troops in their territories, the rulers felt secure and were reluctant to accept British advice to build up the economic infrastructure. However, after the withdrawal announcement they became more willing to invest in development programmes.

In this atmosphere, British traders achieved a healthy share of the market. In 1964 Britain exported to the Trucial States over £5.6 million worth of goods and in return imported about £17.3 million, the bulk of which was oil.<sup>60</sup> The former figure, however, had multiplied to reach £28.2 million in 1969 and in return, in the same year, Britain's imports from the Emirates totalled £30.2 million. Yet by 1975 the figure had reached £200 million in UK exports to the Emirates while the latter imports worthed £160 million in the same year. Thus the Emirates' balance of trade went into the red in Britain's favour because Britain reduced its import of oil mainly after North Sea oil production began. The Emirates' trade Balance with the UK has never recovered from that deficit and it gradually changed from a surplus averaging £108 million in 1974 to a deficit of Dh 3,750 million (£292.0

m.) in 1982.<sup>61</sup>

Britain therefore, remained the Emirates' principal supplier and the withdrawal of the troops in 1971 had not changed this. The British Trade Secretary, John Biffen, once stated that, "Since 1971 the value of our exports to these four markets [Bahrain, UAE, Qatar and Oman] had increased tenfold. Largely thanks to North Sea oil, our imports are a little less than six times their 1971 level."<sup>62</sup> Accordingly we can conclude by saying that trade relations between Britain and the Emirates had become so intertwined that the withdrawal of the troops did not affect its flow but on the contrary increased it.<sup>63</sup> In certain sectors, like the arms trade, Britain greatly relied on the Gulf with over 50% of such trade going to the region during the period 1977-1981.<sup>64</sup>

#### **5.4.3 British firms and the development of the Emirates**

The aim of this subsection is to illustrate the continuities and discontinuities of the UK-Emirates economic relationship by a closer examination of British firms working in the Emirates before the withdrawal and in the period immediately afterwards: 1968-1973.

The Emirates' importance for Britain's invisible earnings from overseas was significant for two reasons. Firstly, British consultants, construction and civil engineering contractors were closely involved with the region, and secondly, other service sectors such as tourism, banking, insurance and freight services, were strongly reliant on it.<sup>65</sup>

One of the major investment for the British firms in the Emirates was the construction market.<sup>66</sup> Many British companies had been associated with the trans-

**Table 5.1: UK trade with the Emirates (£m.)**

Year	Exports	Imports
1964	5.6	17.3
1965	4.2	22.1
1966	6.2	14.3
1967	12.1	12.5
1968	18.5	51.5
1969	28.2	30.2
1970	22.3	28.8
1971	26.3	47.1
1972	31.1	53.8
1973	49.4	69.2
1974	96.9	205.0
1975	198.8	158.9
1976	323.9	199.9
1977	451.9	258.9
1978	435.5	270.6
1979	488.3	244.5
1980	502.2	485.8
1981	492.1	393.4
1982	558.8	266.9
1983	567.8	309.8
1984	541.9	87.2
1985	621.4	96.6
1986	581.8	74.0

**Sources:**

Department of Trade & Industry, *Overseas Trade Statistics of the U.K.*, (London: H.M.S.O, 1964-1986); and COMET, "British Trade with Middle East, 1962-1972."

formation of the Emirates into more developed states. Companies like Costain, Bernard Sunley, Taylor Woodrow, George Wimpey, Brian Colquhoun & Partners, Paulings and Humphreys Ltd. had been followed in recent years by other British companies.<sup>67</sup> The above mentioned companies were capable of winning most of the Emirates construction projects.

For instance in Dubai, Richard Costain had been awarded contracts such as: Rāshid Port at a cost of £24m in 1968<sup>68</sup>; Dubai international airport development in 1968 at a cost of £4.1m<sup>69</sup>; further expansion in 1969 of Rāshid Port at a cost of £20m<sup>70</sup>; land reclamation at £5.1m in 1970<sup>71</sup>; the Dayrah-Shindaqah tunnel, at £7.5m in 1972<sup>72</sup>; Dubai drydock, in a joint venture with Taylor Woodrow, at £91m in 1973<sup>73</sup>; and a cement plant at £9m,<sup>74</sup> which was again expanded in 1974 at a cost of £20m.<sup>75</sup> (see Table 5.2).

In Abu Dhabi, Costain's were not represented nor was Dubai's famous consulting engineer, Sir William Halcrow. Instead other British companies took the lead like Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners in recent years and Arabicon (comprising Alan Grant & Co. and George Daves) before the withdrawal. Brian Colquhoun & Partners had supervised many schemes in Abu Dhabi and al-'Ayn like the Abu Dhabi sewage system and the al-'Ayn water supply and sewage system, both schemes costing together several millions Bahraini Dinar. [During this period the currency of Abu Dhabi was Bahrain Dinar and Dubai was of Qatar/Dubai Riyals. BD 1 = Q/DR 10 = 17s. 6d.]. George Wimpey & Sons, Tarmac Construction Ltd and Motherwell also had participated significantly in Abu Dhabi's oil industry. For example, in 1969 Motherwell constructed for Abu Dhabi a gas-oil plant at a cost of £1m.<sup>76</sup>

**Table 5.2: UK Contracts in the Emirates (£m.)**

Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1968	Abu Dhabi	Harbour	Gibb		
	—	Hospital		Losely	1
	Dubai	Airport		Costain	4.1
	Dubai	Rāshid Port	Halcrow	Costain	24
	Abu Dhabi	Distillation plant		Weir	3
	—	cables to al-‘Ayn		BICC	0.600
	—	Power station		C.A. Parsons	0.100
	—	Cooling equipment		Coventry Radictor	0.024
	—	Laboratory equipment		Mowlem Group	0.035
	—	Generators		John Brown	1.25
	—	Turbines		John Brown	2
	—	Concrete airport		Mills Scaffolds	0.020
	al-‘Ayn	Power station		Ruston Engine	0.750
	Sharjah	Diesel alternators		Ruston Engine	0.180
	Dubai	Aircraft instruments		Space Decks	0.090
	Abu Dhabi	Distributors		Weir West	2
	—	—		Garth	1
	—	Radio studios		Marconi	0.500
	—	Airport runway		Paulings	2
	—	Road to al-‘Ayn		Humphrey	1.4
	RAK	RAK creek	Halcrow		0.300

continue Table 5.2



Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1969	Abu Dhabi	Power station		GEC - AEI	0.300
	---	Hospital		Coselay	1
	---	Gas-oil plant		Motherwell	1
	---	T.V.		Thomson TV	0.040
	---	Telephones		Plessey	0.300
	al-‘Ayn	Subsoil		Tarmac	0.228
	Abu Dhabi	Electrical		Hawker	0.300
	---	Oil storage		Wm. Neil	0.830
	Dubai	Hospital		Bernard Sunley	6
	---	Port Rāshid	Halcrow	Costain	20
		Radio station		Cable & Wireless	0.759
		TV. station		Marconi	0.059
	Sharjah	Water supply	Halcrow	Dawson Keith	0.100
		Port development		Tarmac	1
	Abu Dhabi	Mīnā Zayed	Gibb		195
1970	Dubai	Runway for airport		Costain	2.7
	Dubai	Land reclamation		Costain	5.1
	---	Rāshid Hospital		John Sadd, Essex	0.040
		Rāshid Hospital		Norriss A. C.	
		Telecommunications		Plessey Telecom	0.215
1970	Ras al-Khaimah	Power station	Kennedy & Donkin		0.750
	Abu Dhabi	Radio-Tel. Police	Kennedy & Donkin	British Pye	0.046
	---	Oil storage tanks		Whesoe, Darlington	0.450

Continue Table 5.2

Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1970	Dubai	Sewerage		Watson	3
	Abu Dhabi	Sewerage		Brian Colquhoun	3.8
	---	Town Scheme		Brian Colquhoun	1.8
	al- 'Ayn	Sewage disposal		Brian Colquhoun	4.1
	Abu Dhabi	Sea Wall	Arabicon		2.9
	Ras al-Khaimah	Creek development	Halcrow		0.300
	---	Sea wall	Halcrow	Mothercat	0.150
	Dubai	Creek development	Halcrow		0.300
	Sharjah	Wharfing & dredging	Halcrow	Tarmac	1
	---	Milaiyah irrigation	Halcrow		0.130
	Abu Dhabi	Town roads	Arabicon	Arabicon	2.2
	al- 'Ayn	Town roads		Brian Colquhoun	7
	Dubai	Bridge	Halcrow		0.578
	Sharjah	Roads	Arabicon	Arabicon	1
	Abu Dhabi	Buildings			12
	Dubai	National Bank building	Halcrow		0.300
	Sharjah	Flats & shops	Halcrow		0.250
1970	Umm al-Qaiwain	Govet. buildings	Arabicon	Arabicon	1
	Abu Dhabi	Gas turbine		Charles Haswell	5.9
	R.A.K.	Power station	Kennedy & Donkin		0.500
	Northern Emirates	Electricity	Kennedy	BICC Ltd	0.100
	Sharjah	New power station	Kennedy	Mothercat & BICC	0.600
	Dubai	Electricity	Kennedy	Various UK Firms	1.7

Continue Table 5.2

Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1970	RAK	Electricity	Kennedy	BICC Ltd	0.150
	Abu Dhabi	Water distribution	Arabicon	Arabicon	0.700
	Sharjan	Water supply	Halcrow	Mothercat	0.300
	Federal Government	Water supply	Halcrow		0.120
	al- 'Ayn	Water supply		Brian Colquhoun	4.5
1971	Abu Dhabi	Sewerage		Brian Colquhoun	5.6
	al- 'Ayn	Sewage disposal		Brian Colquhoun	4.1
	Dubai	Sewage disposal		Watson	3
	Sharjah	Drainage	Halcrow	Balfour & Sons	2.15
	Dubai	Creek development	Halcrow	Overseas Ast	0.650
	Sharjah	Creek wharves	Halcrow	Tarmac	1.1
	Abu Dhabi	Clinics		Parsons Brown	0.12
	Ajman	Town planning & roads	Arabicon	Various	2.5
	Dubai	Port Rāshid	Halcrow		1
	---	Cement Factory	Halcrow		0.6
	---	Jabal 'Ali radio station	Halcrow		0.15
	Sharjah	Retail market	Halcrow		0.15
	Abu Dhabi	Desalination plant		Charles Haswell	6.10
	Dubai	Power station	Kennedy	BICC	0.10
	Khaur Fakhān	Generator& transmission	Kennedy	Dale Electric	
	Dubai	Electricity extension	Kennedy	Various	1.35
	RAK	New power station	Kennedy	Various	0.450
	RAK	transmission	Kennedy	Various	

Continue Table 5.2....

Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1971	Sharjah	Electricity	Kennedy	Various	0.25
	Abu Dhabi	Dās Island installation		Tarmac	0.35
	—	Dās Island desalination		George Wimpey	3
	Sharjah	Telecom system		Cable & Wireless	0.60
	Dubai	Land reclamation	Halcrow	Costain	5.1
1972	Abu Dhabi	Sewage	Brian Colquhoun		17
	al-‘Ayn	Sewage	Brian Colquhoun		4
	—	Water supply	Brian Colquhoun		4
	—	Town roads		Paulings	1.7
	Abu Dhabi	Oil plant	ADMA	Wimpey	3
	—	Post Office	British Postal		
	al-‘Ayn	New market	Brian Colquhoun		0.3
	Abu Dhabi	Hilton Hotel	Cementation	Cementation	3
	—	Port Area warehouses	Gibb		1.25
	—	Port cranes	Gibb		0.75
	al-‘Ayn	Water resources	Brian Colquhoun		0.50
	Abu Dhabi	Prison	Brian Colquhoun		0.50
	Abu-Dhabi	Oil plant		Tarmac	
	RAK	Airport run way	Halcrow		0.11
	Dubai	Sewage	Watson		18
	Sharjah	Sewage system	Halcrow		5
	RAK	Cement Co.	Kennedy	Wimpey & Others	5.50
	Dubai	Sea wall	Halcrow	Costain	5.10

Continue Table 5.2 ...

Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1972	Sharjah	Creek development	Halcrow	Tarmac	1.55
	Dubai	Dayrah-Shindaqah tunnel	Halcrow	Costain	7.50
	Abu Dhabi	New prison building	Brian Colquhoun		0.44
	Dubai	Electricity Co	Kennedy	Various	1.35
	Eastern Coast	408 low-income houses	Halcrow		1.3
	Abu Dhabi	Oil installation		William Press Int.	
1973	Dubai	Cement plant	Halcrow	Costain	9
	Dubai	Drydock		Costain-T. Woodrow	91
	Abu Dhabi	Oil facilities project	Davy-Ashmore	F. Harris	100
	Abu Dhabi	Rocks for Mīnā Zayed	Gibb	John Howard	0.55
	Dubai	Power station, Jabal 'Ali	Kennedy		7.5
	Dubai	Airport radar supervision		IAL	0.03
	Abu Dhabi	Gas turbine for 'Aṣab		GEC Gas Turbines	5
	Federal Govt.	Various			3.5
	Abu Dhabi	20 Oil pressure pumps		Weir pumps Glasgow	0.40
	Abu Dhabi	Oil storage		Whessoe	0.327
	Abu Dhabi	Gas sulphur plant at Dās		British Ropeway	0.475
	—	Medical installations		Searle UK Group	0.650
	—	Oil pumps for ADPC		D. Brown Gear Ind.	
	—	Water plant for Dās		Degremont Laing	
	—	Gas plant at Dās		Costain & Tarmac	2.5
	—	20 oil-pressure pumps		Weir pumps	0.400
	—	Expand power network		Balfour Kilpatrick	0.5

Continue Table 5.2 ....

Year	Place	Scheme	Consultant	Contractor	Cost
1973	—	Tourism study		Tourism Planning & Research	0.038
	—	Shiploading at Dās		British Rope-way	0.475
	—	Tankage		Whessoe	0.327
	—	Water filtration	Young Chemical		750
	al-‘Ayn	Cement plant		Mothercat	1.9

### Sources:

British Embassy, Commercial Department, "Some Projects in hand or under study: UAE," October 1972; Idem., "Abu Dhabi Projects in Hand: Abu Dhabi," April 1973; Idem., "Some Projects in hand or under Study: UAE," February, 1974; *MEED*, various issues 1968-1975.

The table below, although not complete, shows that British companies had participated in most of the Emirates' development projects, such as ports and harbours, sewage, water supply, roads, hospitals, school buildings, power stations, bridges, cement plants, dry docks, commercial buildings, land reclamation, radio and broadcasting stations, tunnels, drainage schemes, oil installations and oil refineries.

The other interesting point we find in the table is that where contracts were awarded outside Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the choice of contractor was often determined by the source of funding for the project. For example, if the funds came from Abu Dhabi, as was the case with the Sharjah roads project, then Arabicon won the contract. If, however, the source of funds came from the Trucial States Development Office, then Sir William Halcrow would have been the choice as consultant. This arrangement resulted in British firms having a balanced influence in the other Emirates.

Even though many British contractors and consulting engineers had come to the area in the early 1950s, like Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners<sup>77</sup> for instance, they had to follow a new policy after the withdrawal in the 1970s. Some of them had entered into partnerships with local contractors, like Costain that had established two firms with local partners. In Abu Dhabi, Costain became al-Otaiba Costain Co.,<sup>78</sup> and in Dubai it became Costain Dubai Company.<sup>79</sup> Others had established a subsidiary company in the emirate concerned like Grayswift Tanker Service of Gray Mackenzie that was working in Ras al-Khaimah.<sup>80</sup> Other companies had taken a different approach by merging with other British companies to do specific jobs like Sir William Halcrow, for instance, who had set up Halcrow-Ewbank Petroleum and Offshore Engineering Co. to fulfil contracts for the oil and gas industry. Also Halcrow-Balfour Ltd. was formed in 1979 to work in the field of health and environment engineering.<sup>81</sup>

In other fields of indirect investment, British companies also gained a substantial percentage of the Emirates' banking, insurance, and freight services. As we have mentioned before, the British Bank of the Middle East was the first bank to be opened in the area and it continued to be dominant until 1963. The other British banks which opened branches in the early period were the Eastern Bank and the Ottoman Bank.<sup>82</sup> In the freight and ports services, Gray Mackenzie held the lead in the Emirates, running Dubai port, Ras al-Khaimah port and some other 33 separate subsidiary and associate companies in the Gulf. Finally, British nationals are by far the largest Western expatriate group in the Emirates.<sup>83</sup> This is probably due to the large number of British firms that have offices in the Emirates; there were more than 550 British firms by 1980.<sup>84</sup> Other non-direct investments could be derived from the large number of tourists and students coming to Britain

from the Emirates as well as the many citizens from the Emirates who come for medical consultation and hospital treatment in Britain.

#### **5.4.4 The Emirates investments in Britain**

The fourth point that usually comes under the classification of 'vital interests' was the Emirates' private and official investments in Britain.

Abu Dhabi's official investments only started with the change of its ruler in August 1966. The first finance department in Abu Dhabi was established and chaired by Eric Thompson, former expert in various British colonies, from 1967-1970. The next Abu Dhabi finance director was John Butler who was appointed to the post on the recommendation of Sir William Luce<sup>85</sup> and who held office from 1970 till 1983. On the advice of Eric Thompson and the recommendation of the Bank of England, Sheikh Zayed agreed to establish the Abu Dhabi Investment Board (ADIB) in 1967 with initial capital of £5 million.<sup>86</sup> Its role was to invest Abu Dhabi surplus revenue abroad. The members of ADIP were: Sir John Hogg (British) Chairman; Longstreet Hinton, (American) looked after the Board investments in the US; Count Jean de Sailly (French) looked after the Board's investments in France; John Tyndall (British) London, managed the UK holdings; Nadīm Pāchachī, the Iraqi born oil advisor to the Ruler was appointed in 1968; Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī, (Abu Dhabi) was appointed in 1970 along with Muḥammad al-Mullā of Dubai and John Butler, the Abu Dhabi Financial Advisor; Muḥammad Ḥabrūsh, (Abu Dhabi) became member of the Board in 1971; the Union Bank of Switzerland and the Crown Agents of the UK became members in October 1971; and finally John Morrell of Robert Fleming became a member of the Board in 1972 and was responsible for the Board's investments in Japan,



and also Robert Fleming as a commercial institution was supervised the Board in London.<sup>87</sup> The Board's main office was in London, and it met three times a year there and once a year in Abu Dhabi. After independence however, the Board's responsibilities were taken over by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) a new agency that was established in Abu Dhabi under the chairmanship of Sheikh Khalīfah bin Zayed, the Crown Prince in 1976.<sup>88</sup>

The above illustrations of Abu Dhabi's investment developments demonstrate that they were in effect in the hands of the British advisers, because there were few Abu Dhabi citizen qualified to undertake this task and the small group of experienced administrators in Abu Dhabi were closely involved with establishing the new institutions in the Emirates. The role of British advisers probably explains the substantial amounts that Abu Dhabi had invested in the UK. According to a report that was written by the Economic Department of the UAE Foreign Ministry, UAE investments in 1974 in shares and equities of the British market totalled more than £90 million, which represented 10.5% of the total investments in this sector.<sup>89</sup> In the real estates sector, the UAE bought around 15.5% of its investment from the UK too. For example in 1974, the Board bought 44% of the Commercial Union Building in London for which it paid £86 million.<sup>90</sup> As for Abu Dhabi's deposits in sterling, these amounted to 13% of the total deposits of Abu Dhabi during the early 1970s.<sup>91</sup> These deposits had reached a minimum holding of £1,800 million in 1975 compared with the Dubai government's holdings in sterling of around £95 million in the same year.<sup>92</sup> The Emirates' deposits in sterling thus brought considerable support for the British economy.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to investments in Britain by Government agencies like the Abu Dhabi Investment Board there were also large investments of a private nature by

individuals from the Emirates.<sup>94</sup> Therefore we find that many wealthy families from the Emirates bought property in the U.K. both for their own use and also as an investment.<sup>95</sup> Other examples of this type of investment are the horse racing that attracted Sheikhs of the al-Maktūm family of Dubai<sup>96</sup>; Mahdī al-Tājir's ownership of different properties and share-holdings like the Allied Arab Bank<sup>97</sup>; al-Fuṭaym Group that has a minor share in Tower Scaffolding (Bristol) Ltd; and the purchase of the Park Tower Hotel by Abu Dhabi's ruling family.<sup>98</sup> These were significant holdings that supported sterling and thus in turn were encouraged by Britain.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Britain's economic interests in the Emirates with regard to oil, trade, invisible investments and the Emirates' investments in Britain both before withdrawal and during the first few years of the post-withdrawal era.

There were conflicting arguments concerning the best way that Britain could protect these interests. The classical argument that called for the protection of economic interests through bases and troops was challenged. The advocates of withdrawing the troops pointed out that the presence of the latter was actually defeating its own purpose by arousing nationalist feeling as had been the case with Aden. The other argument that was eventually presented suggested that Britain ought to prepare the area both economically and politically before withdrawing. At the same time the oil companies were encouraged to rely on their own methods to ensure that they remained in the Emirates after 1971.

Thus, the oil companies of ADPC and ADMA, who were affected by events in other oil producing countries like Iran and Iraq, decided on their own approach in order to survive without the presence of British troops. To this end they agreed

to relinquish part of their concession rights; revise the financial agreement by introducing the 50-50 formula of profit sharing; participate in the development of the host Emirates and enhance their personal connections with their hosts. These factors prepared them well for self-reliance, and thus continuity.

As for trade and invisible investments in the Emirates, the old established British firms did not panic over the withdrawal announcement in January 1968. They knew that they had many fundamental advantages over competitors from other foreign countries, such as the historical connection, the English language, the backing of the British government, and personal connections and relationships at the highest level. As a result, British firms went on to win huge contracts even after the withdrawal period. However, some companies had to enter into partnership with a firm of local contractors or even establish a local subsidiary in order to continue working in the Emirates .

As a result it can be concluded that despite Britain's having withdrawn from the region, its economic interests were not affected. This view is supported by the substantial number of British companies working in the Emirates after the withdrawal of troops in December 1971.

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## Chapter VI

### Political and Security Arrangements

#### 6.1 Introduction

As has been seen in the previous chapter, the British Government was convinced that it was necessary to find a new way to protect her economic interests in the Gulf, as the presence of British troops there was having an adverse effect. That led the Labour government of Mr. Wilson, which came to power in 1964, to pursue a long-term policy that relied on the economic development of the area, giving back some administrative responsibility, encouraging the oil companies to depend on themselves in their relations with the host countries and establishing appropriate political arrangements. Amongst those political arrangements were: (a) the creation of a federal structure for the Emirates; (b) the solution of territorial disputes concerning Buraimi and the islands; and (c) the encouragement of a greater understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

What made the political arrangements more significant than the other issues was that the British Government had realized that it could not carry out an appropriate withdrawal policy without solving these problems. There is some evidence that the British Government had started to address these problems even before the official withdrawal was announced. For example, Denis Healey, Secretary of State for Defence, in March 1965 told the House of Commons that:<sup>1</sup>

[I]f we simply abdicate the responsibilities we now carry, without making any arrangements to share them or hand them over to anybody, there is a grave risk that some parts of this great area would dissolve into violence and chaos.

On 18th December 1968, after the withdrawal announcement, Mr. Healey expressed his satisfaction with the progress of these political arrangements in a statement to the House of Commons:<sup>2</sup>

The Government believe that we must give the local countries, particularly those to which we have present commitments, some opportunity to reorganise their forces before our withdrawal. I am glad to say that this was very well reported, if I may say so, in an article in last Sunday's *Sunday Times* that more progress has been made in the last nine months towards reaching a viable political arrangement in the Gulf than had been made in the last twenty years.

The political arrangements were also of concern to the Conservative Government which in the end bore responsibility for the withdrawal plan. Sir Alec Douglas Home, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on December 6th 1971 told the House of Commons that the Labour Government "would have been out of the Gulf with no thought and no arrangement made for future plans."<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, it is intended to study the political arrangements that were carried out by the Labour and the Conservative governments from January 1968 to December 1971, to find out the reasons for their success and failure. For example, was it in the British interest to have a federation of nine or seven states? To what extent were British officials involved in the establishment of the Federation of the seven? In what way did the British authorities seek an improvement of Iranian-Saudi political relations at the end of the sixties?

## **6.2 The Federation of Arab Emirates**

During the intervening period between the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's statement in the House of Commons on 16th January 1968,<sup>4</sup> announcing the decision to withdraw British troops from the Gulf to the actual withdrawal in December 1971,<sup>5</sup> the Gulf had witnessed many important changes. The most

important challenge was to set up a federal political structure for the Emirates and, in particular, the debate about a federation of nine or seven states. This section will examine the federation process stressing British role in failure of the federation of the nine and success of the federation of the United Arab Emirates.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of a federation came as a result of the visit to the Gulf by the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Goronwy Roberts, on 9 January 1968, informing the rulers that Britain was to withdraw her troops by the end of 1971.<sup>7</sup> Even though no public statement was made by Goronwy Roberts on the subject, the editor of one well-known Lebanese political periodical, *al-Hawādith*, speculated that during Roberts's meeting with the rulers, the Minister expressed Her Majesty's Government's desire that the rulers should form a federation among themselves.<sup>8</sup> The rulers, who were shocked, (some of them could not believe the Minister's statement<sup>9</sup>) had started taking the matter seriously. Indeed, in private some of them offered to pay the cost of the troops, but this was rejected by the Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, who later remarked in a television interview that British forces could not be allowed to become mercenaries.<sup>10</sup> Then on 18th February 1968 the rulers of Dubai and Abu Dhabi issued a bilateral agreement on forming a union between their emirates.<sup>11</sup> The two rulers also invited the rulers of Bahrain and Qatar and the other five rulers of Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah to join in discussions about a union of the nine emirates. At the meeting of 25th February 1968, in Dubai, all the nine rulers agreed to enter into discussion about a union of their emirates, to be known as the Union of Arab Emirates, and this agreement was known as the Dubai Agreement.<sup>12</sup> From 1968 to 1971 the Dubai Agreement formed the basis for the discussion of the federation of the emirates.<sup>13</sup> It outlined the objectives of the Federation of Arab Emirates: the

strengthening of mutual ties, the co-ordination of the various development policies with due regard to the independence and integrity of each member state, the unification of foreign policy and the organization of collective defence.<sup>14</sup> The agreement also established federal authorities, consisting of a supreme council, which would be the highest authority in the federation, a federal council of experts and a federal supreme court.<sup>15</sup>

The proposal for the federation of nine emirates met many obstacles and after lengthy discussions, that took place between 1968-71, the initiative failed. A study of various discussions carried out in the same period will provide a better understanding of the obstacles which faced the proposal.

In order to put the Dubai Agreement into practice, a meeting of representatives and advisers of the rulers was convened in Abu Dhabi on 18-19th May 1968 with the aim of agreeing upon an agenda for the meeting of the Supreme Council. The preparatory advisers' meeting faced difficulties over the selection of items for the agenda. Abu Dhabi, as host emirate, and holding the chair of the meeting, proposed a short agenda that consisted of: (a) the selection of constitutional lawyers to study the steps to draft a permanent federal constitution; and (b) the establishment of a liaison committee between the lawyers and the rulers.<sup>16</sup> However, Qatar was not happy with this agenda so it put forward fourteen items to be included in the Supreme Council's next meeting. Besides a permanent federation constitution, Qatar proposed the election of the first Union President; the formation of the Union Council; the creation of federation ministries and other items such as the establishment of an official gazette.<sup>17</sup>

The two different agendas represented two groups that maintained their di-



vergent views in an almost unbroken pattern throughout the years spent discussing the federation. On one side Qatar, supported by Dubai and Ras al-Khaimah, was of the opinion that the Dubai Agreement formed the legal framework of the federation and that it should not be frozen until the establishment of a permanent federal constitution. The Bahrain and Abu Dhabi camps, supported by other emirates, saw the Dubai Agreement, as an expression of the rulers' intentions to federate and thus regarded the establishment of the institutions Qatar wanted as premature. In other words they were cautious about the early establishment of federal institutions and instead they wanted to move slowly. In the end the Qatar proposals were defeated when they were put to a vote but Qatar again raised the issue in the Supreme Council meeting on 25th May 1968.<sup>18</sup>

The first meeting of the Supreme Council of the rulers, convened in Abu Dhabi 25-26th May 1968, encountered the same differences of opinion that were expressed at the meeting of the advisers. Qatar again insisted on the inclusion of her items on the Supreme Council's agenda. Therefore, during their closed meetings of two days, the rulers failed to reach a decision. This resulted in the issue of a communiqué in which they admitted there were differences about the best methods to implement the Dubai Agreement. The communiqué also announced that the next meeting of the rulers would be in Abu Dhabi on 1st July 1968.

The success of the July meeting of the rulers was credited to Kuwait's efforts to mediate. Sheikh Şabah al-Aḥmad Āl Şabah, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, toured the lower Gulf from June 22-27th. He met with the rulers of all the emirates, aiming to bridge the differences between them. Accordingly, the rulers held their Supreme Council meeting in Abu Dhabi on 6-7th July 1968 as a continuation of the May meeting. They agreed on the following points:

1. to elect a chairman for each session of the Supreme Council of the rulers from among its members,
2. to establish a temporary federal council (cabinet)
3. to appoint a constitutional legal adviser to draft the federation's constitution. (An Egyptian, Sanhūrī, was invited to do this, but due to ill health he was replaced by Waḥīd Ra'fat, an Egyptian legal adviser to Kuwait<sup>19</sup>)
4. to establish a liaison committee that would work between the rulers and the legal adviser, and
5. to establish different committees to study the unification of currencies, the flag, the national anthem and the official gazette.<sup>20</sup>

The second meeting of the rulers was convened in Doha, Qatar, from 20-22nd October 1968. At this meeting the rulers agreed to establish several committees such as immigration, health, education and nationality. Also, the rulers discussed federal defence and security problems. This resulted in the appointment of a military adviser to prepare a study on federation defence forces. The appointed adviser was later named as Major-General Sir John Willoughby (see his Report in chapter 4). Furthermore, the Doha session of the Supreme Council asked the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to: "undertake an economic and social survey in the Emirates as a preliminary step towards setting up, within a reasonable period of time, a comprehensive economic and social development plan."<sup>21</sup>

The third meeting of the Supreme Council of rulers was held in Doha, Qatar, from 10-14th May 1969 but it was not preceded by the usual preliminary committee to prepare its agenda because this was opposed by some of the rulers. The

host emirate, Qatar, proposed a draft agenda of 20 items that dealt with various subjects such as: the election of the Union President, a cabinet of ministers to replace the Provisional Federal Council, the site of the federal capital, the federal flag, the establishment of a Federal Assembly and the need to contact the British government to discuss the withdrawal timetable.<sup>22</sup> However, Bahrain immediately counteracted the Qatari agenda with its own 16-item agenda that, however, included most of the Qatari proposals. However, after a heated discussion between Bahrain and Qatar, the council agreed to establish an *ad hoc* committee to prepare overnight a new agenda for the rulers' meeting. The next day the council held its second session where they discussed the new agenda. This was similar to the previous Qatar and Bahrain agendas.

The Rulers' meeting reached deadlock due to the opposite views that were taken by Bahrain and Qatar on the agenda items. For example, Bahrain demanded that representation in the National Consultative Council (NCC) should be proportional to each emirate's population, (which would have given Bahrain a majority over all the other emirates) whereupon the Qatari representative, Sheikh Ḥamad bin Khalīfah, pointed out that: "most of the members in the Council prefer equal representation for each emirate; Qatar agreed to this because, unlike Bahrain, it did not want to contradict the majority."<sup>23</sup> In order to solve the problem, Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi proposed that each Emirate should be represented by four members with the exception of Bahrain which should have six members, but this was rejected by Bahrain. The other matter that was disputed by Bahrain and Qatar was the federal capital. Qatar suggested that Abu Dhabi should be chosen as the provisional site of the federal capital until a new one could be established on the border between Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Bahrain saw this as a waste of time and

money and suggested instead that the Supreme Council should immediately decide the site of a permanent capital. This resulted in the Supreme Council delaying the capital issue until later. Finally, Bahrain objected to the idea that ministers (including the Prime Minister) could combine a federal and local position at the same time. This objection was interpreted by Qatar as a way of excluding Sheikh Khalīfah, the Qatari Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler, from the premiership of the federation. However, Bahrain's objection was not supported by the other emirates and so it was rejected.<sup>24</sup>

The Bahraini-Qatar dispute may also have been motivated by other factors, for instance the Iranian claim over Bahrain. Qatar, which like Dubai, was on good terms with Iran, did not want to antagonize the Shah, with the result that the rulers avoided holding any Supreme Council meetings in Bahrain. This was disturbing to the Bahraini ruling family, which sought to gain political strength by entering the federation. Thus, as will be seen later, once the Iranian claim over Bahrain was removed, Bahrain became stronger in the discussions and began to prepare itself for independence.

The Supreme Council of the rulers convened its fourth meeting in Abu Dhabi from 21-25th October 1969 to discuss an agenda that was prepared by the Deputy rulers in an earlier meeting held in Abu Dhabi.<sup>25</sup> The Council agreed on the following points although the rulers did not actually sign an agreement to that effect:

1. Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi was to be elected as the federation's first president, with Sheikh Rāshid of Dubai as vice-president, for two years;
2. The choice of Abu Dhabi as the provisional capital for the federation and the construction of a permanent capital in an area between Abu Dhabi and

Dubai;

3. The selection of Sheikh Khalīfah bin Hamad Āl Thānī, Deputy Ruler of Qatar, as first Prime Minister of a thirteen-member cabinet;
4. The acceptance of equal representation in the proposed National Consultative Council, each emirate being allotted 4 seats.<sup>26</sup>

Subsequently, the rulers were supposed to set out these decisions in a final communiqué, but the whole effort disintegrated when Sheikh Ṣaqr of Ras al-Khaimah and Sheikh Aḥmad bin 'Alī of Qatar walked out of the meeting. They did so in reaction to a statement delivered personally to the meeting by the British Political Agent, C.J. Treadwell. In his statement Mr. Treadwell encouraged the rulers to overcome obstacles that were hindering the establishment of the federation. He said:<sup>27</sup>

My government will be extremely disappointed if these difficulties are not to be overcome. I strongly urge all the rulers to do their utmost to find a way of resolving their difficulties.

The rulers who walked out claimed that the Political Agent's interruption of their meeting was an interference in their internal affairs and that this was an insult to the rulers and the federation. Sheikh Ṣaqr of Ras al-Khaimah issued a statement in which he blamed the Political Agent for the failure of the federation discussions, pointing out that the Political Agent's message was, "in both form and content rejected by all and that it was regarded as an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Arab Emirates."<sup>28</sup> However, on 31st October 1969 Qatar issued a statement blaming the failure of the Supreme Council meeting on disagreements concerning the distribution of ministerial portfolios.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Sheikhs who walked out were very close to

King Fayṣal of Saudi Arabia. Could it have been that the choice of Abu Dhabi as the federal capital and the choice of Sheikh Zayed as the president would have resulted in an embarrassment to their relations with the King, since Abu Dhabi had not yet solved its territorial dispute with Saudi Arabia over Buraimi? (See Buraimi dispute 6.2.3.). Alternatively, the reason for the break-up of the meeting could have been the rift over the distribution of ministry portfolios among the emirates on the last day of the rulers' meeting. Ra'fat, the constitutional adviser to the federation, argued in an article published in 1971 that Ras al-Khaimah insisted on holding the ministry of defence portfolio, and when this was refused, demanded that of the ministry of the interior. However, when this was also refused, Sheikh Ṣaqr reluctantly accepted the offer of the ministry of agriculture portfolio.<sup>30</sup> Qatar's displeasure over the ministries debate was heightened when Sheikh Khalīfah, the Deputy Ruler of Qatar, (who was selected as Prime Minister) wanted to hold the meetings of his cabinet in Doha, his homeland. This was rejected by the other rulers on the basis that Abu Dhabi was chosen as the federal capital and hence the cabinet ought to hold its meetings there. Nevertheless, the political agent's message was used as a pretext for the break up of the meeting and for the final communiqué not being signed. The October 1969 meeting turned out to be the last ever meeting of the Supreme Council of the nine emirates.

The failure of the October 1969 meeting did not, however, stop all diplomatic efforts to resolve the obstacles that hindered the formation of the federation. The most noteworthy of these efforts were the British Government's missions to the Gulf throughout 1970-71, as well as those of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>31</sup> These efforts resulted in encouraging the Deputy rulers to continue discussions on the federation. On 13th June 1970 the deputy rulers held their meeting in Abu Dhabi. Firstly,

they agreed not to discuss the items on which agreement had already been reached, such as the site of the capital and the presidency. Secondly, they concentrated on points that had not yet been agreed upon by the Supreme Council such as the financial contribution by each emirate to the federal budget and the setting up of a high-level legal committee to study the draft constitutions submitted to the Council.

The Constitutional Committee of the proposed federation had submitted its new draft to the Deputy rulers' meeting of 24-26th October 1970,<sup>32</sup> but this meeting witnessed a complete reversal of the Bahraini position. It insisted on discussing the representation in the Federal Council (Assembly). The Bahraini representative, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Mūbārak Āl Khalīfah, insisted that Bahrain wanted to see the establishment of a council in which the people of the federation were totally represented on the basis of the size of the population in each emirate. At this stage Sheikh Khalīfah bin Ḥamad of Qatar, reminded Bahrain that:<sup>33</sup>

As far as the representation in the Federal Council was concerned, Bahrain has agreed on a solution that was accepted by all emirates. Also, Bahrain agreed in the last meeting of the Deputy rulers, not to re-discuss any items that had been agreed upon previously. The subject of representation in the National Consultative Council, which was renamed the Federal Council, was among those items.

Because an agreement had not been signed incorporating the resolutions of the Supreme Council of October 1969, Bahrain now argued that it had not agreed to accept equal representation in the proposed Representative Council but only discussed it. However, Bahrain pointed out that it would accept a temporary formula of 6 representatives for Bahrain and likewise for Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Dubai; 4 representatives for Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah, and 3 for Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah, (i.e. 41 representatives in all). Her acceptance of this temporary formula was on the condition that the Federation would conduct a cen-

sus four years after its establishment and then proportional representation would be introduced. When her demand was not accepted by the other emirates, Bahrain kept quiet throughout the meeting and refused to answer questions or vote on any item. The meeting ended in a sober mood created by Bahrain's determination to bring up again the items that had been agreed upon previously, especially her insistence on a proportional representation system in the Federal Council.

Bahrain's change of heart can be seen from different perspectives. The overriding factor influencing Bahrain's attitude toward the proposed federation was the settlement of the Iranian claim over its sovereignty through the United Nations (see chapter 7). The other factor might have been that Bahrain probably felt that it could go back on what it had previously agreed on because it had British support. It was known that Sir William Luce, Britain's special adviser on the Gulf, viewed the participation of Bahrain as essential to the success of the proposed federation because of its size and its educated population and that he supported a strong role for Bahrain within the federation (see Luce opinion of Bahrain in 6.2.2).<sup>34</sup> In the wake of this, Bahrain began to seek a leading role in the federation and when that was opposed by other emirates it opted for unilateral independence.<sup>35</sup>

The failure of these discussions encouraged Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to form a mission that toured the Gulf in January 1971 and again in April of the same year. In its attempt at a reconciliation in which the obstacles that hindered the formation of the federation might be removed the joint Saudi-Kuwaiti mission proposed the following:

- a. equal representation for all the emirates in the Federal Council for the first four years only;



- b. the formation of the federal army;
- c. a contribution by each emirate of 10% of their income to the federal budget;
- d. Abu Dhabi to be the provisional capital with the permanent capital to be decided upon later; and,
- e. the federation should be responsible for customs and ports regulations.<sup>36</sup>

The joint-mission's recommendations were welcomed, but not entirely without reservations. For example, Abu Dhabi insisted on the right of each emirate to raise its own army. This was an understandable gesture from Abu Dhabi as it had expected trouble from Saudi Arabia over Buraimi. Bahrain made her acceptance of the mission's new proposals conditional upon their being accepted by all the other emirates: that did not happen. Qatar also expressed some reservations and as a condition of her attending further meetings demanded a written statement by all the other emirates detailing those matters which they had agreed in previous meetings, accompanied by a promise that all parties concerned would abide absolutely by such agreements. As far as Dubai and the other emirates were concerned they all agreed on the Saudi/Kuwaiti mission proposals and they were looking forward to a nine-emirate federation.<sup>37</sup>

Even though these obstacles played a major role in limiting the federation to seven emirates instead of nine, it would probably not have been thus if Britain had adopted a different approach.

### **6.2.1 Britain and the Federation of the Nine**

In a number of cases Britain pursued a policy of unifying former colonies and spheres of influence (Malaysia, West Indies, South Arabian Federation, the Central

African Federation) but was not always successful. The reason for her doing this in the lower Gulf was her desire to leave a stable system in place which could play a role in the security of the area after the withdrawal of British troops at the end of 1971.

J.B. Kelly has criticised the British withdrawal policy from the Gulf and argued that the Foreign Office precipitated the whole affair including the federation plan. He wrote:<sup>38</sup>

Now that the date of departure had been announced, the Foreign Office hastened to tie up or cut off the awkward loose end of Britain's remaining involvement with the Gulf. The first was the Union of Arab Emirates, the fig-leaf with which the British government hoped to conceal its diminished parts from the quizzical gaze of the outside world.

Kelly believed that the Foreign Office never felt comfortable with the Gulf because it was a left-over from the Indian *raj* which had been more imperial than diplomatic. Thus when the Conservative Government agreed to adhere to the withdrawal timetable of the previous Government, the Foreign Office was prepared to accept any form of federation whether it was between nine states, seven or even fewer. It is difficult to accept Kelly's point because there is strong evidence that both the Labour and the Conservative Governments were keen on establishing the federation of the nine.

Frauke Heard-Bey has argued that the British Government (by which she probably meant both Labour and Conservative) had doubts right from the beginning about a federation that included Bahrain and Qatar, and added that when the smaller federation was created the Government "could be satisfied that the infant was of the very shape and size it had anticipated".<sup>39</sup> However, if Britain really wanted a federation of seven it is difficult to explain why its officials continued for some four years to put pressure on the rulers to agree to a federation of nine

states. It was not until June 1971 that the British gave up the idea of federating the nine and as the date for the withdrawal approached, accepted a federation of the seven.

There are many indications that Britain played an important role in the creation of the Federation of the nine and later, the seven. Sir David Roberts, H.M. Political Agent in the Trucial States 1966-68, in an interview on 17th January 1987, pointed out that "the Federation was a British initiative because we could not leave Ajman to be an independent state",<sup>40</sup> implying that Ajman and other smaller states did not have the means to stand on their own. Lord Home, Foreign Secretary of Edward Heath's Government, wrote in his autobiography in 1976:<sup>41</sup>

We put into the mind of the rulers that they should organize a Union of the Sheikdoms, with its own security force, and said that we would be willing to supply the personnel and equipment which would ensure that it had a favourable start.

When the Conservative Government had announced that policy on 1st March 1971, the Opposition claimed the credit for the federal initiative. Denis Healey, Shadow Foreign Secretary, told Sir Alec in the House of Commons on March 1st, 1971 that:<sup>42</sup>

The Opposition share his desire for the establishment and success of a Union of Arab Emirates. Indeed, we launched it on its way.

Another indication that may shed some light on both the Labour and Conservative Governments' close involvement in the establishment of the federation, comes from the Gulf. According to Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum'ah, Abu Dhabi's Planning Director 1968-72,<sup>43</sup>

Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rāshid met in the village of al-Sumayḥ and solved some border dispute between their emirates. At the same time they announced the Federation Agreement and called upon other emirates to join. Sheikh Zayed's desire for federation was unquestionable but he needed some encouragement. However, since there were not enough learned people in Abu Dhabi capable of such a task, then the British Political Agency in Abu Dhabi was in a good position to perform such a role.

Furthermore, Jum‘ah also pointed out that the British Political Agents in the area encouraged the rulers to opt for the Federation of the Nine. For example, before negotiations for the federation began in February 1968 Mr. Jum‘ah explained;<sup>44</sup>

We [the Arab advisers] convinced Sheikh Zayed that the Federation of the Nine would not work because Bahrain and Qatar are bigger than us and we cannot compete with them. He seemed to accept our argument, but Balfour-Paul came and told us to work for the Federation of the Nine.

Early in the federation discussion Balfour-Paul, Deputy Political Resident, talked to Sheikh Zayed about the federation and stressed that the rulers should enter into discussion about federating the nine emirates. Balfour-Paul also asked Sheikh Zayed to see Sheikh ‘Īsā, ruler of Bahrain, as a gesture of his interest in the federation of the nine. Although there is some evidence that Sheikh Zayed was not happy about the idea, he did visit Sheikh ‘Īsā Āl Khalīfah which demonstrated his support for the federation of the Nine.<sup>45</sup>

However, there were others who emphasized that the federation proposal was an Arab not a British initiative. Certain Arabs and British officials stated that the idea was originally by Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rāshid and that the British role was only to encourage it. For example, Balfour-Paul in an interview stated, on 4th February, 1987 that “Britain was in no sense responsible and at no stage was British officialdom involved”.<sup>46</sup> Mahdī al-Tājir, oil adviser to the Dubai Government, in an interview on 2nd December 1988 stated that “Britain had no role in the establishment of the Federation, rather it was certainly an Arab initiative.”<sup>47</sup>

But one would dispute Balfour-Paul’s and Mahdī al-Tājir’s views on the British role in the federal initiative. Firstly, the idea of federating the Gulf emirates fitted exactly into the British vision of a Gulf security system. Secondly,

from the outset most of the rulers and most of their Arab advisers did not want a bigger federation. As one adviser put it when interviewed on 5th July 1989, "We did not like the federation of the Nine and we wanted it to fail... We knew it would not succeed".<sup>48</sup> Probably the Arab advisers dislike of the federation of nine was motivated by their personal interests as they feared that their influence might be reduced in a federation that contained for example Bahrain. Nevertheless, the advisers and the rulers continued to take part in discussions about the federation of the nine for a period of four years due to pressure from British officials and from the wider Arab World. Thirdly, Mahdī al-Tājir's view of the federation as an Arab initiative probably represented his personal involvement in the federation discussions which convinced him that the idea was of Arab origins. But what really happened was that Mahdī al-Tājir and other advisers had started discussing the federation only after it had been proposed by British officials.

It could be argued that while Britain insisted on determining the political future of the Gulf after withdrawal, it also wanted to avoid criticism particularly from the Arab World which might damage the credibility of the proposed federation. Therefore, even though in private British officials were pressuring the rulers to work for a federation of the nine, in public they stressed that the federation was an Arab initiative. Indeed British officials visited the Gulf on several occasions to ensure that the process toward federation continued. For instance in May 1970 the Labour Minister of State, Evan Luard, toured the Gulf area, and his mission (Luard Mission) was carried out in October by officials from the Foreign Office (Acland and Egerton of the Arabian Department). Throughout 1970-71 Sir William Luce headed a team of experts which included his constitutional assistant, Mr. Holmes, and his political assistant Duncan Slater. After these visits, the parties to the dis-

cussion with regard to the federation (i.e. the rulers and their advisers) intensify their discussions. Although their meetings did not necessarily reach any agreement, it clearly indicated the influence of Britain and the role played by its officials.

In spite of the fact that Britain declared it had no role in the federation, this initiative was heavily criticised by nationalist groups in the area and their supporters. The Dhofar Front voiced opposition to the projected federation believing Britain had designed it in order to:<sup>49</sup>

[S]trengthen imperialism's hold and to perpetuate the fragmentation of our territory in the interests of the oil companies. At the same time they will protect the position of the feudal, tribal, ruling families.

*Damascus Radio* on 18th March 1968 condemned the federation agreement as "A false federation which serves neo-imperialist plans".<sup>50</sup> The Soviet Union accused Britain of manipulating the federation in order to preserve its own interests in the Gulf. *Tass* on 3rd March, 1968 stated that: "the Federation was formed under the aegis of Britain and the U.S."<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to this opposition by some Arab countries, several Arab countries such as Kuwait and Egypt welcomed the federation plan. The Egyptian Government spokesman, Ḥasan al-Zayyāt said: "If this unity is what they want, we have to respect it".<sup>52</sup> Egypt though, which was humiliated in the 1967 war, could not help the federation with respect to the Iranian claim over the Gulf Islands.<sup>53</sup> Before his death, the President of Egypt, Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, was furious about the British Conservative Party's proposal to change the withdrawal policy of the Labour Government. During his Arab Socialist Union's speech on 24th July 1970 Nasser said that:<sup>54</sup>

We categorically reject all the attempts by the British Conservative Government to return to the policy of British presence in the Arabian Gulf under the cover of the East of Suez policy.

The above examples illustrate Britain's role in the federal initiative; both Labour and Conservative Governments made several attempts to make the proposed federation a success.

Among the first British attempts to reconcile the various differences of opinion among the rulers, was a visit by the Labour Government's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Evan Luard, who toured the Gulf from 24th April to 8th May, 1970. He visited Bahrain, Qatar, the Trucial States, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>55</sup> Mr. Luard suggested that in order to make the Supreme Council of rulers' meeting successful, there should be a preparatory meeting of the Deputy rulers which subsequently took place on 13th June 1970.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, as a way of encouraging the rulers to concentrate on the Federation and to forget the Conservative Party's promises of cancelling the withdrawal decision when they came to power, Mr. Luard said at a press conference at the British Embassy in Kuwait that he:<sup>57</sup>

did not see any justification for the British remaining in the area after 1971 [because] Britain supported the federation of Arab Emirates and she would not interfere in internal affairs and would not sign any defence pacts with Gulf states, since once they were united they would be able to defend themselves.

At the end of May, Mr. Luard sent a memorandum asking the Deputy rulers "to concentrate on the issues that they had already solved and to delay the points that needed further discussion to other meetings."<sup>58</sup>

With the Conservative Government in office in June 1970, the efforts to reach a federation of the Arab Emirates continued. This was clearly manifested in the succession of different British missions and the numerous officials involved in the discussions that related to the federation problem. For example, Sir William Luce, who was appointed Britain's special negotiator in the Gulf, toured the area from August to October 1970, and again in January and May of the following year.

In October 1970, both the head of the Arabian Department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Antony Acland, and his assistant, Sir Stephen Egerton, had visited the Gulf area too.<sup>59</sup> Sir William Luce's assistant, Duncan Slater, also had held separate meetings with the governments of various individual Emirates.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, most of the British Political Residents and Political Agents in the Gulf, such as Sir Stewart Crawford, Sir Geoffrey Arthur, James Treadwell, E. Henderson, M. Weir, J. Bullard, P. Wright and Julian Walker, had played significant roles in the federation process. Sir Geoffrey Arthur, the last British Political Resident in the Gulf, told Sir David Roberts, Political Agent in Dubai from 1966-68, that "he had great difficulties in trying to make the Sheikhs agree [to a federation of the nine and later to the seven]."<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, most of the Sheikhs from the Emirates who visited London had held meetings with several British officials to discuss the withdrawal policy and, especially, the future of the Federation.

British officials had worked hard to solve the various boundary disputes and many had become intimately involved in the establishment of the federation and the security of the Gulf region after withdrawal. They sometimes expressed their opinions in strong language as in the message of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Sir Alec Douglas Home, to the rulers on 2nd December 1970, in which he warned the rulers that "the circumstances are rapidly changing, therefore they should not delay taking necessary decisions regarding the establishment of the Federation."<sup>62</sup> The same stand was presented by Sir Geoffrey Arthur, Political Resident in the Gulf 1970-1, during a discussion with Mr. Ḥamūdī, the Government of Abu Dhabi's Adviser on the Federation, at the Foreign Office on 26th August, 1970. Arthur pointed out to Ḥamūdī:<sup>63</sup>



The reason for not taking strong policy on the federation was because of Iran. It took us 15 months to convince Iran to accept this policy. But now we will take a strong position in encouraging the rulers ..... This actually is one of Sir William Luce's jobs during his visit to the area. The problem though is the number of States that will enter the federation .... We can't push them too hard, otherwise they will withdraw from the federation just after we leave the area. Thus it is better that they join the federation willingly ... these entities will collapse immediately after our withdrawal if they do not form a union among themselves.

### 6.2.2 Sir William Luce and the Federation

The most important efforts to establish the Federation of the Arab Emirates and solve the various related problems were made by Sir William Luce during his visits to the area throughout 1970 and 1971. His main job, as Patrick Bannerman, the late Foreign Office official, stated in January 1987, was:<sup>64</sup>

- a. To assist in setting up the Federation.
- b. The settlement of Bahraini affairs.
- c. Solving the Buraimi dispute.
- d. The affairs of the islands.
- e. Encouraging an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Sir William Luce, (formerly a member of the Sudan Civil Service) was, from 1956-60, Governor-General of Aden and from 1961-66 the Political Resident in the Gulf. From 1970-71 he was the Personal Representative for Gulf Affairs of the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home.<sup>65</sup> Luce's personal opinion, with regard to Britain's withdrawal policy from the Gulf, had been expressed in two articles in *The Round Table* in July 1967 and October 1969. Furthermore, he delivered two lectures about the subject in November 1968 and in September 1973. He also participated in the Georgetown University Conference, *The Implication of Britain's Withdrawal from the Gulf*, in 1969.<sup>66</sup>

In his article of July 1967, Sir William Luce expressed his opinion that Britain had an important stake in the Gulf oil industry. He realised that the oil companies

should be encouraged to rely on their own survival methods, but that the Gulf was not stable enough for the oil companies to perform such a task. He wrote that if the Gulf was a secure and stable region there would be no problem in disengaging from it. But since it was considered unstable the British presence there was vital. Nevertheless, Luce agreed that Britain would not stay in the Gulf indefinitely but,<sup>67</sup>

With the circumstances of the Gulf region as they are today, the dangers to our interests and those of our friends in the area of an early British withdrawal are too great to make it an acceptable gamble.

In his view Britain should have worked to create reasonable conditions in the Gulf area that would permit the withdrawal of the troops 'honourably'. Amongst these pre-conditions were: (a) understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran; (b) the growth of a close relationship between the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia whereby the Gulf States would accept the leadership of Saudi Arabia in external affairs and defence; and (c) the Gulf States must abandon old feuds that kept them divided.<sup>68</sup>

It would appear that Sir William Luce did not see the feasibility of the Gulf emirates joining a federation at that stage, but he revived his old idea of 'Peninsula Solidarity' by which he sought to encourage the emirates to rely on Saudi Arabia for their defence and external affairs. In other words, Saudi Arabia would have the same responsibilities that Britain used to have within the Gulf Emirates. However, in 1973 Sir William regretted that Saudi Arabia did not utilize this opportunity (see Twin Pillars).

After the withdrawal was announced in January 1968, Luce again expressed his opinion in a lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution (RUSI) on 26th November 1968.<sup>69</sup> He did not agree with the withdrawal decision and even

called for a reconsideration of Britain's policy of withdrawal from East of Suez. In fact, he was not against the withdrawal in principle, but only disagreed with the timing and method of the decision since he thought the British presence could have continued until the mid-1970s without any serious difficulties. The reason he gave was that the Gulf was not yet stable and that the Russians would exploit the opportunity to fill the vacuum. Nevertheless, as the decision had been made, altering it would have created some political problems, because: "The announcement of our withdrawal from the Gulf last January has changed the situation there already. It has set in motion a certain process which cannot be put back."<sup>70</sup>

The programme that Luce outlined to keep post-withdrawal stability in the Gulf consisted of four points. Firstly, he believed the withdrawal would revive the old territorial disputes, namely between Iran and the Gulf emirates. This is why Britain ought to have helped remove these sources of conflict before the withdrawal date. Secondly, the best way to solve these conflicts was through an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran regarding the *status quo* of the Gulf states. Thirdly, the Gulf emirates should be encouraged to join forces by forming a federation amongst themselves.

Even though Sir William expected the federation proposal of February 1968 to succeed, he was not sure of its cohesiveness. He pointed this out by saying:<sup>71</sup>

I think it has a reasonable hope of growing, if not into what we would regard as a particularly efficient organisation, at least into a political entity which would be internationally recognised.

Fourthly, after such a federation was set up, Luce suggested Britain could then sign an agreement with it, whereby the British navy would be permitted to make occasional visits to the Emirates' ports.

Amazingly enough, all four points above, outlined by Sir William Luce in November 1968, were accomplished before Britain evacuated the Gulf in 1971. This would probably not have happened had Luce not been appointed as the British Foreign Secretary's special envoy to the Gulf States in July 1970.

Further issues that Luce forecasted and which later became reality, were the Bahraini conditions for joining the Federation. Luce saw no hope for the Federation without the inclusion of Bahrain because of her greater and more educated population, (more than the combined total of the other emirates) from which the proposed federation would be able to draw most of its skilled and educated civil servants. For these reasons Luce agreed with Bahrain's demand for a bigger say in federation affairs, but when that was rejected by the other emirates he seemed willing to accept Bahrain's reasons for unilateral independence. In October 1969, before he was appointed special adviser on Gulf affairs, Luce suggested in *The Round Table* article that Bahrain might go its own way if the other states did not concede it a leading role in the union. Bahrain claimed that having the largest and most advanced population gave it the right to such a role.<sup>72</sup>

In the October 1969 article, Luce also emphasized the problem of post-withdrawal security in the Gulf and the British role in facing Soviet penetration there. He thought Britain should contest Soviet influence in the Gulf by providing some balance to their growing influence in the region. Britain could do this simply through a naval presence in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf. At the same time, naval personnel would be allowed a degree of access to the ports of the Gulf States and to bases like Masīrah in Oman. This policy would first modernize Britain's relation with the Gulf States by virtue of her withdrawal and secondly, Britain would still have a presence there in terms of mobile naval forces that would be

allowed to use ports in times of emergency, and during occasional visits to the area.<sup>73</sup>

When the Conservative Government came to power in June 1970, Luce was appointed as the Foreign Secretary's special representative to the Gulf States. The official reason for his appointment was that he was needed to consult the governments in the region on the withdrawal decision and to see whether it was possible to reverse it, as the Conservatives had promised when they were in Opposition. Nevertheless, there were some who argued that Luce's appointment was only a face-saving attempt by the Conservative Government, because:<sup>74</sup>

by the time the Conservatives got back it was too late to reverse policy and anyway, they knew that it was no longer reversible, whatever they said publicly. In that sense Sir William Luce's appointment was a matter of finding a formula not to reverse policy, though of course his authority and great experience also offered hope of helping to solve the problems that had to be faced before independence.

However, other researchers and writers (such as Qureshi of *Pakistan Horizon*) saw Luce's appointment as a pretext for Britain to remain in the Gulf, and they suggested that Britain would use the rulers' cooperation with Luce as a vital means by which she could pursue such a policy. It was suggested that the British Government was looking for a reason to remain in the Gulf and that this was behind Sir William Luce's mission.<sup>75</sup> It will be easier to judge Sir William Luce's appointment if his visits are discussed in greater detail and that will be the task of the forthcoming pages.

After his appointment by the Conservative Government in July 1970 Sir William embarked on a mission on 19 August 1970 that would last until the 22nd of the following month. He visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar, Iraq, Iran, and Egypt.<sup>76</sup> His visit was a fact-finding mission to assist the British Conservative Government in its policy towards the Gulf and

to help it decide whether or not it should withdraw from the area. The view he received from rulers as well as from other leaders was that Britain should adhere to the Labour Government's timetable. The rulers were of course not unanimous in their views. For example, *The Times* reported on 14th July 1970, a few weeks before Luce's visit, that Sheikh Rāshid, ruler of Dubai, had openly supported a continued British presence. He said that.<sup>77</sup>

Abu Dhabi and Bahrain, and in fact the whole coast, people and rulers, would support the retaining of British forces in the Gulf even though....they might not give a direct answer out of respect for the general Arab view.

But that was a minority opinion, at least in public, when compared with the views of the other rulers, as well as those of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt. Sheikh Sa'd Āl 'Abdullāh, the Kuwait Acting-Premier, declared from the Cairo radio station *Ṣawt al-'Arb* (Voice of the Arabs) on 24th August 1970.<sup>78</sup>

The present British government should adhere to the decision of the former Labour Government in connection with the withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf area.

Iraq also criticized Luce's visit, accusing the British Government of seeking ways to remain in the Gulf. *Baghdad Radio* on 10th September, 1970 said that: "the aim of Luce's tour was to persuade Gulf rulers of the necessity of British troops remaining there and to wreck the proposed Gulf Federation."<sup>79</sup> Some similar criticism was pointed out by *Cairo Radio* on 9th September 1970 accusing Luce's visit of prolonging the British presence in the Gulf.<sup>80</sup> The Shah had long before also declared his opposition to any reversal in the withdrawal policy, and he repeated this to Luce during his meeting with him on 20th September, 1970. The Shah's Foreign Minister, Ardeshīr Zāhedī, explained the Iranian position to reporters the following day by saying: "Iran had emphasized its opposition to any British military presence in the Gulf area after 1971."<sup>81</sup>

Thus the aim of the first round of Luce's Gulf talks was to ascertain the rulers' opinion with regard to the withdrawal policy, but it was rather strange of Luce to announce on 26th September 1970 at a press conference in Tehran and before leaving for Cairo, that Britain was not insisting on the creation of a federation of the emirates as a pre-condition of withdrawal but that he was trying very hard indeed to accelerate its formation.<sup>82</sup> That probably meant that Luce had already made up his mind about the withdrawal of the troops, or it could have meant that he did not want to upset the Shah who was against the formation of the federation. Another possible interpretation is that Luce wanted to win over the Egyptian Government, which he went to see after the press conference. According to *The Times* of 26th September, Luce was expected to recommend to Sir Alec that Britain should withdraw.<sup>83</sup> *The Times* of 14 October 1970 believed that Sir William had advised the Conservative Government to carry out the withdrawal programme from the Gulf by the end of 1971.<sup>84</sup>

In comparison with Luce's first round of Gulf talks (that took him to all the countries concerned, spending over one month in the region) the second round was very short and involved fewer countries, lasting only from 13th October 1970 to the 19th of the same month.<sup>85</sup> The purpose of his second visit was ostensibly for further consultations. He visited Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait, and on the 19th of October returned to London.<sup>86</sup> This second visit, however, was certainly not for another 'sounding of opinion' but was instead a serious discussion of federation affairs. This was explained by the presence of Luce's constitutional advisor, Mr. Holmes, who had a meeting with some of the rulers' advisors during the same period. Furthermore, on December 2nd 1970, Sir Alec Douglas-Home sent a message to the rulers, the content of which was summarized by Ḥamūdī, an Abu Dhabi official,

as follows:<sup>87</sup>

He [Sir Alec] has appointed Sir William Luce as his personal representative, and mentioned Luce's efforts to solve the obstacles in the way of federation in between August and October. There were two main points that had not been solved yet: the site for the capital and the representation quota. The best way to solve these obstacles, the Foreign Secretary suggested, was that the rulers should first solve the two obstacles and then include them in the provisional constitution. But if they were not solved then the constitution should ignore them completely. Furthermore, the Foreign Secretary, warned the rulers that time was passing very quickly and circumstances were changing, thus, they should not delay taking the necessary decisions to establish the Federation.

The third tour of the Gulf by Sir William Luce was from January 24th to February 14th, 1971. This third round looked more comprehensive than the last one for this time Luce visited Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the Trucial States and Iran. The Foreign Office spokesman, describing the journey, said it was "part of the continuing process of consultation with other Governments concerning British policy towards the region."<sup>88</sup> *The Daily Telegraph* of 29th January, however, pointed out that the Conservative Government had already decided to withdraw and that "Sir William Luce is on a tour of the nine Gulf Shaikhdoms to tell the rulers of this decision. The run-down of forces has begun, and it will be accelerated."<sup>89</sup> This speculation was confirmed by Sheikh Şaqr of Ras al-Khaimah who, after meeting Luce in February, told the magazine *al-Usbū' al-'Arabi*, that "I told you that Britain will withdraw: Luce has just confirmed that now."<sup>90</sup> Luce then went on to meet the Shah of Iran, (on 11th February 1971). He told reporters at the airport before departing for England that:<sup>91</sup>

The idea of establishing a Federation of Arab Emirates in the Gulf region has not failed: the governments of Britain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are still doing everything in their power to achieve the union, and the differences between the Gulf rulers have been narrowed.

The above statement by Sir William Luce was further proof that he was not in the Gulf to consult the rulers on whether to withdraw or not, as the Foreign



Office spokesman had stated. The purpose of the visit was rather to notify the rulers of the Conservative Government's decision to abide by the former Labour Government's dead-line. Furthermore, the statement shed light on the cooperation between Luce and the Saudi/Kuwaiti Mission that toured the Gulf in mid-January 1971 in an attempt to minimize the differences between the rulers about the Federation.<sup>92</sup>

The Conservative Government's withdrawal decision was revealed in a statement delivered by Douglas-Home on 1st March 1971. Besides adhering to the former withdrawal time-table, the Foreign Secretary outlined the proposals that his Government was prepared to undertake regarding the projected Federation as follows:<sup>93</sup>

Firstly, we are prepared to offer a Treaty of Friendship containing an undertaking to consult together in time of need.

Secondly, Her Majesty's Government is willing to hand over the Trucial Oman Scouts, a force whose efficiency and value is well proven and to which I pay tribute today for its role in maintaining peace in the Trucial States, to form a nucleus of a Union Army. We are prepared to make available British Officers and other personnel on loan to the Union's forces and to assist in the supply of equipment. The Union itself would naturally assume full financial responsibility for its own forces.

Thirdly, if the Union wishes, elements of British forces, including training teams to assist with the training Union security forces, could be stationed there on a continuing basis to act in a liaison and training role.

Fourthly, training exercises involving British Army and Air Force units could take place regularly.

Fifthly, there would be regular visits to the area by ships of the Royal Navy.

There are differences of opinion among some researchers about exactly when Luce submitted his report to the Foreign Secretary. Was it in September 1970, as J.B. Kelly suggests, or was it in December of the same year as Balfour-Paul believes?<sup>94</sup> These writers thus hold the view that Luce submitted his report after either his first or his second trip to the Gulf. He found that opinions in the area had completely changed since January 1968 when the Labour Minister had come

to tell the rulers of the withdrawal decision and they had objected to it. There are others, on the other hand, who believe that Luce submitted his report to Sir Alec in February 1971 and that the Foreign Secretary made his celebrated March statement after receiving the report. Heard-Bey and al-Baharna agree about this sequence of events.<sup>95</sup>

Luce's report is important in the sense that it explains to us the nature of the Conservative Government's policy towards the region. How relevant was the formation of the federation to the new British security arrangements? And why did it take the British Foreign Secretary nine months to announce his Government's policy in March 1971?

First of all there might never have been any report by Luce at all, because he strongly believed that the Labour Government's announcement in January 1968 had changed the situation in the Gulf to such an extent that any reconsideration of that decision was now impossible. This opinion was declared by Luce even before he was appointed as an adviser on Gulf affairs, and the Foreign Secretary could hardly have been unaware of it. Secondly, there might have been an earlier preliminary report (September or December 1970) advising withdrawal, but the Government could not act upon it because of the failure to form the federation. Luce always held that the withdrawal of British troops would create a vacuum that might be exploited by the Russians. The best way to fill this vacuum was through new arrangements, including a naval presence in the area that would make occasional visits to the federation's ports (see Luce's opinion, above). Therefore, it was necessary to establish a federation first and to sign an agreement with it later. Sir Alec was also a believer in this idea: he told the House of Commons on 20th July 1970: <sup>96</sup>

If we are successful in forming the union of Arab Emirates -and I hope we may be successful- it is for them to say, in consultation with Britain, what support they want.

Finally, there might have been a final report in February 1971 that recommended withdrawal by the end of the year. This supposition is based on two premises. Firstly, even though the federation was not established yet, it is conceivable that Luce had received a certain degree of acceptance for the new British security arrangements, including the naval visits. Secondly, taking an earlier decision on withdrawal would itself encourage the rulers to form their federation. Therefore, the argument goes, Sir Alec was advised to make his statement on 1st March 1971.

The fourth visit by Sir William Luce to the Gulf region began on 2nd May 1971 and lasted until the 30th of the same month. He arrived in Tehran on 3rd May and on 5th May had what was described as a long and friendly meeting with the Shah. No statement on their talks was issued, but it was believed that they discussed Iran's claim to the three islands that belonged to Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah. Then on 6th May, Luce visited Bahrain, on the 7th he went to Qatar and Dubai and on the 9th he returned to Bahrain. After meeting Sheikh 'Īsā on 10th May he went to Jeddah for talks with Saudi Arabian officials. Later on he went to the Trucial States, where he met the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalīfah bin Zayed Āl Nahayān on 16th May.<sup>97</sup>

During the May 1971 visit Luce worked on two items. First, he discussed the affairs of the islands with the Shah of Iran. This was probably the reason for revisiting Tehran on 22nd May, 1971. It is possible that during this visit he gave the rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah the British Government's advice that

they should negotiate with the Shah. It seems as though Taryam and al-Alkim were in error when they quoted 4th June 1971 as the date when Luce warned the two rulers that the Shah was contemplating occupation of the islands before the end of the year.<sup>98</sup> Luce was not in the Gulf on 4th June but in London.

The second problem that Luce worked on was the Federation issue. Even though his first attempt to federate the Arab Emirates in 1970 had failed, Luce utilized both the Saudi/Kuwaiti mission of January 1971 and that of April 1971 to urge the nine emirates to reconsider their individual standpoints.<sup>99</sup> Indeed Sir William followed up the recommendations of the Saudi/Kuwaiti mission. He presented a memorandum to the rulers which contained the mission's proposals coupled with his own recommendations on the disputed points. The mission had suggested seven amendments to the draft constitution of the Emirates, as follows:<sup>100</sup>

- a. Representation of the Emirates in the Union Council.
- b. The siting of the temporary and permanent Capitals.
- c. Representation of individual Emirates in international organisations.
- d. Matters on which the Federation has the sole right to legislate.
- e. The right of the Emirates to set up local forces.
- f. Voting in the Supreme Council.
- g. Contribution of the Emirates to the Federal budget.

Luce's suggestions on the disputed points, (b) (e) (f) and (g) were as follows:

**1 - The right of the Emirates to set up local forces:** Luce's suggestion was to return to the 1970 proposed constitution (see 6.2 above) and in particular to article 143 which reads:<sup>101</sup>

The member states shall have the right to establish local armed forces ready and able to form a defensive tool, if need arises, to defend the Union against any external aggression.

**2 - Voting in the Supreme Council:** all the Emirates, with the excep-

tion of Bahrain, agreed that the decision of the Supreme Council should be made unanimously. Therefore, in the interests of reaching an agreement, Sir William suggested the following:<sup>102</sup>

Resolutions of the Supreme Council on matters of substance should be made by unanimous vote. Should a unanimous vote on a given subject not be achieved then the subject should be reviewed within a month at the most. If the Council on this occasion reaches a decision on the subject by a majority of seven out of nine votes, then it comes into effect, provided that the majority includes the votes of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai and Qatar, and the minority is bound by the opinion of the majority. Resolutions of the Council on administrative matters should be passed by a majority of votes and such matters shall be prescribed in the Council's internal rules of procedure.

**3- Contributions of the Emirates to the Federal Budget:** Sir William suggested that each Emirate should contribute a specified proportion of its annual revenue to the union budget. He thought that 10% of their annual income would be acceptable to all nine Emirates.

**4- Siting of the permanent capital:** Even though the Saudi/Kuwaiti mission had suggested that the site of the permanent capital should not be specified in the temporary constitution, Sir William suggested that the Constitution "should reach a final decision on this question."<sup>103</sup>

In the end all efforts to federate the nine Emirates failed. The problem of federation went beyond the obstacles that were discussed by the Saudi/Kuwaiti mission or by Sir William Luce. According to Mr. Ḥamūdī, Adviser to the Abu Dhabi Government on Federation affairs, in a long letter to Mr. Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī, Chairman of the *Amīrī Diwān* in Abu Dhabi:<sup>104</sup>

The official differences were not the main obstacles for the federation even though every emirate tried to prove that they were so. The major obstacle was a lack of trust [between the emirates]. It seems also there are other reasons that are hindering the establishment of the federation beyond the official reasons and those mentioned in the official memorandums. It could be the desire for independence on the part of some emirates or the covert threats from the neighbouring countries that have some interests in the region. Besides that, some of the emirates paid attention

to some of the neighbouring countries' hints and incitements. The above-mentioned reasons could be among the causes that are hindering the federation process.

Even though the period May-September, 1971 was crucial owing to the establishment of the federation among six of the Trucial States (of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, and Fujairah) in July (see 6.2.4) and the independence of Bahrain and Qatar in August and September respectively, Sir William Luce remained in London. However, that did not mean he was not involved in what was going on. On the contrary, he was a full participant. For example, he held meetings with the rulers during their visits to London, such as his meeting with Qatar's Deputy Ruler, Sheikh Khalīfah, on 20th September 1971, after Qatar had announced her independence on the 1st of that month.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the Political Agents in the Gulf kept him informed. For instance, J. Walker, Political Agent in the Trucial States 1970-71, said on 19th July 1991 about his personal involvement in the federation of the United Arab Emirates that, "I used to send telexes to Sir William Luce informing him of what was happening, and asking him for confirmation."<sup>105</sup> In fact, his absence from the Gulf during the summer of 1971 could have been for political reasons. The presence of Luce in the area during the period when Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE were about to become independent could have exposed the new states to criticism by nationalist forces who argued that Britain was behind the establishment of these states.

From September 4-23 1971, Luce made his fifth tour of the Gulf. He met Sheikh Zayed, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Sheikh Rāshid, Ruler of Dubai, on the 4th of that month in Abu Dhabi.<sup>106</sup> It seemed the purpose of Luce's fifth visit was to discuss the following topics with the newly formed Federation of the Six:

- ( 1) Final arrangements for the withdrawal of British forces from the region.

- ( 2) Britain's relations with the Union of the Six after the withdrawal of troops.
- ( 3) The relations between the Emirates and the neighbouring countries, especially Iran and Saudi Arabia.
- ( 4) Arrangements for retroceding the British Government's legal responsibility towards foreigners.
- ( 5) Putting more pressure on Ras al-Khaimah to join the federation.

On the day Luce returned to London, 23rd September 1971, British officials said that quite a lot of progress had been made in the formation of the federation and that things were going ahead smoothly and satisfactorily.<sup>107</sup>

In October-November Luce made three visits to the Gulf region. For example, on 2nd October, he visited Tehran and had talks with the Iranians officials about the Iranian claim over Abū Mūsā and the Tunbs islands. After that, Luce went back to London, and on 25th October left for the Emirates. In the Emirates he held meetings with several rulers of the Trucial States, but the most important were those with Sheikh Ṣaqr b. Moḥammad of Ras al-Khaimah and Sheikh Khālīd b. Moḥammad of Sharjah. He discussed the Iranian claim over Abu Mūsā and Ṭunbs with the two rulers (see chapter 7). On 3rd November 1971 Luce returned to London, only to start another trip to both Iran and the Trucial States before his mission was completed on 20th November 1971.<sup>108</sup>

Britain's special envoy to the Gulf region, who had made eight visits to the area and had spent one year and five months shuttling between London, Cairo, Tehran, Baghdad, Jeddah, Kuwait, Oman, and the nine Gulf Emirates, had succeeded in solving some problems but had failed with others. For example, he

initially began his efforts with the hope of establishing a federation of nine Emirates, but in fact had succeeded in uniting only six. Secondly, he negotiated a deal with the Shah over Abū Mūsā yet was not able to convince Sheikh Ṣaqr of Ras al-Khaimah to negotiate over the Ṭunbs. Thirdly, he was able to foster understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran regarding Gulf security but failed to convince Saudi Arabia or Abu Dhabi to reach an agreement over the Buraimi dispute (see chapter 7). Finally, he succeeded in keeping a British naval presence especially in Masīrah island off Oman and the occasional visits to the Gulf Arab states by a British naval force.

### **6.2.3 Britain and the failure of the nine**

Britain's role in the failure of the federation of the nine is puzzling. On one hand, the British Government's official policy was to encourage the federation of the nine but, on the other hand, the federation process was further complicated by the changing course of British politics. That is to say after 1968 Britain worked to federate the emirates, but there were several factors which might have played a significant role in hindering attempts at federation.

The first factor was that Britain had fossilized the emirates through the 'exclusive treaties' (see chapter.1) and had guarded this semi-independence for many years. This meant that each ruler enjoyed almost absolute power over his subjects and thus they naturally opposed any attempts to centralize power in a federal state. Similarly they were opposed to the promotion of a Gulf national identity. The reason for this opposition was due to the fear that such a policy would directly threaten the basis of traditional political power which Britain had historically protected. As the British Desert Intelligence Officer (DIO) Captain Tim Ash, who



lived in the Gulf for more than 22 years, explained "If it was not for the British protection since the nineteenth century, the Emirates would have been taken over by either Saudi Arabia or Oman."<sup>109</sup>

The habit of the British Government of stimulating such division among the Gulf emirates was a result of a policy that Britain had pursued in the fifties and sixties. This policy had encouraged estrangement between the Trucial States on one side and Qatar and Bahrain, as separate identities, on the other side. For example, in outlining instructions to Bernard Burrows, on his appointment as Political Resident in the Gulf 1953-58, the dispatch from the Foreign Office stated that:<sup>110</sup>

1. It is the policy of Her Majesty's Government to maintain the traditional position of Great Britain in the Gulf and to continue to fulfil the obligations which they have assumed in that area;
2. The Shaikhdoms of the Gulf have become of first importance to the United Kingdom and to the Sterling Area as a whole. It is essential that Her Majesty's Government should exert sufficient influence in them to ensure that there is no conflict between the policies of the rulers and those of Her Majesty's Government. This influence will in the main flow from a proper appreciation of the value of the British protection and advice by the rulers and their peoples.
3. Where appropriate, Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to advance the internal independence of the Shaikhdoms.
4. Her Majesty's Government will not oppose any political or economic association or co-ordination between the Shaikhdoms provided it is consistent with the aims under paragraphs 1 and 2 above. Except in the case of the Trucial States, where a common administration would appear to be highly desirable, such association and co-ordination will be encouraged only so far as it will assist the achievement of the said aims.

However, in a draft minute that was written by A.D.M. Ross, Counsellor, F.O., on July 17, 1953, there were further explanations of the above instructions. The explanations pointed out that:<sup>111</sup>

- (a) Paragraph 1 means that we intend to stay in the Gulf; (b) paragraph 2 is a reminder that constant effort is necessary to make our will felt and that we shall succeed only through success; (c) paragraph 3 means that we may, where appropriate, surrender some of our capitulatory rights. It does not mean that we will encourage

novel forms of Government - a point which is deliberately omitted from the despatch;  
(d) paragraph 4 means that we will not encourage federation and that in the unlikely event of it being desired we shall oppose it if it seems to conflict with our policies in general.

The explanations of Burrows' instructions had pleased Sir William Strang, Permanent Under Secretary, and Lord Reading, Minister of State, F.O. For example, Strang commented that "I think that this draft meets the case very well."<sup>112</sup>

Accordingly, Bahrain and Qatar were not incorporated within the Trucial States and, consequently, each had separate economic, security and political arrangements. This was probably part of the British Government's old imperial style of 'divide and rule' policy. For example, the Trucial States Council had amongst its members the Seven Trucial States but not Bahrain and Qatar. This led the Sheikhs of the Trucial States to develop some understanding of each other over the years but the rulers of Bahrain and Qatar did not have such an opportunity. Furthermore, both Bahrain and Qatar were excluded from the Trucial States' Development Office, the Senior Police Officers' annual meetings of the Trucial States, and other discussions that prepared the Trucial States for federation. The outcome was that there existed divisions between the nine emirates that in fact Britain herself had encouraged over the years. Thus, by persistently neglecting to foster a closer relationship between the rulers of the nine Emirates in various fields, Britain made it difficult for them to avoid their differences during the federation discussions of the 1968-71 period.

The second factor for which Britain was directly responsible was that the nine Emirates were further confused by the course of domestic politics in Britain between 1968 and 1971. At the time of the withdrawal announcement in the House of Commons on Tuesday, January 16th 1968<sup>113</sup>, the Conservative Opposition

Leader, Edward Heath, had condemned the decision to withdraw.<sup>114</sup>

Do the changes being made in overseas defence expenditure mean that Britain will not in fact carry out her commitments and obligations in the Gulf and in the Far East? Is not this dishonourable and ought it not to be thoroughly condemned? Does not the right hon. gentleman's statement about defence equipment mean that in fact any defence policy which the Government may have had in the past is in ruins? Finally, is not the whole of the Prime Minister's statement entirely negative?

Heath, on the third day of the debate on the Prime Minister's announcement of the withdrawal, emphasized his party's determination to change that policy.<sup>115</sup>

And so, when the time comes - and on the Prime Minister's time schedule the opportunity will be open to us - we shall ignore the time phasing laid down by the Prime Minister and his Government for the Far East and the Middle East. We shall support our country's friends and allies and we shall restore the good name of Britain.

Edward Heath's condemnation was echoed by Ian MacLeod, the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer.<sup>116</sup>

I make quite clear that when we become the Government, if in the years to the mid-1970s it is practical and helpful for us to maintain a presence in the Far East, we shall do so. We will keep the Prime Minister's word for him.

When he was asked if that was a pledge, MacLeod said "Yes, and one we will keep." Maudling, the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party, and Douglas-Home, the foreign affairs spokesman were also furious at the Labour Government's withdrawal announcement.

The pledge of the Conservatives, which was repeated again and again, had given a false hope to the rulers. As they preferred to remain under British protection, they began to drag their feet in the negotiations towards federation. They were under the impression that if the Conservatives came to power before December 1971, it might save them from having to accept the unpalatable necessity of federal union.<sup>117</sup>

The same pledge had some influence on the Foreign Office officials too, who

were supposed to encourage the rulers to carry on the federation discussion with some seriousness. They were appalled by the Conservatives' promise because as stated by Donald McCarthy, Head of the Arabian Department 1967-68,<sup>118</sup>

We knew that no local government, whatever it really wanted, would dare ask the British to stay and that the decision had been made irreversible by the fact of its announcement. That was made very clear to Mr. Heath in Iran, Kuwait and elsewhere when he toured later, though the Conservatives went on saying that they would reverse if the local government wished that.

However when the Conservatives came to power in June 1970, they sent Sir William Luce to the Gulf area to discuss the withdrawal policy with the leaders of the Gulf countries. Even though, as we said before, Sir William was used to release the Conservatives from their pledge, he reached the same conclusion as that of the Labour Government. Therefore, Sir Alec Douglas-Home on March 1st 1971, announced that Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf would commence by the end of the year (see Sir William Luce and the Federation).

The effect of Sir Alec's announcement in March was to encourage the emirates to conclude their discussion about federation. On the same day in the House of Commons, Denis Healey, the Shadow Foreign Affairs Secretary, asked Sir Alec for assurance that his Government would not withdraw British troops from the Gulf until the union was formed and thus capable of assuring stability in the area. Sir Alec's reply showed how determined his government was to withdraw the troops even though that would probably mean the creation of a weaker union. Of course at this stage he did not specify if he was willing to accept a federation of less than nine emirates. His reply was: "The military presence is due to be withdrawn by the end of 1971, but we have sufficient time to form the union. If the union is not formed I shall return to the House."<sup>119</sup>

As a consequence, the Conservative government was obliged to fulfil the

Labour government's plan of withdrawing the troops by the end of 1971. In fact, even before the March announcement, the Conservative Government had started putting pressure on the rulers to come up with a resolution on the Federation, exemplified in Sir Alec's message on 2nd December 1970 in which he urged the rulers not to delay the establishment of the Federation (see Sir William Luce and the Federation). *The Daily Telegraph* also reported on 16 December, 1970 that Sir Alec had sent a message to the nine rulers in which he said that their "continued inability to decide on a federal structure now seriously threatened international credibility of its future success."<sup>120</sup> However the pressure on the part of the Conservative Government lacked credibility. The Conservatives when out of office, had promised to reverse the withdrawal decision but when they were in power they began pressuring the rulers to federate and, on top of that, to complete the process of federation within just a few months! Some of the rulers could have considered this as a betrayal by the Conservative government. Other rulers, with their eyes on separate independence, realized that Britain had a time-limit in which to carry out the withdrawal and saw that if they failed to federate during that time then Britain would allow the bigger emirates, i.e. themselves, to go it alone.

The third factor that caused the shrinkage of the federation of nine emirates to seven and prompted Bahrain and Qatar to seek independence outside the federation, could have been the result of personal advice by certain British Political Agents to some of the rulers. This advice was possibly given because the Political Agents were instructed to win the confidence of the rulers by telling them the truth and being frank with them as much as possible.<sup>121</sup> At the same time the Political Agents conveyed Britain's position on certain policies through indirect conversations of an informal nature. For example, the political agent would visit

the sheikh in the evening at his *Amīrī Dīwān* and discuss with him, in a friendly atmosphere, not only Britain's line of thought on certain issues but, doubtless, his own personal viewpoints as well. This method of personal contact, friendly conversation and winning the ruler's confidence had strongly influenced events in the area. For example, Sir Anthony Parsons, Political Agent in Bahrain 1965-69, who was a close friend of Sheikh 'Īsā bin Salmān Ruler of Bahrain, did not believe in the Federation of the nine and so conveyed to Sheikh 'Īsā his private opinion that Bahrain should go it alone. Sir Anthony wrote in his *memoirs* in 1986 that Bahrain was different from the other Emirates.<sup>122</sup>

Its population was larger, it was geographically distinct from those of the smaller Shaikhdoms. Moreover, Bahrain was just large enough to sustain full independence on its own. My private feeling was that a union of the Nine would not work and that Bahrain would be best advised to go it alone.

In private he did not hesitate to express this view to Sheikh 'Īsā:<sup>123</sup> viz., "Bahrain should go it alone when the time comes and seek full membership of the Arab League and the UN."<sup>124</sup>

As a consequence of conflicting advice from the Political Agents in the area, Bahrain and Qatar were influenced dramatically to seek independence alone. Furthermore, W. Ra'fat, the constitution expert of the proposed federation, revealed that these contradictions in opinions that were conveyed by some British officials had reached the other smaller states too.<sup>125</sup> Since the latter, however, were not big enough to stand on their own, they were encouraged to federate among themselves.

The fourth factor that might have played a role in hindering a federation of the nine Emirates was the British position vis-à-vis the territorial disputes between the Gulf emirates and their neighbours Saudi Arabia and Iran. It was considered by some emirates that Britain was favouring Iran and Saudi Arabia over the question

of the Islands and the Buraimi disputes. According to an Abu Dhabian official, Britain was putting pressure on the Abu Dhabi Government to give in over Buraimi in favour of Saudi Arabia<sup>126</sup> (see Buraimi dispute). The same thing was allegedly happening in Ras al-Khaimah over the Tunb Islands that were claimed by Iran (see Abu Mūsā and Tunbs). Sheikh Ṣaqr, ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, felt outraged by Britain taking sides with Iran over the Ṭunb Islands. A statement issued by the people of Ras al-Khaimah after a demonstration on December 1st 1971, condemned the Iranian invasion of the Islands:<sup>127</sup>

The threads of the conspiracy are now clear. It was known in the last few months, when Sir William Luce the British envoy [who] pressured Ras al-Khaimah government on one occasion and on the other occasion offered financial temptations, that the government of Ras al-Khaimah should cede its sovereignty over the Tunbs.

Britain's ambivalent position on the territorial disputes had a devastating impact on the federation process.

Firstly, British efforts to reconcile the views of the rulers over the federation were received with less enthusiasm. The rulers, (who had complete trust in Britain's friendship) were annoyed by this new development. It made them doubt British advice and led them sometimes openly to reject it. For example, Sheikh Ṣaqr, ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, openly criticized Britain's role over the disputed islands since he thought Britain had betrayed him. Probably on account of this issue he would not allow Sir William Luce and Julian Walker (the last British Political Agent in the Trucial States) to persuade him to sign the Seven-Emirates Provisional Constitution.

Secondly, this conception of a British conspiracy with both Iran and Saudi Arabia had created a new political climate in the area in which the Emirates now had to take seriously what Saudi Arabia and Iran were saying about the Federation.

For instance, during the tour of the nine Emirates from 22-23 May 1971, made by Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī (chairman of Abu Dhabi's *Amīrī Dīwān*) and Adnān Pāchachī (political adviser to the Abu Dhabi Government) who were calling for a new meeting on the federation, Dubai focussed attention on the Iranian claims to certain Gulf Islands. This issue appeared more important to Dubai than the federation discussion. The visiting envoys were disappointed by Dubai's stand and expressed their predicament by stating that:<sup>128</sup>

Dubai did not pay much attention to what was happening in regard to the federation, and even it disregarded Sir William Luce's memorandum. But it gave a significance to the Iranian claim over the Islands. In conclusion, Dubai sees no point in holding a meeting. As a result, it seems that the federation discussions had reached a *cul-de-sac*

Finally, the fifth factor that might have made Britain's role in establishing the federation of the nine an unconstructive one, was Britain's consideration of its future interests in the region. That is to say, with Iran and Saudi Arabia agreeing to play the major role in Gulf security, Britain no longer needed to insist on a bigger federation (see Twin Pillars). At the same time however, it was in the British economic interest to have more than one state in the region with a friendly orientation towards Britain so that it would be able to play a major role in the economic development of these states, as well as exporting machinery, military equipment ... etc. Mr Ḥamūdī expressed this by pointing out that:<sup>129</sup>

The British became the intermediary in reconciling the different views that were (voiced) by some Emirates. They wanted a federation of the nine, but they did not want to be seen as interfering in its formation. Unfortunately, though, when Bahrain and Qatar sought independence they did not stop them as this was serving their future interests in the region.

With the failure to achieve a federation of nine emirates and Bahrain and Qatar's decision to opt for independence alone, the seven Trucial States decided to form a smaller federation among themselves. The British authorities also played



an important role in its formation, as we shall see below.

#### 6.2.4 The UAE federation

In the light of Britain's failure to create a bigger federation before the withdrawal, a smaller one that contained only the seven Trucial States was finally negotiated. It was hoped by Sir William Luce, in his last attempt at a reconciliation on May 16 1971, that a federation of the nine Emirates could still be established. This made him ask the Abu Dhabi Government to call for a further meeting of the nine rulers. After visiting all the Emirates, the Abu Dhabi delegation, Aḥmad al-Suwaydī, 'Adnān Pāchachī and N.D. Ḥamūdī, communicated the failure of their mission to the British authorities. The envoy also reached the conclusion that Abu Dhabi should prepare for independence either in cooperation with the Trucial States or on its own.<sup>130</sup>

What we saw was that Bahrain has prepared for independence and Qatar will follow suit. It remained for the rest of the Emirates, especially Abu Dhabi, to prepare for a free modern state. That could be either in cooperation with the rest of the emirates or Abu Dhabi going it alone.

This recommendation in fact represented the delegation's assessment of the situation; they saw no hope for the federation of the nine. The British, on their side, were limited by the withdrawal timetable which had just commenced, so they went along with that recommendation too.

The process of federation among the seven Trucial States had begun in June 1971 during a meeting between Sheikh Zayed and British officials in London. Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī had already reported to Sheikh Zayed about the failure of the last attempt to achieve the federation of the nine. Thus after meeting Sheikh Zayed in Switzerland on 10th June 1971, they decided to bring up the

matter with the British authorities in London.<sup>131</sup> Sheikh Zayed, accompanied by Aḥmad al-Suwaydī, Maḥdī al-Tājir, adviser to Dubai, and other Arab advisers, had spent about two weeks in London in mid-June 1971. Therefore, during this trip to Europe for a health check Sheikh Zayed discussed the withdrawal policy with British officials in London<sup>132</sup>. After Sheikh Zayed had returned to Abu Dhabi on 19th June 1971, Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī, head of Abu Dhabi's *Amīrī Dīwān* and the Ruler's closest counsellor, was confident that the establishment of the federation was about to become a reality. He told the people who had come to welcome Sheikh Zayed on his return from Europe that, "We hope the coming days will fulfil the hopes of the people of the Arab Emirates in their long-awaited federation."<sup>133</sup>

What we may conclude from the above is that during Sheikh Zayed's stay in London he had received some assurance that the British Government was prepared to recognise the independence of a smaller federation. Furthermore, according to *al-Ḥawādith*, Britain encouraged the rulers of the smaller emirates to cooperate in establishing such a federation.<sup>134</sup> The second important issue that was achieved by Sheikh Zayed while he was in London was a preliminary discussion with Maḥdī al-Tājir of Dubai concerning the new federation of the seven. Tājir recalled that Sheikh Zayed had told him that he wanted a federation and Tājir replied that Dubai wanted a federation too.<sup>135</sup> Sheikh Zayed nevertheless had pointed out how reluctant Sheikh Rāshid, ruler of Dubai, was to cooperate with Abu Dhabi. Maḥdī al-Tājir again reassured Sheikh Zayed, "Do not worry, Aḥmad al-Suwaydī and I will do the job."<sup>136</sup>

Therefore, with six months to go before the expiry of the deadline for Britain's departure from the Gulf, it was clear that some urgent efforts had to be made.

Accordingly, political efforts by the rulers, their advisers and the British officials were multiplied. Amongst these efforts were three important initiatives that were taken by Sheikh Zayed himself, the first occurring immediately after his return from London on 19th June 1971 when he made some diplomatic contact with the rest of the Trucial emirates. Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī and Ḥasan ‘Abbās, economic adviser to the Abu Dhabi government, then proceeded to the northern Emirates<sup>137</sup> in order to discuss the new initiative for the federation of the seven Trucial States. Also, the rulers were invited to Abu Dhabi to receive first hand information from Sheikh Zayed. So at the end of June 1971, the rulers of Dubai, Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah as well as the Crown Princes of Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah, came to Abu Dhabi to attend this primary meeting. Although there was no official statement concerning the subjects that had been discussed, it was assumed by all that the federation of the Trucial States was the main issue.<sup>138</sup>

The second step taken by Sheikh Zayed was to issue a decree forming a cabinet for the Abu Dhabi emirate headed by the Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalīfah bin Zayed, as Prime Minister. The other decree that was issued by Sheikh Zayed was to establish a National Consultative Assembly with fifty members from among the notables of the Abu Dhabi emirate.<sup>139</sup> Both measures were aimed at: (a) putting pressure on the rulers of the emirates to accept the federation; and (b) hinting that in case the federation was not accomplished by the end of the year, then Abu Dhabi would be ready for independence. However, Sheikh Zayed did emphasize that a union of the Gulf emirates was his primary objective and that he would continue his efforts to achieve it.<sup>140</sup> The link between the formation of both the Abu Dhabi cabinet and the National Consultative Assembly and the pressure on the rest of the emirates to accept the federation was clear, namely that the emirates

realized that Abu Dhabi was serious and that without her they could not support the establishment of a state.

The third step that was taken by Sheikh Zayed was that he made it known that Abu Dhabi was willing to form a federation of any number of emirates. This was another form of pressure on the other rulers to join the federation or be left out. It was reported that Sheikh Zayed had sent al-Suwaydī to Sheikh Rāshid, ruler of Dubai, with a strong message:<sup>141</sup>

Tell Sheikh Rāshid that certainly we will establish the Federation, and if he is interested then he can join us. Otherwise we shall leave him.

The determination of Sheikh Zayed to form the federation led him to hold several bilateral talks with the other smaller emirates, such as Fujairah for instance. The non-oil producing Emirates (by this time they were Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah) had realized earlier that they could not survive alone after the withdrawal of British troops without Abu Dhabi support. Furthermore, Sir William Luce had given them a firm warning that Britain was not prepared to recognize the independence of any of the Trucial States outside the framework of the federation.<sup>142</sup> These factors probably explain why Sheikh Khālid, ruler of Sharjah, announced in late June 1971 that he was willing to enter into a union with Abu Dhabi as the first step towards a larger federation of all the Trucial States.<sup>143</sup>

Sheikh Muḥammad bin Ḥamad al-Sharqī, ruler of Fujairah, also discussed a bilateral union with Abu Dhabi during his visit to Sheikh Zayed at al-‘Ayn on 2nd July 1971. He reassured Sheikh Zayed of his sincere intentions in a written letter on 9th July in which he stated:<sup>144</sup>

It stemmed from our deep belief in the unity of our land, religion, language, history, destiny and hope. I refer to our verbal agreement that took place on Friday

2.7.1971 in al-'Ayn city in the presence of my crown prince, the Head of the *Dīwān*, concerning the unity between our two Emirates. I am writing this letter hoping it will meet your kind ratification. It will surely go into history that we have worked for the benefit of our people by establishing a federation between the Emirates of Fujairah and Abu Dhabi.

This letter of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Sharqī illustrates the manner in which the smaller emirates had quickly responded to the federation call of Sheikh Zayed. Thus these efforts, coupled with the efforts of British officials like Sir William Luce, Julian Walker, Political Agent in the Trucial States, Jim Treadwell, Political Agent in Abu Dhabi, and Sir Geoffrey Arthur, Political Resident in Bahrain, resulted in a historic meeting in Dubai between the rulers of the Trucial States from 10th July 1971 to the 18th of the same month. It ended with a remarkable declaration in which six Emirates agreed to form a political union called 'the United Arab Emirates'.<sup>145</sup>

The announcement was made after almost a month of discussions between various officials. In fact, between Sheikh Zayed's return from London on 19th June 1971 and the announcement of 18th July continuous discussions were held at different levels. Amongst these discussions were the meetings between the representatives of the oil-rich Emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi headed by Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī and Mahdī al-Tājir. The representatives were in almost daily contact during which they revised both the constitution of the nine Emirates as well as the Basic Law of the Trucial States Council (see below) to fit the federation of the seven Emirates. For example, some of the modifications they made to the old constitution gave Dubai and Abu Dhabi the power of veto in the Supreme Council; in the National Council Dubai and Abu Dhabi were each given eight representatives; and in the Ministerial Council the two Emirates were allocated the most important ministries i.e. the Defence Ministry and the Interior Ministry

which were given to Dubai and Abu Dhabi respectively.<sup>146</sup>

Thus rivalry between the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the federation discussions was stifled. Sheikh Zayed alluded to the heated rivalry of Sheikh Rāshid of Dubai during a press conference in Abu Dhabi on 5 December 1989, "Rāshid was hesitant in the beginning because he wanted some assurances."<sup>147</sup> Mahdī al-Tājir emphasized however, that "there was no greater enthusiasm for the federation than Sheikh Rāshid who saw in the Federation a bigger market for Dubai commerce."<sup>148</sup> However Jum'ah, Advisor to Sheikh Zayed, explained this struggle between the two rulers as a struggle over the leadership of the proposed federation.<sup>149</sup> In the end it seemed that Aḥmad al-Suwaydī, Mahdī al-Tājir, and J. Walker, the main negotiators, had found a formula that was acceptable to the two rival emirates. A kind of 'gentleman's agreement' gave Abu Dhabi the presidency of the federation while Dubai held the vice-presidency as well as the premiership and the defence and finance portfolios. These arrangements were met with some resistance by the less wealthy and smaller emirates of Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah. They recognized however that the size of their respective emirates, together with their dependence on Abu Dhabi finance and the small size of their populations, gave them no alternative but to cooperate. The only exception was Ras al-Khaimah.

What actually emerged on the 18th July 1971 was a loose grouping of the six emirates in a federation based on the idea of the Trucial States Council (TSC) that was established by Britain in 1952. Indeed, the TSC had drawn up a draft of a provisional Basic Law for the Emirates of the Oman Coast in 1968.<sup>150</sup> After the Dubai agreement, the legal adviser of the TSC produced this precautionary draft constitution, but since it contained articles in conflict with the federation of the

nine it was shelved, and only reactivated when the federation of the nine failed. Because the basic law was drawn up under British supervision, we intend to study it and compare it with the provisional constitution of the Emirates in order to determine the extent to which this basic law influenced the form of the federation of the seven.

The Basic Law of the Emirates contained 26 articles distributed over 7 chapters. Article 2 stated that the Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah were to be called the Emirates of Oman Coast. Article 6 stated that the authority of the Emirates of Oman Coast would be the following:<sup>151</sup>

- a. Foreign Affairs;
- b. Defence;
- c. Health and Education;
- d. Immigration and nationality;
- e. Development of the inter-states projects as well as those projects in the needy emirates but with the approval of their rulers;
- f. Information;
- g. strengthen relations and cooperation among the Emirates in the fields of internal security and other fields;
- h. Any other affairs which are approved by the rulers' Council.

Furthermore, the Basic Law indicated in Article 7 that the main organs of the central government were as follows:

- 1- The rulers' Council;
- 2- The Ministers;
- 3- The Consultative Council;
- 4- The Central Court.

The differences between the Basic Law and the Provisional Constitution of the UAE (that became operative on the date of proclamation of the UAE on 2nd

December 1971) were marginal. For example, in Article 25 the Basic Law established a committee that would supervise the development programmes in the Emirates, thus retaining the Trucial States Development Office of 1965. However the federation transferred the duties of the Development Office to the new Federal Ministries. The other difference was over the location of the capital of the Emirates. The UAE Constitution in Article 9 made Abu Dhabi the provisional Capital of the federation until a capital could be built on a defined land area lying on the border between the Emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The Basic law did not mention the site of the capital, which made some officials in Abu Dhabi point out Britain's interest in making Dubai the centre of power.<sup>152</sup> The interesting point found in both constitutions was the power of veto allocated to Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the Supreme Council of the rulers. As to the number of representatives allocated to each emirate, the Basic Law agreed with the Provisional Constitution's total number of 40 members, but it stipulated that the allocation to each emirate would be in accordance with its population and financial participation in the federal budget. The Provisional Constitution distributed the 40 seats of the Federal National Council by allocating 8 seats to each of Dubai and Abu Dhabi; 6 members to each of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah, and 4 members to each of Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah.

Therefore the indirect influence of Britain on the UAE constitution was an important element. As Patrick Bannerman, the late FCO Research Department's official pointed out:<sup>153</sup>

The Provisional Constitution of UAE was essentially a British draft. But the looseness of the Federation which people consider a weakness is actually one of its strong features. Otherwise you would have no UAE.

This observation can be understood in the light of the Trucial States Council's



Basic Law as well as in the efforts of Sir William Luce and other British figures who participated in building up the federation. For example Julian Walker, the British Political Agent in Dubai 1970-71, explained the problems that were facing the area after the failure of the nine Emirates federation. He stated that "Dubai and Abu Dhabi were about to be alone, but the others were too small and if they became independent alone they will not stay long." He further explained that:<sup>154</sup>

Fujairah might go to Oman, Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah would follow Saudi Arabia and Dubai is friendly with Iran, that might have created problems. The British role was to get the Council of the Rulers to be strong enough to provide an umbrella for them.

Walker pointed out that with some help from other junior Sheikhs, he had played a role in mediating between the smaller emirates and the larger ones. He concluded that, "We were able to assure four of the five to agree on the union and by July, the Six Emirates signed the Provisional Constitution of the Union".<sup>155</sup>

As a consequence of the efforts made by the rulers, their advisers and the British officials, the federation of the UAE was proclaimed on 18th July 1971. The joint Communique read by Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī was as follows:<sup>156</sup>

In response to the desire of our Arab people, we, the rulers of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah, have decided to establish a federal state under the name of the United Arab Emirates. On this blessed day the provisional Constitution of the United Arab Emirates was signed. While conveying this happy news to the great Arab people, we pray the Almighty that this Federation will form the nucleus of a complete federation which will include the remaining members of the brotherly family of emirates who, due to their current circumstances, were not able to sign the constitution.

Immediately after the announcement of the six emirates federation three actions were taken to strengthen it. (a) Delegations were sent to various Arab countries to explain the purpose of the federation and seek recognition from other Arab States.<sup>157</sup> (b) At the same time committees were established to prepare the procedures required to enable the Emirates to be ready for withdrawal day.<sup>158</sup> (c) Some

efforts were made to persuade Ras al-Khaimah to join the Federation. However Sheikh Şaqr, ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, ignored all the pressure put upon him and he issued his own statement explaining his position. He did not accept three of the amendments that were made to the Provisional Constitution and which differed from the old nine Emirates Constitution. The first was the veto power that the Provisional Constitution, in Article 49, had given to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Sheikh Şaqr insisted on their being equality between all the rulers in the Supreme Council. He therefore proposed that decisions in procedural matters should be made by an affirmative vote by the majority of its members.<sup>159</sup>

The second point that Ras al-Khaimah rejected was Article 68 of the Provisional Constitution of the UAE. This Article as stated in the nine Emirates Constitution was that "the Federal National Council is composed of 36 members, and its seats are distributed equally among the Emirates."<sup>160</sup> The amendment, however, put the number at 40 members which were not distributed equally among the Emirates.<sup>161</sup> Instead, Sheikh Şaqr proposed that "the Federal Council should be composed of 42 members that should be distributed equally among the member emirates."<sup>162</sup> This suggestion Sheikh Şaqr claimed, was backed by the other four smaller Emirates.

The third point that Sheikh Şaqr wanted to change was the financial participation of each Emirate in the Federation fund. He suggested that:<sup>163</sup>

A Development Office should be established by the Federation and that its job is to develop the Five Emirates only. For fulfilling this aim, the oil-producing Emirates should allocate 5% of their annual income to it.

This meant that Abu Dhabi and Dubai should allocate 5% of their annual income specifically in order to develop the five less wealthy smaller Emirates. In addition to that, each emirate should pay 10% of their annual income to the fed-

eral government as suggested by Sir William Luce.<sup>164</sup> Sheikh Ṣaqr had demanded that his proposals be considered by the other rulers but the final edition of the provisional constitution on 18th July 1971 did not take his proposals into account. Therefore Sheikh Ṣaqr withdrew from the federation discussion and refused to sign the provisional constitution.

The refusal of Sheikh Ṣaqr, ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, to sign the Provisional Constitution was motivated by pride according to Maḥmūd Ḥasan Jum‘ah: “Sheikh Ṣaqr considered himself as the descendent of the al-Qawāsīm tribe that once ruled over the Gulf ... but due to his misfortune he had no oil.”<sup>165</sup> The British Political Agent in the Trucial States at the time, Julian Walker, believed that to be true.<sup>166</sup>

Sheikh Ṣaqr had, as he said, reservations about the power of veto, and about representation in the National Council of the federation, given that he regarded himself as the representative of the Qawāsīm, one of the most senior families, if not the most senior, of the area.

However, even though the demands of Sheikh Ṣaqr and the other smaller Emirates were logical, the oil-producing states of Dubai and Abu Dhabi were not keen on accomodating them. The main reason probably lay in the fact that the British never got along with Sheikh Ṣaqr, who had cooperated with Saudi Arabia in the past, and in 1970-71 had sought cooperation and help from Iraq in response to the Iranian claim to Ṭunbs. He also refused to cooperate with Sir William Luce over the Ṭunb Islands that were claimed by Iran. The Maḥdī-Suwaydī-team saw Sheikh Ṣaqr as a partner who manipulated the Dubai-Abu Dhabi rivalry for his own benefit, yet once Dubai was persuaded to accept the federation, Sheikh Ṣaqr was left alone. Subsequently Ras al-Khaimah reluctantly joined the Federation and accepted its constitution on 10th February 1972.

From July to December 1971, the British officials and Arab advisers and officials from the Emirates were busily involved in transferring the responsibilities that were once held by the British Government. Also, future relations between Britain and the Emirates were discussed by Mahdī al-Tājir and Aḥmad al-Suwaydī during their visit to Britain at the end of July 1971.<sup>167</sup> Furthermore, a treaty of friendship along the lines of Douglas-Home's offer of March 1971 was accepted. The signing of the friendship treaty was left to Sir Geoffrey Arthur, H.M. Political Resident in the Gulf, who toured the Emirates to terminate the old treaties<sup>168</sup> between Britain and each of the Emirates, and then sign a new treaty with the President of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed.<sup>169</sup> In this treaty both parties agreed to "consult together on matters of mutual concern in time of need."<sup>170</sup> The treaty was, however, more of a symbol than a guarantee of stability in the region. The British Government's behaviour, though, can be explained if we look more closely into the Gulf security system that prevailed in the post-withdrawal period: 'the Twin Pillars Theory'.

### 6.3 Twin Pillars Theory

In Western terms, Gulf security means the continuation of the oil supply to the Western World and Japan without interruption and at the lowest possible price. This role was strongly upheld by the British presence in the area until 1971. The Gulf security system had developed over the years, sometimes in direct response to regional events. For example, during the Iranian oil dispute of Moṣadeq in 1951, the oil companies expanded their exploration activities in other parts of the Gulf, such as the Trucial States and Oman. The drilling teams needed some protection in order to perform their task, therefore small local forces officered by the British were raised, for example the Trucial Oman Scouts. As a result, with the major British bases located in Aden, Kenya, the Suez Canal and Iraq, Gulf security was

maintained for almost ten years with only a few RAF planes needed to assist the local forces in keeping the Gulf region stable. However, after the Suez crisis in 1956 and the Iraqi revolution of 1958, Gulf security needed further reassessment. But no positive reassessment took place until 1961 when General Qāsim threatened the independence of Kuwait. This led to an expansion and development of the British bases in Bahrain, Sharjah and Masīrah. Even when Britain gave up her base in Aden in 1967, British forces in the area were capable of keeping the Gulf secure until their withdrawal in December 1971.

The withdrawal announcement of January 1968 provoked considerable criticism (mainly from the Conservative Party) but the most alarming thought for the whole Western World was that Britain would leave a vacuum in the Gulf that might be filled by anti-Western elements like the Soviet Union or one of its allies. The argument was that once an anti-Western power had got control over Gulf oil then oil supplies to the West could be disrupted.<sup>171</sup> This possible threat to Western oil interests brought Britain and the United States together in urgent consultation as to what sort of initiatives should be taken in order to keep the Gulf as stable as before. Indeed, George Brown, the British Foreign Secretary, in his meeting with the American Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, on 11th January 1968 was subjected to considerable American pressure and persuasion to postpone the date of withdrawal. The American argument was that U.S. involvement in Vietnam had prevented her from taking over Britain's military role in the Gulf. At the same time it was recognized that Britain had a wide knowledge of the Gulf that the U.S. could not do without. Any tension in the Anglo-American 'special relationship' was apparently smoothed over during personal talks between the British Prime Minister, Wilson, and the American President, Johnson, during their meeting in

Washington in early February, 1968.<sup>172</sup>

Ruling out direct US military involvement in the Gulf, American officials proposed two alternative policies to fill the vacuum there. Firstly, on January 29, 1968, Under-Secretary of State, Eugene Rostow, made a statement on the Voice of America in which he said:<sup>173</sup>

As to the Persian Gulf area, some strong and quite active and stable states are interested in assuming responsibility for regional security... Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would certainly be a nucleus around which security arrangements could hopefully be built, and we hope that in the long run the policy of Iraq will orientate itself in a cooperative direction so that it could join in such efforts.

This picture of Gulf security after the British withdrawal, was strongly attacked by Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad, who accused the U.S. of sponsoring a new Baghdad pact in the area. The idea was thus left to die slowly.

Secondly, in summer 1969 US President Richard Nixon proposed his view of what America's world role should be in what became known as the Nixon Doctrine. He stated that:<sup>174</sup>

It is not my belief that the way to peace is by giving up our friends or letting down our allies. On the contrary, our aim is to place America's international commitments on a sustainable, long-term basis, to encourage local and regional initiatives, to foster national independence and self-sufficiency, and by so doing to strengthen the total fabric of peace.

Since the 'Nixon Doctrine' meant making a major contribution to the security of the Gulf without the Americans getting directly involved, the U.S. had to rely on strong regional allies, namely Iran and Saudi Arabia, to take responsibility for Gulf security. The American Assistant Secretary of State, Sisco, in testimony to U.S. Congress in 1973 pointed to that arrangement:<sup>175</sup>

We anticipated the British exodus and we asked ourselves: What is it that the United States can do, consistent with the Nixon Doctrine, to make a major contribution towards stability in the area without ourselves getting directly involved,

because this is an area, obviously, in which we have very, very significant political-economical interests? What we decided was that we would try to stimulate and be helpful to the two key countries in this area... namely Iran and Saudi Arabia.

It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss American policy towards the Gulf after the British withdrawal<sup>176</sup>, but what concerns us is Britain's role in building up the 'Twin Pillar' security system. The 'Twin Pillars' (Saudi Arabia and Iran) were expected in the light of the 'Nixon Doctrine', to form the nucleus of stability in the Gulf region. Supplied with up-to-date military equipment by Britain and the US, Saudi Arabia and Iran were supposed to keep the region secure and check any radical infiltration. However these 'Two pillars' had not only long mistrusted one another, but each of them also had certain territorial claims over its smaller neighbours. For example Iran claimed Bahrain and the small islands close to the Straits of Hormuz, and Saudi Arabia claimed Buraimi (see 7.4). The ill-feeling, suspicion and even enmity which existed among the Gulf States (Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Sheikhdoms) was therefore in itself a source of instability and friction in the region. Britain thus worked especially hard to harmonize relations between the Gulf States in the period leading up to withdrawal.

### **6.3.1 Britain and the Twin Pillars**

Britain played a crucial role in the late sixties and early seventies in forming the Gulf security system or the 'Twin Pillars System'. She was anxious to leave behind stable, friendly states that would not disturb the oil supply. The Fabian group had published an article in April 1967 on Arabia in which they envisaged Gulf security after Britain's withdrawal from the region:<sup>177</sup>

The most that could be done in this respect would be to attempt to ensure that friendly governments were in power in these countries and that no 'unfriendly' government obtained excessive influence over the policies of the Arab States.

To some Foreign Office officials 'Friendly governments' meant the regimes existing in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq. Sir Stephen Egerton, Deputy Director of the Arabia Department 1970-72, wrote in March 1991 concerning the issue of Gulf stability at that period,<sup>178</sup>

British observers believed at the time that the security of the Gulf after Britain's military withdrawal would depend on a self-equalising triangle of forces: Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia, with the possibility of some foreign assistance not far 'over the horizon', either in the Indian Ocean or the Russian land mass.

Since Iraq, however, had an anti-Western stance it was left out of the 'triangle'. This meant that Britain was left with two states, Saudi Arabia and Iran, which were the most important western allies in the area. Cooperation between them would enable them to fill the vacuum caused by the British withdrawal. This was seen by Sir William Luce as an important pre withdrawal condition. In the *Round Table* article of October 1969 he stressed the point:<sup>179</sup>

Perhaps the two most important pre-conditions for peace in the Gulf after our withdrawal are some form of co-ordination between the small states at present under our protection, and an understanding between Iran and the Arabs, particularly Saudi Arabia about the future of the Gulf. If feuds and divisions among the small states persist and Arab-Iranian rivalry threatens to erupt into confrontation, then the future after our withdrawal would be bleak indeed.

Thus the other course of action pursued by Britain in order to stabilize the Gulf was to encourage some understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran; this approach paralleled that adopted by the American Government. According to *The Times* this intention was conveyed to the Shah during the visit of Goronwy Roberts, Minister of State, to the Gulf in January 1968.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore it has been suggested by Balfour-Paul that the British Government's was strongly influenced by Sir William Luce recommendations concerning Saudi Arabia and Iran role and eventually adopted that as official policy towards the Gulf.<sup>181</sup> The problem, though, was how to bring together King Fayṣal and the Shah of Iran who were not



on particularly friendly terms.

Muḥammad Rezā Pahlavī, the Shah of Iran, welcomed the British withdrawal from the Gulf, believing that Iran would take the opportunity to play a more active regional role since it had both the means and the will to do so. Iran was the most powerful state in the Gulf region with a population of 28 million in 1968, and with a more diversified economy although oil remained the dominant sector.<sup>182</sup> At the same time the Shah was more secular and openly pro-Western than the conservative Saudis. Furthermore, he was a CENTO member and was on good terms with Israel, which made him more acceptable in the U.S. and Europe. And finally, Iran had emerged as the predominant military power within the Gulf region. This had been made possible by the backing that it received from Britain and the U.S., who sold it huge supplies of sophisticated weapons. For example, Britain had sold 800 Chieftan battle tanks to Iran in the 1970s, a substantial number of hover-crafts, 4 Vosper MK-5 destroyers including Seacat missiles, 400 Tiger Cat missiles and Rapier anti-aircraft missiles. The main arms sales to Iran though came from the United States.<sup>183</sup> Sir William Luce expressed his admiration of Iran and its future role in the Gulf to an American audience in 1973 as follows:<sup>184</sup>

Iran, one of the key countries, has emerged as the predominant military power within the Gulf region; and this was to be expected in view of the comparative size of her population, her natural resources and, above all, the dynamic leadership of the Shah, with his determination to take over the previous British role of maintaining the security of the Gulf waters.

However, the Shah was not without his shortcomings; his desire to acquire supremacy in the Gulf was disturbing to the Arabs. Firstly, he had claimed Bahrain and when that dispute was settled, he turned his attentions to the islands of Abu Mūsā and the Ṭunbs. Baghdad radio commented on the Iranian arms purchase from Britain in its 10th of January 1971 broadcast as follows:<sup>185</sup>

Britain had recently provided the Shah's Government with arms to be used not only against the Iranian people but also against the Arabism of the Gulf.

Secondly, he was considered as an enemy by Arab nationalists because of his close ties with Israel.

Therefore, even though Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf States actually wanted to cooperate with the Shah in regional matters (as was seen from their various visits to Iran at that period) they realized that meant inviting criticism from Baghdad, Damascus and other radical Arab states. In this context we can understand the meaning of the changes in the Shah's policy towards the Arab countries; for instance the re-establishment of relations with Egypt in 1970; taking a critical stance on Israeli's policy towards the occupied territories; relinquishing his claim to Bahrain; and visiting Saudi Arabia in November 1968.<sup>186</sup>

In contrast to Iran, Saudi Arabia had a much smaller population, was weaker militarily and economically, and was much less willing to take a leading role in the Gulf.<sup>187</sup> It was reported by Muḥammad H. Heikal, former editor of *al-Ahrām*, that King Fayṣal in June 1967 urged Britain not to withdraw from the Gulf as it had done from Aden.<sup>188</sup> Probably the King was under the impression that once Britain left the Gulf the Communists would take over as had happened in Aden. Yet Saudi Arabia, in the view of the British Conservative Party's research centre, held the key for security in the area.<sup>189</sup>

Saudi Arabia should be encouraged to assume some of the responsibilities in the Gulf which have fallen to Britain during the last century. Our aim should be a system of 'Pan-Arabian Solidarity' under which the rulers of the various states would keep their autonomy, but rely on Saudi Arabia for protection, and perhaps advice in their external relations.

The above idea also was backed by Sir William Luce who saw the 'Peninsula Solidarity' in the Gulf as the best way of survival for the smaller Gulf Emirates.

As his biographer, Balfour-Paul, wrote in 1991 :<sup>190</sup>

Luce pleaded with London, and continued to plead throughout his six years as Political Resident, that the pursuit of 'Peninsula Solidarity', as he called it, would offer the best prospect of preserving stability when the time came for Britain to terminate her treaties.

It seemed that Britain wanted Saudi Arabia to be, in effect, some sort of 'big brother' to the smaller Sheikdoms, while at the same time cooperating with Iran in the sphere of Gulf security. Again in contrast to Iran, Saudi Arabia did not take the opportunity to play that role. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia made considerable efforts to bring the nine Emirates into federation and stood by Sultan Qābūs against the Dhofari revolutionaries. This was considered not enough by Sir William Luce, who in 1973 pointed out in dismay:<sup>191</sup>

As regards the other key country of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, I have to record some mild personal disappointment. I have for many years believed that Saudi Arabia is the keystone of solidarity and stability in the Arabian Peninsula. Everything is in her favour... geographical size, custody of the Holy Places of Islam, ever-growing wealth and, above all, the prestige of the Saudi monarchy created by Ibn Saud and strengthened in the first years of King Fayṣal's reign. The other Arab countries of the Gulf, leaving aside Iraq of course, regard King Fayṣal with the respect and affection of younger brothers, and they look to him for leadership and guidance in many ways. In spite of these great assets, it seems to me that during the last few formative years Saudi Arabia has not exercised that degree of influence or given the positive leadership which could have been helpful to her smaller neighbours.

The Saudi policy of virtual non-interference in the affairs of smaller Gulf emirates which so dismayed Luce can be put down to various reasons. Firstly , Saudi Arabia's territorial claims over, for instance, parts of Abu Dhabi and the Sultanate of Oman perhaps made her unacceptable in the eyes of some of the rulers to play the leadership role that Luce expected of her. Secondly, Saudi Arabia perhaps needed more time to assume this new role which Britain had prevented her from playing for the previous half-century. Thirdly, it is possible that Saudi interference would be considered by Arab nationalists as 'hegemony' on the part of the Saudi monarchy, which was not popular, certainly with the

younger generation. Finally, it was perhaps her military weakness that prevented the Saudis from taking the lead in the Gulf. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia had set aside a considerable amount of money for defence purposes as a result of the British withdrawal from the Gulf. For instance, in 1967-68 the Saudi military budget amounted to \$396 million but in 1975 it was \$6.9 billion.<sup>192</sup>

Despite the coolness of Saudi-Iranian relations in the early 1960s, Saudi Arabia strove to improve her relations with Iran later in the decade in order to safeguard the security of the Gulf after the British withdrawal. 'Umar al-Saqqāf, the Saudi Deputy-Foreign Minister, was reported as saying after his visit to Iran on 14th April 1970 that "Iran and Saudi Arabia will cooperate in the defence of the Gulf and that there is no need for a separate alliance in this respect."<sup>193</sup> Iranian-Saudi cooperation became stronger after Fayṣal's visit to Tehran on 16th May 1971 when he discussed the affairs of the Gulf with the Shah.<sup>194</sup>

The Saudi-Iranian 'understanding' over the security of the Gulf that was urged by Britain and the United States did not meet the expectations of the Shah. The latter wanted some kind of pact, but the Saudis on the other hand, saw no need for such an alliance and they preferred to play a low-profile role. Any alliance with the Shah would be an embarrassment to them since the Shah was quarrelling with a sister Arab state, Iraq. Even low-key cooperation with the Shah was not exempt from criticism by the 'radicals'. For example Damascus radio described the new Saudi policy as a betrayal of Arabism.<sup>195</sup> Syria perhaps had not forgotten the passive attitude of the Saudi Government during the seizure by Iran of the Ṭunbs and Abu Mūsā Islands. Taryam reported that when King Fayṣal was asked by Sheikh Khālīd of Sharjah for support with regard to Abu Mūsā, the King advised him to negotiate with Iran, writing that "the door of dialogue between you and

the Iranian Government should be left open.”<sup>196</sup>

Britain's efforts to reconcile Saudi Arabia and Iran so that they could work together for Gulf security did in fact materialize. However, it was not without its price. Britain's former position with regard to the territorial disputes had been somewhat compromised. It might have seemed that Britain's new policy of bringing Saudi Arabia and Iran together had put Britain in an embarrassing situation. Given this new situation, it was more difficult for Britain to maintain its traditional position of upholding the claim of the Gulf Sheikhdoms to the Islands and Buriami. Such support from Britain could have provoked the Shah of Iran and King Fayṣal and consequently have disturbed the process of mutual understanding the very policy Britain worked so hard to achieve. This change in Britain's attitude was naturally seen by the smaller emirates as a betrayal after the long friendship which had existed between Britain and the Sheikhdoms. For the British policy makers the protection of British interests was more important than honour and friendship. Britain now viewed territorial settlements through the wider spectrum of Gulf security which they were convinced necessitated the cooperation of the 'Twin Pillars' of Saudi Arabia and Iran. As an ex-British diplomat put it:<sup>197</sup>

We were clear that whatever happened it was important that Iran and Saudi Arabia did not quarrel and rather, if possible, cooperated. We thought that since then the Americans may have called it 'Twin Pillars', as they like giving titles to things.

In short, each of the countries involved in the Twin Pillars security arrangement had its own particular aim. The Shah for example, saw it as an opportunity to fulfil his ambition of making Iran into a regional superpower and controlling the Gulf region. On the other hand, King Fayṣal needed the Shah's cooperation as a check against marxist Aden, the Dhofar revolutionaries and Ba'ṯhist Iraq. The aim

of the United Kingdom was the protection of her oil and commercial interests and the protection of the *status quo*, For the U.S. the Gulf had become a place of such strategic importance that the Soviet Union should be kept away<sup>198</sup> from it at any cost. Thus the Gulf security system in the seventies was worked out by each one of the participants according to their own interests and ambitions. This suggested that some form of re-arrangement of Gulf Security would be unavoidable within a few years, due either to the fulfilment of some or all of those aims, or the removal from the scene of one or other of the participants. For the time being, however, the Twin Pillars arrangement served different purposes for different parties and was accepted as an essential arrangement before the actual withdrawal of the British troops in December 1971.

## 6.4 Notes and References

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2. H.C., vol. 775, 18.12.1968, col. 1354.
3. H.C., vol. 812, 1.3.1971, col. 1230.
4. H.C., vol. 756, 16.1.1968, col. 1577-84.
5. H.C., vol. 812, op. cit.
6. For the establishment of the Federation, see: Taryam, op. cit.; Heard-Bay, *Trucial States*, op. cit.; Moḥammad S. al-Musfir, "The United Arab Emirates: An Assessment of Federation in a developing polity," (New York State University, Ph.D. thesis, 1986) pp. 67-80; 'Ādil al-Ṭabṭabāī, *al-Nizām al-ittiḥādī fī 'l-Imarat al-'Arabiyyah: Dirasah muqārinah*, (The Federal System in the Arab Emirates: a comparative study) (Cairo: Cairo New Press, 1978).
7. Denis Wright, "The changed balance of power in the Persian Gulf" *Asian Affairs: Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, vol. 60, (1973) p. 257.
8. Salīm al-Lūzī, *Ṛaṣāṣatān fī 'l-Khalīj*, (Two bullets in the Gulf) (Beirut: al-Ḥawādith publications, 1971). p. 84.
9. Sir David Roberts. op. cit.
10. *The Times*, 26.1.1968; and interview with Gibbs, op. cit.
11. Abu Dhabi Government, Department of Information and Tourism, "Federation of Arab Emirates: A Report," Abu Dhabi, 24.10.1970, p. 2.
12. Ibid; and Michael Field "The Gulf," *World Survey*, no. 37, (Jan. 1972) p. 6.

13. El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., pp. 21-29.
14. Abu Dhabi Government, "A Report," op. cit., p. 2; and El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., p. 27.
15. Taryam, op. cit., pp. 92-93; Heard-Bay, *Trucial States*, op. cit., pp. 343-344; El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., p. 28; and Wahid Ra'fat, "Dirāsah wa-wathā'iq ḥawl Ittiḥād al-Imārāt al-'Arabiyyah fi 'l-Khalīj," (A study and documentation on the Federation of Arab Emirates in the Gulf) *Egyptian Journal of International Affairs*, issue no. 26, 1970, pp. 1-128.
16. El Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., p. 31.
17. Ibid., p. 46.
18. For the dispute over Hawār islands see: El-Hakim, *The Middle Eastern States and the Law of the Sea*, op. cit., p. 121.
19. See the Communique in El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., p. 69; and Ra'fat, op. cit., pp. 30-32.
20. El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., pp. 86-94; Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., pp. 347-349; Brewer, "Yesterday and Tomorrow in the Persian Gulf," op. cit., p. 156; and Taryam, op. cit., pp. 101-104.
21. F 9/1, Letter to Robert McNamara, President and Chairman of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Washington, D.C., U.S.A., signed by Sheikh Khalīfah bin Ḥamad Āl Thānī, President of the Provisional Federation Council. Doha, 11.12.1968.
22. El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., pp. 301-302.



23. Ibid., pp. 316-317.
24. Abu Dhabi Government, "A Report," p. 8; and Taryam, op. cit., p. 333.
25. Abu Dhabi Government, Information Department, "Press Release," no. 2. Abu Dhabi, 20.10.1969.
26. Idem., "A Report," op. cit., p. 13; and, El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., pp. 403-439.
27. Taryam, op. cit., p. 135.
28. Ra'fat, op. cit., p. 121.
29. Ibid., p. 125.
30. Ibid., p. 116.
31. There were three different constitutions' drafts. One was written by the rulers' own Advisers and when they submitted it to Dr. W. Ra'fat to comment on it, he saw the need to write a new draft, which he did himself. The third draft was written by Dr. Ḥasan Kāmil, Qatar's adviser. See: El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., pp. 462-471; and, Ra'fat, op. cit., Appendix.
32. The draft that was presented to the Deputy rulers was not adequately organized thus the Constitutional Committee was asked to correct it again, which it did over-night. See: El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., pp. 529-536. For the Deputy rulers' Communique see: *al-Ittiḥād*, 5.11.1970.
33. Ibid., p. 501; and Taryam, op. cit., pp. 155-156.
34. It is interesting to note that H. Kāmil, Qatar's Government adviser, stated

that he was surprised to learn that the constitution adviser to Sir William Luce further wished to discuss the draft of the constitution because as far as Qatar was concerned they were merely waiting for Bahrain to confirm its acceptance of the terms of October 1969 meeting. He stated:

On 7th October 1970, Mr Henderson, the British Political Agent [in Qatar] telephoned me to tell me that the constitutional adviser to Sir William Luce is coming next day on thursday 8th October to discuss the draft of the constitution from a legal point of view. He will be accompanied by Mr. Weir, Assistant Political Resident in Bahrain. I was surprised to hear such news, and I told Mr. Henderson that we have agreed on all items, and it remained only that Bahrain confirm her acceptance on the representation and capital item.

See, El-Rayyes, *Arabian Gulf Documents*, op. cit., p. 501.

35. Al-Baharna, op. cit., p. xxiv; Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 354.
36. Private Paper of Mr. N.D. Ḥamūdī, Letter to the Chairman of the Abu Dhabi's *Amirī Diwān*, 'Review of the efforts made to solve the problems relating to the establishment of the Federation'. Abu Dhabi, 25.5.1971, (Top Secret).
37. For the Saudi-Kuwait Mission to the Gulf, see Al-Baharna, op. cit., p. xxiv; Mr. Ḥamūdī Private papers, Letter to the Chairman of the *Amirī Diwān*, op. cit., p. 7; and *ARR*, 1-15.1.1971.
38. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, op. cit., p. 92.
39. Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 368.
40. Sir David Roberts, op. cit.
41. Lord Home, *The Way the Wind Blows: An Autobiography*, (London: Collins, 1976) p. 261.

42. H.C., vol. 812, 1.3.1971, col. 1230.
43. Jum‘ah, Interview, op. cit.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. G. Balfour-Paul, "Recent Development in the Persian Gulf," *Royal Central Asian Journal*, vol. vi, (Feb. 1969) p. 17.
47. Al-Tājir, op. cit.
48. Jum‘ah, Interview, op. cit.
49. The Gulf Committee, op. cit., p. 35.
50. Brewer, op. cit., p. 155; For the South Yemeni view see: *MER*, 1969-70, p. 613.
51. K. Qureshi, "The Unite Arab Emirates," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1973, p. 15.
52. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3341/A1, 23.2.1970.
53. *The Times*, 2.4.1968; and *MER*, (1969-70) p. 672.
54. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3439/A9, 24.7.1970.
55. *Al-Rā’i ‘l-‘Āmm* 26.4.1970; and Mr. Ḥamūdī Private Papers, Letter to the Chairman of the *Amirī Dīwān*, op. cit., p. 4.
56. For Mr. Luard’s discussions with the Crown Prince of Ras al-Khaimah, see *al-Yaqazah*, 25.5.1970.

57. *Al-Rā'i 'l-Āmm*, 26.4.1970.
58. Private Papers of Mr. Ḥamūdī, Letters to the Chairman of the *Amirī Dīwān*, op. cit., p. 4.
59. Idem., Discussion between Mr. Ḥamūdī, Acland and Egerton. Abu Dhabi, 9.10.70.
60. Idem., Slater told Ḥamūdī that the rulers' views regarding the federations were far apart from each other. Abu Dhabi, Oct. 1970.
61. Roberts, op. cit.
62. Private Papers of Ḥamūdī, Letter to the Chairman of the *Amirī Dīwān*, op. cit.
63. Idem., Discussion with Sir Geoffery Arthur in the F.C.O. London, 26.8.1970.
64. Bannerman, op. cit.
65. *Who was who*, vol. vii, 1971-80. (London: Adma and Charles Black, 1981).
66. Middle East Institute *The Arabian Peninsula, Iran and the Gulf States: New Wealth, New Power, A Summary Record*, Washington, D.C. Sep. 1973.
67. Luce, "Britain in the Persian Gulf," op. cit., pp. 281-282.
68. Ibid.
69. Idem., "Britain's Withdrawal from the Middle East and Persian Gulf," op. cit., pp. 4-10.
70. Ibid., p. 8.

71. Ibid.
72. Idem., "A Naval Force for the Gulf," op. cit., p. 351. It was wrongly alleged by Taryam that Luce wrote this article after he had visited Bahrain in October 1970. See Taryam, op. cit., p. 156.
73. Ibid., p. 354.
74. McCarthy, Type-written notes. op. cit.
75. See Qureshi, op. cit., p. 17.
76. *The Financial Times*, 28.7.1970; and, BBC, *SWB*, ME/ 3471/A.1, 30.8.1970.
77. *The Times*, 14.7.1970.
78. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3467/A.1, 25.8.1970.
79. *ARR*, 1-15.9.1970, p. 492.
80. Ibid., p. 504.
81. Idem., 16-30.9.1970, p. 515.
82. Ibid.
83. *The Times*, 26.9.1970.
84. Idem., 14.10.1970.
85. *ARR*, 16-31.10.1970, p. 577.
86. Ibid.
87. Private Papers of Mr. Ḥamūdī, Letter to the Chairman of the *Amīrī Dīwān*,

op. cit.

88. *ARR*, 16-31.1.1971, p. 54.
89. *The Daily Telegraph*, 29.1.1971.
90. *Al-Ūsbū 'al-Arabī*, 17.2.1971.
91. *ARR*, 1-14.2.1971, p. 83.
92. Prince Nawwāf bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, the Saudi member of the Saudi/Kuwaiti Mission to the Gulf, was among the Saudi envoy that had visited Britain in December, 1970.
93. H.C., vol. 812, 1.3.1971, col. 1228.
94. Kelly, *Arabia the Gulf and the West*, op. cit., p. 82; and Balfour-Paul, *end of empire*, op. cit., p. 129.
95. Heard-Bey, *Trucial States*, op. cit., p. 340.
96. H.C., vol. 804, 20.7.1970, col. 14.
97. *ARR*, 1-15.5.1971, p. 235; and Idem 16-31.5.1971, p. 259.
98. Taryam, op. cit., p. 170-171; and al-Alkim, op. cit., p. 141.
99. Al-Baharna, op. cit., p. xxiv.
100. F 11/19, Memorandum containing Sir William Luce's suggestions regarding the proposals on the Constitution of the Union of Arab Emirates by the Saudi/Kuwaiti Mission, May 1971.
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*Dīwān*, op. cit., p. 5.

102. Ibid. p. 6; and, F 11/19, op. cit.

103. Ibid.

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105. Interview with J. Walker. Durham, 19.7.1991.

106. *ARR*, 1-15.9.1971, p. 470; and Idem., 16-30.9.1971, p. 502.

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108. Idem., 16-30.11.1971, p. 598.

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110. FO 371/12/370, EA 1053.8, Letter from Acting Secretary of State, F.O, to B. Burrows, 24.7.1953, (Secret).

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112. Idem., Sir William Strang, 20.7.1953.

113. Wilson, *The Labour Government 1964-70*, op. cit., p. 483; and H.C., vol. 756, 16.1.1968, col. 1580.

114. Ibid., col. 1594.

115. Idem., 18.1.1968, col. 1971.

116. Idem., 17.1.1968, col. 1821, and col. 1819.

117. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, op. cit., pp. 57-58.
118. McCarthy, op. cit.
119. H.C., vol. 812, 1.3.1971, col. 1228.
120. *The Daily Telegraph*, 16.12.1970.
121. Roberts, op. cit.
122. Parsons, *They Say the Lion*, op. cit., p. 135.
123. Idem., interview, op. cit.
124. Idem., "Bahrain in Transition," in I.R. Netton, *Arabia and the Gulf from Traditional Society to Modern States*, (London: Croom & Helm, 1986) p. 184. Probably Sir Anthony Parsons conveyed such view to Sheikh 'Īsā while he was in Bahrain as Political Agent 1965-1969, or during Sheikh 'Īsā visit to New York in 1969.
125. Ra'fat, op. cit., p. 19.
126. Ḥamūdī, Interview. Abu Dhabi, 16.5.1989.
127. MFA, File no: 18, "Statement of the People of Ras al-Khaimah," 2.12.1971
128. Private papers of Ḥamūdī, "Surveys of efforts to establish the Federation," op. cit., p. 11.
129. Ḥamūdī, interview, 31.5.1989.
130. Private papers of Mr. Ḥamūdī, Letter to the Chairman of the *Amīrī Dīwān*, op. cit., p. 12.



131. *Al-Khalij*, 12.6.1971; and also see *al-Jumhūriyyah*, 20.6.1971.
132. *Ākhir Sā'ah*, 30.6.1971.
133. *Al-Jumhūriyyah*, 24.6.1971. *Aḥmad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī*, a native of Abu Dhabi city, was one of the first Abu Dhabians to hold a university degree. Probably his study in Cairo influenced his political thinking by causing him to lean towards Arab Nationalism of the Nasserite type. Nevertheless, Sheikh Zayed, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, trusted him and thus made him in charge of his Royal Bureau, and after the UAE was established in 1971 Aḥmad was appointed as the first Foreign Minister of the country. After leaving the Foreign Ministry in 1979 he became Sheikh Zayed's counsellor and in charge of the Cultural Foundation of Abu Dhabi.
134. *Al-Ḥawādith*, 7.8.1971.
135. Interview with M. al-Tājir, op. cit., *Muḥammad Mahdī al-Tājir*, a native of Bahrain. He was commissioned, by Sheikh Rāshid al-Maktūm, Ruler of Dubai, on the advice of the British Political Residency in Bahrain, to organize Dubai's port and customs. He became a wealthy businessman with World-wide investments. His role in the Federation was to convey Sheikh Rāshid's point of view to others during the Federation discussions which lasted around four years. In 1971 he became the UAE's first Ambassador to the U.K. and stayed on until his friend Sheikh Rāshid became ill and later died in 1990. After leaving the Embassy, he lived in Dubai and Britain running his own commercial enterprises.
136. Ibid; and see *al-Ḥawādith*, 7.8.1971.

137. *Al-Anwār*, 24.6.1971.
138. *Al-Akhbār*, 26.11.1971.
139. *The Times*, 2.7.1971; *Al-Ahrām* 6.8.1971; and John Daniels, *Abu Dhabi: A Portrait*, (London: Longman, 1974) p. 61.
140. *Al-Liwā*, 13.7.1971.
141. Interview with M.H. Jum‘ah, Abu Dhabi, Oct. 1990.
142. Al-Baharna, op. cit., p. xxvi.
143. *Al-Ahrām*, 13.7.1971.
144. F 14/7, Letter from Muḥammad bin Ḥamad al-Sharqī, Ruler of Fujairah to Sheikh Zayed, Ruler of Abu Dhabi. Fujairah, 9.7.1971.
145. *Al-Ahrām*, 31.7.1971.
146. F 11/25, The proposed Amendments to the Draft Constitution of the Union of the Arab Emirates that was recommended during the Meeting of the Deputy rulers in Abu Dhabi on 26.10.1970.
147. Abu Dhabi T.V., press conference of Sheikh Zayed. Abu Dhabi, 5.12.1989.
148. Interview with Mahdī al-Tājir, op. cit.
149. Interview with Mr. Jum‘ah, Abu Dhabi, 5.7.1989.
150. TSC 23/1, Draft of the Provisional Basic Law of the Oman Coast.
151. Ibid., Article 7.

152. TSDO 23/6/2, Letter from N.D. Ḥamūdī to the Minister of State, Abu Dhabi. (Secret).
153. Interview with Bannerman, op. cit.
154. Interview with J. Walker. London, 28.7.1987.
155. Ibid.
156. While it was obviously pointing out in the final communiqué that the remaining emirate was Ras al-Khaimah, the doors were kept open for Bahrain and Qatar to join too. TSDO 23/6/5, Communique issued in Dubai, 18.7.1971; *Al-Ahrām*, 31.7.1971; *al-Akḥbār*, 26.11.1971; and Taryam, op. cit., pp. 173-74.
157. *Ākḥir Sa‘ah*, 8.12.1971.
158. TSDO 23/6/5, op. cit.
159. F 11/17, a statement issued by the Government of Ras al-Khaimah. Ras al-Khaimah, 20.7.1971.
160. Ibid.
161. Article 68, UAE Provisional Constitution.
162. F 11/17 Ras al-Khaimah statement, op. cit.
163. Ibid.
164. UAE Provisional Constitution, op. cit., Article 132; F 11/17. op. cit., p. 3; and F 11/19, Memorandum containing Sir William Luce's suggestions, op. cit.

165. Interview with Maḥmūd H. Jum‘ah, op. cit.
166. Letter from Julian Walker. London, 24.11.1990.
167. *Al-Rāṣid*, 29.7.1971.
168. Cmnd. 4941, *Treaty Series*, no. 34 (1971) Exchange of notes concerning the Terminations of Special Treaty Relations between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Trucial States. Dubai, 1.12.1971.
169. The nature of this treaty was not a defence treaty, see *Treaty Series*, no.35 (1972) Treaty of Friendship between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Arab Emirates. Dubai, 2.12.1971. Cmnd. 4937.
170. Treaty of Friendship, op. cit.e,
171. In May 1968, a Soviet flotilla of two ships called at Umm Qaṣr, Iraq’s new port, to mark the first Soviet naval presence in the Gulf for over sixty years. W. Brewer, “Yesterday and tomorrow in the Persian Gulf,” op. cit., p. 153; see also: Denis Wright, “The Changed Balance of Power in the Persian Gulf,” *Asian Affairs: Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, vol. 60, (1973). pp. 255-262; and *The Gulf: Implication of British withdrawal*, op. cit.
172. Gregory Gause, “British and American policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973,” *Review of International Studies*, 1985, p. 259; J. Fankel, “East of Suez: The Aftermath”, *Year Book of World Affairs*, (1969) pp. 27-29; Wm. Roger Louis and H. Bull, *The ‘Special Relationship’ Anglo-American relation since 1945*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) pp. 255-56.

173. James Noyes, *The Clouded Lens: Persian Gulf Security and U.S. Policy*, 2nd edit., (California, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982) p. 31.
174. U.S. Government, *Public Paper of the Presidents of the U.S: Richard Nixon: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President 1970*, (Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972) p. 222.
175. Quoted in: H. Bazzaz, "The Arab Gulf in the 1970s: Stability or Turmoil," (Claremont: Claremont Graduate School, Ph.D. 1980) p. 21.
176. For American policy toward the Gulf post-withdrawal see: H. Sirriyeh, *U.S. policy in the Gulf 1968-1977: Aftermath of British withdrawal*, (London: Ithaca press, 1984); Noyes, *The Clouded Lens*, op. cit; *al-Ṣirā' 'alā 'l-Khalīj al-'Arabī*, (The conflict the Arabian Gulf) (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1978); and Gause, "Britain and American policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973." op. cit.
177. Fabian Group, "Arabia: When Britain goes", London: Fabian research Series, no. 259, (April 1967) p. 20.
178. Letter from Sir Stephen Egerton, H.M. Ambassador. Rome, 19.3.1991.
179. Luce, "A Naval Force for the Gulf: Balancing inevitable Russian Penetration," op. cit., p. 349.
180. *The Times*, 16.1.1968.
181. Balfour-Paul, *end of empire*, op. cit., pp. 120-121.
182. *The Middle East and North Africa*, Europa publication 1970-71, p. 274.
183. R. Beasley, "The vacuum that must be filled - the Gulf and Iran's military

potential assessed," *New Middle East*, no. 32 (May 1971); John Mattam, "U.S. Attempts to Resurrect the Surrogate Model in the Persian Gulf," *Asian Profile*, vol. 10, no. 1, (Feb. 1982) p. 6; S. Chubin and S. Zabih, *the Foreign Relations of Iran: A Developing State in a Zone of Great-Power Conflict*, op. cit., p. 253; and, D. Carr, "U.S. Arms Transfer to Iran, 1948-72, and the Politics of Reverse Influence," (University of London, The London School for Economics and Political Science, Ph.D. 1980).

184. Sir William Luce, "Banquet Address," op. cit., p. 31.

185. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3581/A.1. 10.1.1971

186. The Shah's Government supported Egypt's position on the territories occupied by Israel both publicly and at the U.N: For Arab-Iranian 'Cold War', see: R. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf: Iran's Role*, (Charlottesville, Va., University of Virginia, 1972, pp. 33-42; Chubin and Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran*, op. cit., p. 228; and *The Times*, 12.11.1968.

187. This view was expressed by Sir William Luce after withdrawal in 1973 and one would agree with it, see Luce, "Banquet Address," op. cit., p. 31.

188. *Al-Ahrām*, 23.6.1990.

189. E. Griffiths, and others, "The Middle East and Britain", CPC, no. 379, (Sep. 1967) p. 27.

190. Balfour-Paul, *end of empire*, op. cit., p. 120.

191. Luce, "Banquet Address," op. cit., p. 31.

192. Cottrel, *Persian Gulf: General Survey*, op. cit., p. 142; and *The Middle East*

*and North Africa*, 1967-68, op. cit.

193. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3354.1, "Tehran radio," 15.4.1970.
194. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3887/E/2/1, 26.5.1971.
195. BBC, *SWB*, ME/3379/A1, "voice of the Arabian Peninsula, Damascus," 13.5.1970.
196. Taryam, op. cit., p. 183.
197. Letter from ex-British diplomat, who prefers that his name is not divulged, to the writer.
198. On 23 December 1971 the U.S. Government and the State of Bahrain exchanged notes by which Bahrain agreed to provide facilities for the U.S. Middle East Force, including vessels and aircraft. For this exchange of notes see: M.S. Agwani, *Politics and the Gulf*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Ltd, 1978) Appendix: xii.

## **Chapter VII**

### **Territorial Settlements**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The territorial settlements were part of Britain's aim to leave a stable Gulf after its withdrawal. However, that aim was a challenging one to attain since the means of stabilizing the Gulf were in the hands of the regional powers, Iran and Saudi Arabia, which were themselves involved in territorial disputes with the smaller Emirates. Iran for example, claimed Bahrain, Abū Mūsā and the Tunbs Islands and Saudi Arabia claimed the Buraimi oases. We therefore intend to examine Britain's role in solving these complicated territorial disputes and how it might be related to the overall policy of withdrawal.

#### **7.2 Bahrain**

The process of settling the Shah's claim over Bahrain is rather unclear and complex. The Shah at first pressed his claim over Bahrain so vigorously that he was even prepared to leave the United Nations if Bahrain became one of its members. He declared his determination by saying that, "If Bahrain becomes an independent State, we shall not recognize it, and if it is admitted to the United Nations we shall leave. The UN could chose whether to have us or Bahrain."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, on April 1st 1968, the Shah warned the proposed federation, that included Bahrain, that Iran would reserve all its rights in the Persian Gulf and would in no way tolerate the 'historical inequity and injustice'.<sup>2</sup> However, the



Iranian claim over Bahrain was softened at the end of 1968. For instance, the Shah during a press conference in New Delhi on January 4th 1969, declared that "anything that will be the expression of the will of the people in Bahrain, that we, you, the world will recognize as the will of the people of this island would constitute an acceptable solution."<sup>3</sup> He added that Iran would abjure force on the Bahrain issue.

The question to be raised here is why the Shah changed his mind over the Bahrain issue. There are different arguments which each claim to be authoritative on the subject. According to 'Abdullah Bishārah, former Kuwaiti Permanent Representative at the United Nations, Kuwait played a major role in mediating between Bahrain and Iran which resulted in the dispute being solved through the United Nations.<sup>4</sup> But James Noyes, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Near Eastern, African and South Asian Affairs 1970-76, emphasized the Saudi role in mediation which took place mainly during the Shah's visit to Saudi Arabia in November 1968.<sup>5</sup> However the leftist *al-Ṭalī'ah* was of the opinion that the solution to the Bahrain issue came about through American pressure on the Shah, because the US was considering establishing a naval base on Bahrain for American warships.<sup>6</sup> An American researcher, Nelson Beck, held the view that the reason why the Shah relinquished his claim to Bahrain was that "Iranian claims to Bahrain might disrupt stability in the Gulf by arousing the hostility of the Arab World and, in turn, endanger oil shipments."<sup>7</sup> In support of the last point an Arab writer, Jamāl Z. Qāsim, argued that the Shah's claim to Bahrain could have encouraged leftists to infiltrate the region which the Shah wanted to avoid; by giving up Iran's claim to the islands the *status quo* in the region would be preserved.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to focus on Britain's role which was critical in the settlement

of this dispute. Firstly, Britain had arranged for meetings between Bahraini and Iranian representatives to find a formula for a settlement of the problem. Mr. Al-Baḥārnah, legal adviser to the Government of Bahrain, who participated in these secret meetings, later wrote that:<sup>9</sup>

Subsequently, Bahraini and Iranian officials met, in secret, in Switzerland, with the object of working out a mutually acceptable formula on the basis of which a satisfactory solution of the chronic dispute could be achieved.

It is unlikely that Bahrain could have held such negotiations without Britain's permission.

Secondly, British officials were in direct contact with the Iranian Government. It seems, however, that Anglo-Iranian contacts were not meant merely to settle the Bahrain dispute but also to form a general policy that would guarantee the security of the Gulf after the 1971 withdrawal. Several meetings took place between the two governments in the period after the withdrawal announcement.<sup>10</sup> For example, Mr. Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, met the Shah in May 1969 during a Central Treaty Organization Conference (CENTO) in Tehran. *The Times* reported that they discussed ways of solving the Bahrain affair, adding that their "talks will be useful as a stage towards a stable security system in the Gulf, buttressed by Iran and the Arab states after Britain's withdrawal."<sup>11</sup>

What the British were really seeking through these contacts with the Shah of Iran was to point out to him that his insistence in claiming Bahrain would jeopardize the stability of the Gulf as well as destroy the new attempt at an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran. That is to say the Shah might complicate the withdrawal of the British troops from the Gulf, and hence his opportunity of playing a major role in the affairs of the area might be lost.

However, since the Shah had sought to obtain popular support in Iran for his country's claim to Bahrain and there had been widespread demonstrations in favour of the Iranian claim throughout the country, he needed a face-saving solution. This was finally reached through referring the dispute to the UN Secretary-General to mediate through his good offices. Consequently, the UN Secretary-General was approached by Britain and Iran to send a Personal Representative to ascertain the wishes of the people of Bahrain.<sup>12</sup>

On the 20th March, 1970 the Secretary-General agreed to use his good offices to ascertain the wishes of the people of Bahrain. He later designated Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, Under-Secretary-General and Director-General of the United Nations office at Geneva, to be his Personal Representative to inquire into the wishes of the people of Bahrain as to the future of their country.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Guicciardi visited Bahrain from March 30 to 18 April 1970. He talked to a variety of people, institutions and clubs, and also visited villages throughout Bahrain.<sup>14</sup> On April 29 he presented his report to the Secretary-General in which he said that,<sup>15</sup>

His consultation had convinced him that the overwhelming majority of the people of Bahrain wished to gain recognition of their identity in a fully independent and sovereign State free to decide for itself its relations with other States.

This report was examined by the Security Council on the 11 May 1970. Resolution 278 (1970) which endorsed the report's findings, was adopted unanimously on the same day.<sup>16</sup>

Even though the UN resolution 278 (1970) had opened the way for Bahrain to become independent, nonetheless it was criticized by the French representative at the UN, who argued that it was not a democratic method of assessing public opinion. Nevertheless, the French delegate accepted this approach because it would bring about a solution to a dispute that otherwise could have resulted in a

conflict.<sup>17</sup> Besides that, some Arab commentators, such as al-Lūzī of *al-Ḥawādith* magazine, argued that Britain and Iran had used the United Nations to legitimize an agreement which they had made over the future of the island.<sup>18</sup>

In the end the UN initiative was considered a success by British officialdom. Sir Anthony Parsons, H.M. Political Agent in Bahrain 1965-69, explained how reluctant Sheikh 'Īsā was to accept UN mediation. Sir Anthony stated that "I advised Sheikh 'Īsā to accept the UN when he came to New York in 1969... I gave him my personal word that it would work."<sup>19</sup> However the solution of the Bahrain-Iran dispute had devastating consequences on the issue of the other smaller islands that belonged to the Trucial States of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah.

### 7.3 Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs

The Shah accepted the UN verdict on Bahrain and on 23rd May 1970 sent an Iranian good will mission headed by M. Zelli, Under-Secretary at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, to congratulate Sheikh 'Īsā, ruler of Bahrain.<sup>20</sup> However, with the solution of the dispute over Bahrain, the Shah raised the issue of Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs.

These islands were located at the mouth of the Gulf in the Straits of Hormuz. Abū Mūsā Island (population 800) belonged to Sharjah and lay 35 miles off the Sharjah coast, while the Ṭunbs, both the Greater, Ṭunb al Kubrā, (population 200) and the Lesser, Ṭunb al- Ṣughrā, (uninhabited) belonged to Ras al-Khaimah and lay 17 to 22 miles from the Iranian mainland.<sup>21</sup>

In order to explain this dispute we shall examine the Iranian point of view, the position taken by Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah and the role of British officials

in mediating between them. That is, we intend to answer three main questions. Firstly, why were the Islands important to the Shah? Secondly, what was Britain's role in the debate? Thirdly, what was the standpoint of the Sheikhs, in particular that of Khālid of Sharjah and Ṣaqr of Ras al-Khaimah, regarding the dispute?.<sup>22</sup>

The Iranian government's claim to Abū Mūsā and the Tunbs was based on various arguments. The first argument that had been offered by the Shah was of a historical nature. He claimed that the Islands were Iranian because: (a) they had been under Persian sovereignty until the late nineteenth century when the British government took them over and considered them as belonging to the Arabs of the Trucial States; and (b) they were Iranian because they were shown as belonging to Iran on a British map produced in 1888.<sup>23</sup> This historical right was declared by several Iranian officials. For example, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ardeshīr Zāhedī, during his official visit to Bahrain on 23rd June 1971, when questioned by reporters at the airport about the Iranian policy toward the Islands, said:<sup>24</sup>

The Islands of Abū Mūsā and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, in the Straits of Hormuz at the Mouth of the Gulf, belong to Iran although they had been under British occupation for the past 80 years. Now that the British are withdrawing, the islands should be handed back to their rightful owner. Nevertheless, Iran has no quarrel with its Arab brothers on the issue which should be resolved between the British and the Iranian governments.

The same historical argument was echoed by the Iranian Prime Minister, 'Abbās Hoveida, who reiterated in a speech at Bandar 'Abbās on the 27th June 1971, that "When the central government in Tehran was weak, the British took control of the Three Islands to fight pirates. But now no such problem exists and the Islands must be returned to Iran."<sup>25</sup>

The Arabs of the Trucial States rejected the Iranian argument as lacking any valid legal grounds. They maintained that the Arabs, and in particularly the

Qawāsim tribe, were in control of both shores of the Gulf before the arrival of the British. This meant that they controlled the Gulf Islands of Lingah, Kisham, Khung, Şīrī, Luft, Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs.<sup>26</sup> The Arab Qawāsim living on both shores of the Gulf used the islands for fishing and grazing and some took up residence there. Thus the Qawāsim tribe was in control of Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs and the inhabitants of these islands were always Arabs. The Iranians, however, retorted that the Arabs on the Persian shore had become Iranian subjects in the early nineteenth century, which meant the islands under their control became subject to Iranian sovereignty. However, the rulers of Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah provided documents that stated that the Qawāsim of Oman, i.e. Trucial States, and not the Qawāsim of the Persian Coast were the sole owners of the Ṭunbs and Abū Mūsā. The documents were presented by Sheikh Şaqr of Ras al-Khaimah to the Arab League on the 6th December 1971.

The Arabs of the Trucial States rejected the Iranian argument made on the basis of the British map of 1888. (a) The 1888 map was issued by the British Intelligence Section of the Ministry of Defence, and was supported by the Foreign Office in London in order to create a favourable atmosphere in which they could play a role in solving the Persian-Afghanistan border dispute. The latter was considered by the Foreign Office to be more important, due to security reasons relating to India, than disputes in the Gulf. This fact was reluctantly accepted at that time by the British Government of India which was concerned about, and attempted to solve the islands dispute.<sup>27</sup> (b) In spite of the existence of the 1888 map the British official position was strongly supportive of Arab rights over the Islands.<sup>28</sup> (c) At the beginning of the twentieth century the British Government admitted that an error had been made in the preparation of the map and accepted

that the islands belonged to the rulers of the Trucial States.<sup>29</sup> It was also pointed out that the consent of the rulers of the Trucial States had not been obtained by the British when they issued the map.

For these reasons, the rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah maintained that the Shah's historical argument could not be sustained. This made them challenge the Shah by demanding a settlement of the dispute through the International Court.<sup>30</sup> The Shah, however, did not see any point in pursuing a legal course in order to return to Iranian sovereignty of the Islands and hence objected to Sharjah's and Ras al-Khaimah's request.

The second argument presented by Iranian officials was that of strategic necessity. They maintained that the security of the Gulf and the protection of the sea routes justified the Iranian government's assertion of sovereignty over the islands.<sup>31</sup> In his memoirs the Shah explained why he occupied the Islands in November 1971:<sup>32</sup>

Mr. Goronwy Roberts, the Foreign Office envoy, assured us that Great Britain intended remaining in the Gulf 'for the foreseeable future'. Three months later, the English were packing their bags. Such incompetence was tied, I think, to Britain's entry to the Common Market. The safety of the Persian Gulf had, however, to be guaranteed, and who but Iran could fulfil this function? This is, in the first place, why I reoccupied our two islands, Tumb and Abū Mūsā, on the very eve of the departure of the English .

Therefore, the withdrawal decision of January 1968 had made Gulf security a major concern for the Shah. For example, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ardeshīr Zāhedī, told *The Daily Telegraph* in March 1971, that the "Islands were essential for Iran because they were passed every day by over 15 million barrels of oil - a tanker every three minutes."<sup>33</sup> Also an ex-Iranian Naval Officer, who participated in the siege of the Islands said, on 18 December, 1990 that "The Islands were important not because of territorial ambitions but rather because of the marine

traffic zone that passes north and south of the Tunbs Islands.<sup>34</sup>

The other strategic reason that convinced the Shah that he had to seize the islands was his fear of radicalism that might spread into the region after Britain's withdrawal. The danger of threats against the monarchy represented by Nasser and the Soviet Union both in Yemen and Dhofar, had increased the Shah's suspicions that they might carry out subversive activity in the Gulf.<sup>35</sup> For example, the Shah once explained, "If a nihilist power takes over these Islands it will be a source of danger to the rest of us. These Islands must be in safe hands."<sup>36</sup> This fear was deepened by the attack on an oil tanker carrying crude oil to Israel from Iran on the 13th June 1971. The attack was carried out by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine off Perim Island close to Bāb el-Mandab in the Red Sea.<sup>37</sup> The Shah clearly feared there could be similar attacks in Gulf waters.

The security argument, however, was considered by many as an invalid one for several reasons. (a) As *The Times* explained "military observers maintain that they [i.e. the Islands] will give Iran no advantage which cannot be obtained from the air base and port at Bander Abbas."<sup>38</sup> (b) The *Tudeh* party, although it acknowledged Iranian rights over the Islands,<sup>39</sup> questioned the Shah's strategic motives, speaking of "the Shah's plans to seize two islands near the Straits of Hormuz in order to intervene in the Gulf affairs after British withdrawal and act as an agent of colonialism."<sup>40</sup> (c) The Gulf Emirates were, like Iran, heavily dependent on their oil revenues and thus it was in the strategic interests of all parties to safeguard the flow of oil through the Gulf.

The third argument that may have motivated the Shah to occupy the Islands was an internal political one. According to one British Official:<sup>41</sup>

'Advisors to the Iranian Government told us that the Shah did not want the



Islands for military or strategic reasons, despite his statements and much official propaganda to that effect. Rather he needed to take them in order to enhance his image as a forceful and decisive monarch. At the time of the Bahrayn settlement, we failed to grasp the extent to which the Shah's prestige had fallen in the eyes of the Iranian people due to his having 'given in' on that question. He had to do something forceful to regain it, and in occupying the Islands he did.

This idea of saving face was considered an important element in causing the Shah of Iran to occupy the Islands. Frauke Heard-Bey, of the Abū Dhabi Documentation Centre, argues that while the Shah's claim over Bahrain was sacrificed for the sake of Gulf Security, "it would have been very difficult for Iran to renounce its claim over the Islands of Abū Mūsā and the two Ṭunbs."<sup>42</sup>

Having set out the various factors that might have motivated the Shah to occupy the Islands, one would nevertheless question his ability to achieve that goal without the acquiescence of the British Government.

### 7.3.1 The British role in the Islands

The British Government's policy with regard to the Islands may be divided into two phases. The first phase was the old official line of complete support for the Sheikhs of Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah as the sole owners of the Islands.<sup>43</sup> The British Government's official position on the Islands was explained by Sir David Roberts, H.M. Political Agent in Dubai 1966-68, who pointed out, that in 1968:<sup>44</sup>

Before I left the Emirates there was a great scare that Iran was going to occupy the Ṭunbs. We had to do a great operation. We said the Ṭunbs belonged to Ras al-Khaimah. Some Iranian ships came close to the Ṭunbs so I decided to go with Sheikh Khālid, Crown Prince of Ras al-Khaimah, in a helicopter to the Greater Island. I took some TOS Officers with me to show the flag.

However, this position gradually changed and Britain's support for the Sheikhs of Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah with regard to their sovereignty over the Islands began to weaken. This second phase of the British Government's policy over the

Islands came when the Conservative party won the June 1970 election. The change of policy under the new Conservative Government was reflected by two incidents over the Islands in 1970-71. The first was in December 1969 when Sheikh Khālīd, ruler of Sharjah, granted drilling rights on Abū Mūsā to Buttes Gas and Oil, an American Petroleum corporation, with the approval of the British Government. At the same time another American oil company, Occidental, was granted drilling rights in the vicinity of Abū Mūsā by the Sheikh of Umm al-Qaiwain. In May 1970 however, the British Government stopped the American oil concessionaries from searching for oil in the area. Occidental reported that two RAF jets were shadowing the company's rig, while a royal Navy mine sweeper had moved into position nearby. An Occidental employee in London, who was puzzled by the behaviour of the Foreign Office, explained that the Foreign Office's new order was a "complete reversal of the British Government's reply to Sharjah on May 16, when it was agreed that Occidental be allowed to continue drilling, pending a solution."<sup>45</sup> The Foreign Office's reply was that because Abū Mūsā was claimed by Iran, to allow the oil companies to continue their operations would involve the British government in a confrontation with the Iranian government. But they added that they would "use their best efforts to try to clear up the present unsatisfactory situation."<sup>46</sup>

The second incident over Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs was in May 1971 when Iran's armed forces were ordered to fire upon any British plane violating the Iranian air space, including the area around of the disputed Islands. A British Ministry of Defence spokesman had denied that the RAF were violating Iranian air space and explained that the British aircraft were not equipped for attack anyway.<sup>47</sup>

These two incidents showed a shift in British policy over the Islands. Clearly, Britain was now unwilling to enter into hostility with the Shah over the Islands'

sovereignty. This meant that the former policy of backing the Sheikhs' sovereignty of the Islands had in fact been discarded by H.M. Government. Thus it was made clear to both rulers that Britain would not defend their rights in the event of an Iranian invasion. Sir William Luce, and indeed many British Government officials, explained this to the rulers of the Trucial States, in particular to Sheikh Khālid bin Muḥammad ruler of Sharjah and Sheikh Ṣaqr bin Muḥammad, ruler of Ras al-Khaimah. What, however, were the factors that led Britain to forsake its old position concerning the Islands, and play a role that was seen by Arabs as being more favourable to the Shah.

In assessing the British Government's role in the affairs of Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs, six factors may be identified that might have influenced the shift in British policy. First, there may have been a link to Iran relinquishing her claim to Bahrain. J. Kay, former British Official in the Gulf, pointed out that "It was a bargain between the Shah and the British that if he gave up his claim to Bahrain he would get the Islands."<sup>48</sup> During another interview, Mr. Kay explained the point further by saying that,<sup>49</sup>

The principal British objective as far as Iran was concerned was for her to abandon her claim over Bahrain. The best way to do that was to offer Abū Mūsā and the Islands to the Shah, because there was no doubt that Iran would seize these Islands. It [the plan] was a great success.

This way of bartering Bahrain for the Islands was proposed by many British officials as well as by some of the British press. For example, *The Guardian* wrote that "The problem on the Arab side is to find something to offer to the Shah in return."<sup>50</sup> Another British source stated: "British representatives had told him [the Shah] that if he would agree to relinquish his claim to Bahrain, the U.K. would view more favourably his claims to other islands i.e. Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs."<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore Sir Richard Beaumont, British Ambassador to Cairo 1969-72, wrote on 15 January, 1991 that, " So far as I am aware this deal was arranged by the late Sir William Luce at the time when the Emirates were becoming independent."<sup>52</sup>

Subsequently however, British officials denied conveying any such information or impression to the Shah.<sup>53</sup> This denial has been recorded by Donald McCarthy, former head of Arabian Department, FO:<sup>54</sup>

We managed to get the UN ascertainment which got rid of the claim to Bahrain We gave our word that we would not reveal how. The Shah tried to pull us into a deal between Bahrain and the Islands. We refused throughout on the basis that three different rulers were involved and that we could not trade one against another.

The second factor that influenced Britain's role in negotiating a settlement with the Shah over the Islands, was the British Government's efforts to persuade the Shah to abandon his opposition to the establishment of a federation of Arab emirates. The Iranian Government's insistence on linking its claim to the islands with its approval of the federation was a new obstacle that had arisen in the aftermath of the Bahrain settlement. This was despite the fact that in June 1969 the Shah had declared that once the question of Bahrain was settled, there would be no objection to a federation of the Sheikhdoms.<sup>55</sup> Yet his objection to the Federation was reported and communicated to Sir William Luce during his first tour of the region in September 1970<sup>56</sup> a few months *after* the UN resolution regarding Bahraini independence. This connection was also demonstrated by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ardeshīr Zāhedī, in an interview with the Karachi newspaper, *Dawn*, in December 1970, in which he said that:<sup>57</sup>

Until the sovereignty of Iran over the Abū Mūsā and Tunb Islands is re-established and the freedom of navigation is mutually guaranteed, the formation of the Federation of Sheikhdoms and any other action to safeguard stability and security in the Persian Gulf will not be advantageous .

This Iranian opposition was only removed after Sir William Luce successfully

engineered an agreement between the ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Khālīd, and the Government of Iran in November 1971. After six days of negotiations with Iranian officials, Sir William Luce announced on the 17 November 1971 that the Iranian objection to the formation of the Federation had been removed and that Iran and Britain have sorted out their differences over the Gulf Islands. He added that the Sheikhdoms could now form their federation.<sup>58</sup> The other Emirate, Ras al-Khaimah, refused to negotiate over the sovereignty of Ṭunb Islands and had not joined the Federation when its islands were occupied on 30th of November 1971.

Both Britain and the Gulf Emirates considered that winning Iranian support for the federation was important. This can be seen in a discussion that was carried out on 26th August 1970 in the Foreign Office between Sir Geoffrey Arthur, Political Resident in the Gulf, and N.D.Ḥamūdī, advisor to the Abu Dhabi Government. After emphasizing the Iranian role in the Gulf Sir Geoffrey told Mr. Ḥamūdī:<sup>59</sup>

It is essential to win Iranian support for the federation because it is the biggest and strongest country in the region. At the same time it has many citizens as well as agents in the Emirates who can cause a lot of problems if they want to. They will never drop their claim to Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs, especially to the island that is located closest to their coast. However, the problem with the Arabs is that they want their full rights, as in the case of Palestine where they failed. Iran is determined to occupy the Islands and it will do so as soon as we withdraw. Therefore if the ruler of Ras al-Khaimah is wise he will sell them and take the payment, otherwise he will lose them without any payment.

Furthermore, Iran had strong bilateral relations with some of the Arab Gulf Emirates particularly Dubai which had put her in a position to influence the federation discussions. This was mentioned by Sir William Luce during his meeting with Sheikh Khālīd, ruler of Sharjah, on 30th of October 1971. According to the head of the Abū Dhabi Government Office in Sharjah, Muḥammad Khalīfah al-Suwaydī, who attended the meeting, Sir William warned that if the federation were established without solving the Abū Mūsā issue then Iran would disrupt it from

within.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, British officials may have suggested that in order to remove Iranian objections to the Federation, the Emirates should negotiate with Iran over Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs. This probably made the federation of the six postpone a rapid move to independence until an agreement was reached over Abū Mūsā. Agreement over Abū Musā was reached at the end of November 1971. The Ṭunbs were occupied on 30 November, 1971. Iran recognized the U.A.E. on 4 December 1971, two days after the Federation had been officially declared.

The third factor might have been that Britain and the United States had calculated that Iran was the only Gulf country with sufficient military and economic strength to give a lead in filling the vacuum that would exist in the area after the British withdrawal. In particular Britain wanted to secure stability for the flow of Gulf oil after 1971. Thus Iran, and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, were encouraged to undertake responsibility in what became known as the Twin Pillars theory (see chapter 6). The Shah of Iran however, insisted on occupying the small islands in the Gulf for the reasons we have mentioned above. This produced a significant debate among the people of the Gulf as well as among British officials. Donald McCarthy, head of the Arabian Department in the Foreign Office, has stated that Sir Denis Wright, British Ambassador to Iran 1963-71, and Sir Stewart Crawford, British Political Resident in the Gulf 1968-70, "had engaged in an intensive debate over the islands issue, whereby each supported the point of view of the country he works in."<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Mr. J. Kay, former British Residency Official in the Gulf, summed up the British position thus: "They thought of the Shah as a stable regime with ability to guarantee the peace in the Gulf. They were afraid of disturbances in the area" .<sup>62</sup> This was echoed by Balfour-Paul, H.M. Ambassador in

Iraq in 1971, who said that "As a *real politik* the Ṭunbs were much better in the hands of the Shah for the safety of the oil supply towards the West."<sup>63</sup> Therefore the realisation that Gulf security could be ensured only with Iranian cooperation, convinced the Conservative Government to go along with the Shah's claim over the islands.

The fourth factor could have been that the islands did not possess any economic interests for Britain. Furthermore, the owners of the islands, Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah, were not oil producing Emirates like Abū Dhabi or Dubai. Thus offending Sheikh Ṣaqr, ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, or Sheikh Khālīd, ruler of Sharjah, was not of great consequence. Supporting the rights of the Sheikhs, therefore, did not always serve British interests as for example, the Ḥawār island dispute had done. Ḥawār island was recognised by the British Indian Government as belonging to Bahrain, but the Foreign Office did not agree and recognised the island as part of Qatar. The reason for the Foreign Office's position was because the oil concession in Qatar was in British hands while in Bahrain it was held by an American company.<sup>64</sup>

Accordingly, the relative economic importance of the Gulf islands as well as the Emirates that owned them were important elements that influenced Britain's attitude. This point was expressed as early as 1935 by the head of the Eastern Department at the Foreign Office, G. Rendel, who stated:<sup>65</sup>

My feeling therefore is that if Ṭunb is worth anything we should do much better to take it and that if it is worth nothing it is foolish to let it affect our policy on major issues.

Thus it was not surprising that Britain let Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs go to Iran because it was in her ultimate interest to do so.

The fifth factor that might have influenced Britain's position concerning the islands could have been the influence of American support for the Shah who they regarded as the natural successor to Britain in guarding Gulf security.<sup>66</sup> Two substantial pieces of evidence are available from 1971 which may demonstrate the U.S. position on the islands and the Americans' perception of Gulf security. The first significant contact between Arab officials from the Emirates and the U.S. in discussion of the islands was in January 1971, when an American mission headed by Frank Shakespeare, Director of the U.S. Information Agency, toured the Gulf area. In Abu Dhabi, the American mission expressed its concern over Gulf stability in the aftermath of the British withdrawal at the end of 1971. The mission was particularly worried about Iranian-Arab relations and the possibilities of improving them; however, it was concerned about the Iranian claim to the Islands which might adversely affect their relations. In the meantime the American mission appeared to be trying to convince Abū Dhabi officials that Iranian-Arab cooperation, given the potential threat from Iraq, was more important than the dispute over the islands. However, the American mission found Abu Dhabi more concerned about the Buraimi issue than about the Islands question.<sup>67</sup>

The second contact with the Americans related to the Islands affair took place in November 1971. This came about during a secret visit by Ras al-Khaimah's Crown Prince, Sheikh Khālid bin Šaqr, to the United States, when he asked the U.S. State Department for diplomatic recognition of Ras al-Khaimah in return for the use of military bases there. However the State Department rejected the Sheikh's proposal and explained that the U.S. did not intend to take over Britain's role in the area. Furthermore, American officials urged Ras al-Khaimah to join the Federation of Arab Emirates.<sup>68</sup> [For Anglo-American cooperation in the Gulf



see 'Twin Pillars'].

From the above we may conclude that the United States Government was clearly aware of the Shah's determination to occupy the Islands. Therefore, the Americans tried to persuade Sheikh Khālid bin Ṣaqr as well as the other Gulf officials that it was in their interests to cooperate with Iran over Gulf security in the post-withdrawal period.

The sixth factor that may have influenced Britain's position vis-à-vis the Islands was the success of her economic links with Iran. According to a recommendation published by the Conservative Political Centre in 1967, "Britain has a comity of interest with Iran. It should be our policy to stand close to her as a military and political partner, as well as a trading associate."<sup>69</sup> The importance of Iran as a trading partner was significant since Iran was Britain's biggest market in the Gulf. This was particularly true of Iranian imports from Britain which had increased from £38.3m in 1965 to £494.6m. in 1975, (see table 7:1). Furthermore, Iran was the biggest purchaser of British arms during the withdrawal period. For example, Iran had placed large orders with British companies for missiles, 800 Chieftan tanks, several warships and other military equipment which were considered necessary by the Shah in order to fulfil his new role of policing the Gulf.<sup>70</sup>

### **7.3.2 The Emirates' position:**

The above-mentioned factors put Britain into a very difficult situation over the islands: if Britain opposed the Shah then it might sacrifice its interests in Iran; but if it supported Iran, then it would alienate the Emirates and indeed would face criticism from the Arab World as a whole. In the end Britain involved herself in intensive negotiations in order to find a compromise formula acceptable to both

sides. Indeed Sir William Luce engaged in 'shuttle diplomacy' between Iran and the Emirates for over a year. In May 1971, Sir William explained to the rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah that "H.M. Government wished to advise the two emirates that they should negotiate with Iran over the Islands."<sup>71</sup> He also made it clear to them that the Shah was going to occupy the islands once Britain had left.<sup>72</sup> The rulers first tried to mobilize the Arab governments to come to their assistance. For example, Sheikh Khālid, ruler of Sharjah, sent messages on 24th August to different Arab States, but few were prepared to risk a conflict with Iran when the major threat came from Israel. This probably encouraged Sheikh Khālid to enter into negotiations with Iran over Abū Mūsā through Sir William Luce.

In his October 1971 tour of the Gulf, Sir William Luce communicated to Sheikh Khālid Iran's conditions for a settlement over Abū Mūsā as follows:<sup>73</sup>

1. Abū Mūsā should be divided between Sharjah and Iran, with Iran taking the larger share.
2. Income from oil would be divided equally between Sharjah and Iran.
3. Iran would give Sharjah £1.5 million annually for nine years.

Sheikh Khālid publicly denounced the proposal and stated that "our reply to Luce was that we would never give up our sovereignty and rights to the Island";<sup>74</sup> in secret, however, he did negotiate. For instance, on 2nd November 1971 he wrote to Sir William Luce confirming these negotiations with Iran:<sup>75</sup>

We have carefully considered the Settlement Memorandum relative to Abū Mūsā which you gave us on October 27th, stating terms to which the Shah has expressed a willingness to agree, together with the sketch map of Abū Mūsā on which has been drawn a boundary line for the area to be occupied by Iranian forces, as proposed by Iran. We also acknowledge receipt of the draft of a financial assistance agreement with Sharjah which we understand Iran is prepared to execute, and letters of implementation of these arrangements. We have discussed all of these with you. This letter

**Table 7.1: Britain's Trade with the Gulf states: 1965-75, (£m.)**

Country	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bahrain											
Export to	9.0	8.1	8.6	10.9	12.8	24.3	25.2	19.6	24.3	33.7	60.9
Import from	4.8	5.6	2.9	1.9	2.1	1.6	4.0	8.6	15.8	20.3	17.8
Iran											
Export to	38.3	39.6	43.3	61.0	71.6	66.3	78.6	117.0	169.4	278.6	494.6
Import from	41.0	38.2	136.7	90.7	73.8	76.1	109.5	123.8	237.4	513.3	700.9
Kuwait											
Export to	18.9	25.8	25.1	28.7	40.9	36.2	35.3	31.3	36.1	59.8	99.2
Import from	90.2	92.9	73.6	151.4	172.0	165.4	198.8	176.5	235.3	569.5	418.2
Oman											
Export to	2.2	3.1	2.3	2.8	5.3	7.8	13.1	17.2	22.2	42.9	97.0
Import from	-	-	1.1	11.1	10.4	7.8	4.0	2.9	15.9	32.8	114.2
Qatar											
Export to	2.2	3.1	2.3	2.8	5.3	7.8	13.1	17.2	22.2	42.9	97.0
Import from	4.4	16.8	4.3	24.3	24.7	30.6	41.3	39.3	47.3	166.0	159.3
Saudi Arabia											
Export to	12.8	20.9	16.2	47.0	57.0	35.2	38.9	45.2	58.5	119.7	199.8
Import from	26.1	39.7	62.5	68.7	86.8	104.2	172.8	183.7	322.2	1178.1	856.6
UAE											
Export to	4.2	6.2	12.0	18.5	28.5	24.5	26.3	31.1	49.4	96.9	198.8
Import from	22.2	14.3	12.6	51.2	30.3	32.1	47.1	53.8	69.2	205.9	158.9

**Source:** U.K. Government, Department of Trade and Industry, *Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom*, (London: H.M.S.O, 1965-1975).

is to confirm these discussions.

Furthermore Sheikh Khālid offered counter proposals that he asked Sir William to forward to the Shah. He declared that Sharjah did not accept the Iranian boundary proposals because "Iran's proposed line would give to Iran the well on which the village is dependent, as well as the ancestral home, date gardens and burial ground of the Qasimi family [the ancestors of the ruler of Sharjah]." <sup>76</sup> As to petroleum operations, Sharjah hoped that the agreement with Buttes Gas and Oil Co., dated December 1969, would be recognized by Iran. <sup>77</sup> Eventually, a final agreement between Sharjah and Iran was announced by Sheikh Khālid on 29th November 1971 as a Memorandum of Understanding which was as follows: <sup>78</sup>

Neither Iran nor Sharjah will give up its claim to Abū Mūsā nor recognize the other's claim. Against this background the following arrangements will be made:

1. Iranian troops will arrive in Abū Mūsā. They will occupy areas the extent of which has been agreed on the map attached to this memorandum.
2. Within the agreed areas occupied by Iranian troops, Iran will have full jurisdiction and the Iranian flag will fly.
2. Sharjah will retain full jurisdiction over the remainder of the island. The Sharjah flag will continue to fly over the Sharjah police post on the same basis as the Iranian flag will fly over the Iranian military quarters.
3. Iran and Sharjah recognize the breadth of the island's territorial sea as twelve nautical miles.
4. Exploitation of the petroleum resources of Abū Mūsā and of the sea bed and oil beneath its territorial seas will be conducted by Buttes Gas and Oil Company under the existing agreement which must be acceptable to Iran. Half of the governmental oil revenues hereafter attributable to the said exploitation shall be paid directly by the Company to Iran and half to Sharjah.
5. The nationals of Iran and Sharjah shall have equal rights to fish in the territorial sea of Abū Mūsā.
6. A financial assistance agreement will be signed between Iran and Sharjah.

While Sir William Luce was able to reach a settlement between Iran and Sharjah with regards to Abū Mūsā, he failed, however, to conclude a similar agreement with Ras al-Khaimah over the Ṭunbs. The Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, Sheikh

Şaqr al-Qāsimī, refused to enter into any kind of negotiations over the Lesser and Greater Ṭunbs. *Baghdad Radio* reported that Sheikh Şaqr had revealed that, "The British envoy, William Luce, had offered Ras al-Khaimah £18 million, payable in instalments over nine years, as assistance to the Emirate" as a compensation for the islands. Iran was prepared to pay but the Sheikh rejected the deal.<sup>79</sup> This offer was confirmed by the ex-British diplomat, Frank Brenchley who says that the Shah "was persuaded to offer the Sheikh of Ras al-Khaimah a measure of financial compensation, which the Sheikh refused."<sup>80</sup> The failure of Sir William Luce's discussions over the Ṭunbs was raised in question time in the House of Commons on 6 December 1971 after the occupation of the Ṭunbs by Iran. Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the British Foreign Secretary, was asked "Why if he could buy off Sharjah with £8m. and an agreement on an oil field, could Sir William Luce not have had something similar to settle the claims of Sheikh Zagur [*sic*] over Abū Mūsā ." In replying to the question the Foreign Secretary said:<sup>81</sup>

I understand that the landing on the Ṭunbs was unopposed and peaceful, but there was an incident later, and that in that a policeman and three Iranians were shot. Sir William Luce tried very hard to get a successful arrangement with Ras al-Khaimah as he got from Sharjah but the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah felt he could not make an agreement. I wish it had been possible, we did all we could.

On 29th November 1971 the Iranian troops had occupied the Ṭunbs and three or four of the Ras al-Khaimah police were killed trying to resist the Iranian landing.<sup>82</sup> An Iranian Marine Officer and three soldiers were also killed. Subsequently, the inhabitants of the Greater Ṭunb were transferred to Ras al-Khaimah.<sup>83</sup>

The failure of Sir William Luce to convince Sheikh Şaqr to negotiate with Iran was rather ambiguous because one is led to believe that Britain may have intended the negotiations to fail. First of all the British diplomats did not offer any face-saving device to Sheikh Şaqr except financial compensation. That was

certain to fail since it did not give Sheikh Ṣaqr (who considered himself as the descendant of the famous Qawāsīm tribe) any room to manoeuvre. Not only this, but Sheikh Khālīd, who agreed to negotiate with the Iranians over Abū Mūsā, was considered a traitor by Arab radicals in the Arab World and Sheikh Ṣaqr did not want the same thing to happen to him. Indeed, as *al-Khalij* reported, Sheikh Ṣaqr stated that Sir William Luce had suggested to him that he should cede sovereignty over the Ṭunbs in return for annual payments of £1.6m by Iran. Sheikh Ṣaqr's reply was that "We rejected this offer and told Luce we would never give up our land, nor were we ready to enter into deals to sell our islands."<sup>84</sup>

The second reason, according to Maḥdī al-Tājir, was that "the Iranian occupation of the Ṭunb Islands was rather suggested by an upper Gulf state," i.e. Saudi Arabia. The reason was that Sheikh Ṣaqr had been in close contact with the Iraqi Government.<sup>85</sup> For example, during his 4-day visit to Iraq from 26-30 June 1970, Sheikh Ṣaqr had expressed gratitude to the Iraqi revolutionary government for its continuous support of the Gulf States. Addressing a press conference, Sheikh Ṣaqr said: "During our visit to Iraq we discussed co-operation in all fields of trade, the economy and education... the Arabism of the Arabian Gulf can not be disputed and its people are capable of repulsing any aggression in cooperation with their brothers."<sup>86</sup> This kind of relationship between Sheikh Ṣaqr and the Iraqi Government had created some concern among the conservative Arab Gulf States, like Saudi Arabia, who knew that Iraq was supporting revolutionary elements in the Gulf for example the Dhofar revolution. According to John Armitage, a British diplomat in Saudi Arabia 1968-1974, this link between Iraq and Ras al-Khaimah "probably made Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the lower Gulf States keep quiet about it" i.e. the Iranian occupation of the Ṭunbs.<sup>87</sup>

The third reason might have been that the other rulers of the Trucial States did not give enough support to Sheikh Şaqr due to their total involvement with the establishment of the Federation. In addition to that, the rulers could not raise the Islands issue in their meetings about the proposed federation because it would probably have embarrassed those Emirates with a close relationship with Iran: this fact was perceived during the Trucial States Council meeting that was held in Dubai on 10th July 1971. According to the agenda, the Islands issue was numbered as item 14, but the Secretariat had crossed that out because of the sensitive nature of the subject.<sup>88</sup>

The other point of interest was Sheikh Şaqr's demand for amendments to the proposed constitution in which he demanded more power, but when his amendments were rejected he refused to sign it. (see 6.2.). But after he was humiliated over the Tunbs Sheikh Şaqr agreed to federate on condition that the Federation would boycott Iran, liquidate its interests and deport those Iranian citizens who entered the Emirates illegally.<sup>89</sup> However the other members of the Federation did not consider Sheikh Şaqr's demands to be fair and had thus paid no heed to them.

The fourth reason that might have led to the failure of Sir William Luce's efforts to reach an acceptable settlement over the Tunbs was Iran's tenacity in her claim to them. Iran maintained that the islands were too close to her and that they had relatively few inhabitants in comparison with Abū Mūsā. This sort of thinking was clearly understood by British diplomats and hence they applied less pressure on Sheikh Şaqr. The last British Political Agent in the Trucial States, Julian Walker, has stated that no pressure was put on Sheikh Şaqr by the British authorities:<sup>90</sup>

no one threatened Sheikh Şaqr of Ras al-Khaimah to try to persuade him to make a deal with the Shah over the Tunbs, but the British made it perfectly clear

to him that they believed that the Shah would try to seize the islands from Ras al-Khaimah once British protection was withdrawn if there was no agreement. Sheikh Şaqr preferred not to try to make any agreement of the sort made by Sheikh Khālid of Sharjah, and in any case there was some doubt about whether the Shah would be prepared to negotiate a similar agreement with Ras al-Khaimah over the Ṭunbs.

The final reason could have been that the British looked upon the Ṭunb Islands as too close to the Straits of Hormuz and thus for security reasons they would be better in the hands of the Shah. This fear had increased due to the activities of a nationalist group which had established a base in Ras Musandam. (see chapter 2). Furthermore, the landing of the Iranian troops on the Islands on the final day of Britain's treaty of protection with the Emirates could not have happened without the previous knowledge of the British Government. *The Financial Times* suggested that Iran had occupied the Tunbs on the last day of the British presence in the Gulf because, once Ras al-Khaimah was independent then, "the act would be more offensive in the international context than if the States foreign policy and defence were still technically in Britain's hands."<sup>91</sup> Another reason was put by the British diplomat, J. Kay, "The plan was to invade the Islands before so as to save the Sheikhs' face and to show that the Sheikhs were not weak and not to be blamed."<sup>92</sup>

Ras al-Khaimah, in accordance with its protection treaty, asked the British Government to help her in resisting the Iranian occupation. The British reply, however, was that "the British Government could hardly be expected to exercise their treaty responsibilities on their final day"<sup>93</sup> and that the British troops had already been withdrawn from the area so Britain could no longer defend the Islands. Yet, according to J.B. Kelly, there was sufficient British presence in the Gulf area to defend the islands. The aircraft carrier H.M.S. *Eagle* with Royal Marine Commandos on board and the cruiser H.M.S. *Albion* were in the Gulf of Oman,<sup>94</sup>



and there were RAF Hunters in Sharjah as well as a strong British military presence in Oman, especially in Masīrah.<sup>95</sup> However, as Edward Henderson, the Political Agent in Qatar in 1971, put it, "It was considered a joke that we fought on the side of the Iranians in Dhofar but at the same time we were not on good terms with them over the Islands."<sup>96</sup>

The repercussions over the Iranian occupation of Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs were felt throughout the Arab World. Demonstrations swept the newly established United Arab Emirates, where Iranian banks, hospitals and shops were attacked. In Sharjah, Sheikh Ṣaqr, the Deputy ruler had four shots fired at him by an unidentified gunman. The assassination attempt is believed to have been in response to the Iranian occupation and to the role that the Sheikh played in receiving the Iranian forces on the island.<sup>97</sup> In Baghdad thousands of people took to the streets and the British Ambassador, Balfour-Paul, was summoned to the Iraqi Foreign Ministry to be informed that Iraq was severing diplomatic relations with Britain. While Libya nationalized British Petroleum (BP) and asked the other Arab countries to take stronger measures against Iran and Britain, Egypt and most other Arab countries limited themselves to verbal condemnation.<sup>98</sup> Saudi Arabia surprised many by its low-profile stand over the issue: probably its role in the Buraimi dispute provides some explanation for this.

## 7.4 Buraimi dispute

The Buraimi oasis, 24° 14' North 53° 46' East, takes its name from the village of Buraimi which lies in the Omani part of the Oasis. Today the Oasis contains nine towns and villages of which three are located in Oman: Ḥamāsā, Ṣa'arā, and Buraimi town; and the other six located in Abū Dhabi: Hīlī, al-Jīmī, al-Qaṭṭārah,

al-‘Ayn, al-Jāhlī and al-Mu‘tarīḍ.<sup>99</sup> However in the past the name Buraimi was given to an area extending well beyond the immediate oasis and which was disputed between Saudi Arabia and Abū Dhabi and Oman.

In comparison with the Islands dispute with Iran, the Buraimi problem was more important due to: (a) Its complicated history that had started in 1795 and which was not solved until 1974. (b) The discovery of oil in the disputed area and thus the involvement of a group of American oil companies in a conflict with British led oil companies. (c) The wide stretches of land that were involved, covering most of Abū Dhabi and a part of Oman, and also the involvement of many countries in the dispute including Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Britain and, to a lesser extent, the United States. Of particular concern to us here are Britain’s negotiations with Saudi Arabia to solve the dispute during the withdrawal period between 1968-71. However we will begin with a brief account of how the issue had developed.

The Wahhābī reform movement that was founded by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1792) had spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. As a result in 1795 Ibrahim b. ‘Ufayṣān, became the first *amīr* of the Saudi state to rule over Buraimi. During their presence in Buraimi the Saudi officials collected Islamic taxes, (*zakat*), preserved public security through Islamic laws, (*shariat*), and established tribal allegiances with the Saudi state.<sup>100</sup>

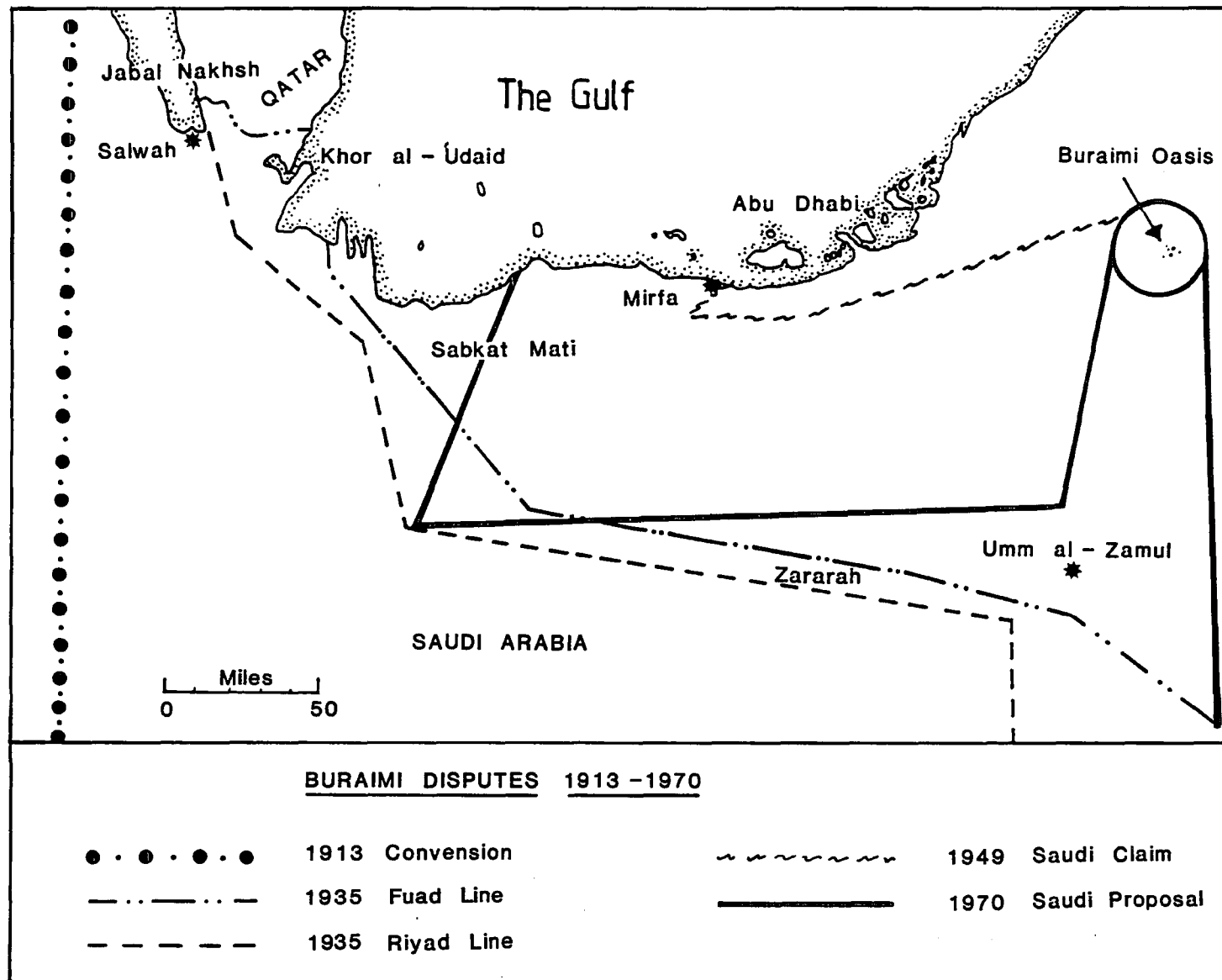
After the demise of the first Saudi state in 1850, the Saudi garrison was ejected from Buraimi by alliances between local tribes and tribes which owed allegiance to the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi. Control over Buraimi passed to its original ruler, the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and later, due to shifting tribal allegiances, the ruler

of Abu Dhabi took control of parts of the oasis.

In the twentieth century, however, the Buraimi dispute was influenced by oil concessions that were awarded in 1933 by Ibn Sa'ud to Standard Oil of California (SOCAL) to exploit oil on his eastern frontiers. At around the same time, Abu Dhabi also granted an oil concession to Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) an affiliate of IPC, to look for oil throughout the Emirate's territory. The boundary issue between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi thus appeared.

In 1934 the American Government, on behalf of SOCAL, approached the Foreign Office about Saudi Arabia's eastern frontier. The Foreign Office reply was that the eastern frontier was that laid down in a convention concluded in July 1913 between the British Government and the Ottoman Empire. The convention defined the eastern Saudi frontier, then the emirate of Najid, as being from the west of Qatar running straight south through the Rub' al-Khalī, the empty quarter (see map 7.1). But Ibn Saud had refused to accept the 1913 convention because by that time his authority reached well beyond the boundaries established by the convention. Moreover, because of the outbreak of World War One, the 1913 convention had never been ratified. Consequently, it was necessary for Saudi Arabia and Britain (on behalf of Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Oman and the Eastern Aden Protectorate) to enter into discussions, which began in summer 1934.<sup>101</sup>

Following these discussions, Saudi Arabia put forward a claim to a corridor of land to the sea coast in the vicinity of Khaur al-'Udaid, which would have separated Abu Dhabi from Qatar. This proposal, known as the *Fuad line*, was put forward in April 1935. In return, Saudi Arabia was willing to give up its claim to the Buraimi oasis (see map 7.1). Britain rejected the Saudi proposal and



SOURCE:- Kelly, J.B. Arabia, The Gulf, and the West. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1980. P.210-212.

Map 7.1

presented a counter proposal in November 1935, known as the *Riyad line* (see map 7.1). This gave Saudi Arabia the bulk of the Rub‘ al-Khālī desert but rejected the Saudi proposal set out in *Fuad line*, for a corridor to the Gulf coast at Khaur al-‘Udaid.<sup>102</sup> The Saudi, refused to accept the British proposal and in 1949 the Saudi government presented a new frontier, but incorporated four-fifths of the emirate of Abu Dhabi, including the Buraimi oases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (see map 7.1). This was rejected by Britain which threatened to return to the Anglo-Turkish convention of 1913.<sup>103</sup>

In 1952 the situation deteriorated further. First, the Dhammam Conference, 28 January to 14 February 1952, held by Britain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Abu Dhabi to discuss the dispute, had collapsed; second Saudi Arabia had despatched Turkī ibn ‘Utayshān to the Buraimi oasis to act as governor. Britain on her side reacted by blockading the Saudi garrison with the Trucial Oman Levies (TOL later renamed TOS) and low level sorties by the RAF over Buraimi villages. A few weeks later however, the American ambassador in Jeddah, Raymond Hare, used his good offices to bring about a reconciliation between the two parties. This resulted in: (a) the standstill agreement of October 1952; and (b) an arbitration agreement in July 1954 in which the two parties agreed to present their cases in front of an international tribunal. The Tribunal of Arbitration that had begun in September 1955 came to an end in the same month due to the resignation of the British representative, Sir Reader Bullard. On 26 October 1955, the British government decided to put aside all further argument, especially with the Americans, and occupy Buraimi. They expelled the small Saudi garrison and installed TOS on behalf of Abu Dhabi and Oman. Britain’s action naturally caused some embarrassment for the Americans. On one hand they feared that Saudi Arabia

might seek allies elsewhere if they did not support the Saudi claim, and that indeed Saudi Arabia might retaliate against Aramco and the US air base at Dhahran. On the other hand support for Saudi Arabia on this issue could sour relations with their ally Britain<sup>104</sup>

In fact Britain had her own reasons for carrying out the Buraimi operation in October 1955 to remove the Saudi garrison.<sup>105</sup> The first reason could have been a political one. That is, matters were seen in quite a different light in Whitehall owing to wider Middle Eastern and other preoccupations. For example, the Iranian oil dispute of 1951 and Britain's failure to keep the Suez Canal as a military base (see chapter 1) were seen in the Gulf as signs that British power was declining.<sup>106</sup>

In order to assess Britain's position in the Gulf, Sir Roger Makins, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, was sent to the area in 1952. One of his recommendations was that Britain ought not to contemplate any voluntary withdrawal.<sup>107</sup> On the contrary, Britain must demonstrate her intention of remaining in the area. In 1953 Sir Rupert Hay, British Political Resident in the Gulf, saw the opportunity of demonstrating British power by standing firm on the Buraimi issue. He wrote to his superiors in the Foreign Office:<sup>108</sup>

I do not propose to deal with his [Ibn Saud] latest aggressions in detail here but will content myself with pointing out that our whole position in the Gulf depends on the belief of the rulers and their people in our ability to protect them against external aggression and that when they lose their confidence in us they will turn elsewhere.

Accordingly, a tough stance towards the Saudis was meant to retain the rulers' confidence in Britain's ability to defend them, a confidence which had been damaged slightly by her weak response over the Iranian oil dispute. According to Evelyn Shuckburgh, Principal Private Secretary to Eden, he had suggested to the Acting Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, that "we should at once occupy Buraimi

to show that we can be tough as well.”<sup>109</sup> This was also the Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden’s position in 1953, as reported by his private secretary: “Anthony Eden seemed to want violent action soon and complained that we had not got Turkī [b. ‘Uṭayshān] out during his absence. We persuaded him against doing this while we needed so much US help on Egypt and Persia.”<sup>110</sup>

The second reason was that the Buraimi dispute demonstrated how determined Britain was to protect the interests of the London based Petroleum Development(Trucial Coast) in the face of Aramco<sup>111</sup>, even though that would antagonize her traditional allies, the US and Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, this determination was expressed by the British Prime Minister, Churchill, in a letter to Ibn Saud: “what would the friendship of Great Britain be worth if she abandoned the weaker of her friends for the sake of the stronger. We would stand up for what we felt to be right, and Ibn Saud would, no doubt, do the same.”<sup>112</sup>

As to the sourness in Anglo-American relations created by the Buraimi dispute, Britain reminded the US that she fully accepted the Americans’ encouragement to enter into discussions with Saudi Arabia over Buraimi. However British officials expressed their displeasure at the American position:<sup>113</sup>

They encouraged us to conclude the Buraimi standstill agreement in 1952 which Turkī never made the slightest attempt to observe, and they also urged us to conclude the Arbitration Agreement which the Saudis also never observed. Was it not the duty of the Americans first to put pressure on the Saudis to keep these agreements rather than put pressure on us to make new ones after the Saudis had rendered the other ones useless? One of our main difficulties in dealing with the Saudis is that American pressure to retreat is always on us and never, so far as we know, on them.

Furthermore, Britain reminded the Americans that the British position in the Gulf was an asset to the West as a whole including the United States.<sup>114</sup> Thus the US was warned that:<sup>115</sup>

The Americans are gaining all the advantages from the British special position

in the Gulf and refusing to say a word in support of it. They must realise that if they connive at the undermining of one corner of the edifice of British influence, the whole will be in danger of collapsing.

The third reason was that the British officials were concerned lest arbitration might end in an advantage for the Saudis. The Foreign Office had issued a statement on 4 October 1955 explaining the reason for Sir Reader Bullard's resignation from the Tribunal, accusing the Saudis of tampering with the impartiality of the Tribunal behind the President's back.<sup>116</sup> Such an accusation of improper conduct was an over-simplification of a complicated issue and J. B. Kelly's standard work on the affair, which attempted to connect the failure of the arbitration with the misconduct of the Saudis, is too biased:<sup>117</sup>

The tribunal also heard evidence of the Saudi bribery and gun-running, of the plot to overthrow the Ruler of Abū Dhabi, of the circumstances surrounding the fire of Hamasa, of the abuse of the Saudi supply aircraft, and of other violations of the conditions of arbitration.

However in recent publications we discover that Britain was concerned with the Saudi's success in winning over some of the main tribal leaders of Buraimi like Rāshid b. Ḥamad Sheikh of Ḥamāsa, Ṣaqr b. Sultan al-Ḥamūdah paramount sheikh of Nu'aym tribe, 'Obaid bin Jum'ah chief of Banī Ka'b tribe, together with a number of other influential figures who persuaded their tribes to support the Saudis. After the escalation of the dispute in 1955 the tribal leaders with a number of their followers left for Saudi Arabia as refugees. The British concern was reported by Sir Bernard Burrows, the British Political Resident in the Gulf 1953-1958:<sup>118</sup>

After the Arbitration had been running for some time it became apparent to us that the Saudis were using all kinds of methods, such as the supply of arms and money, to extend their influence and to win the allegiance of tribal leaders over a much wider area; these tactics might if they continued succeed in influencing the result of the arbitration, insofar as this was likely to depend in part on some form of ascertainment of the will of the inhabitants. It was therefore agreed after much



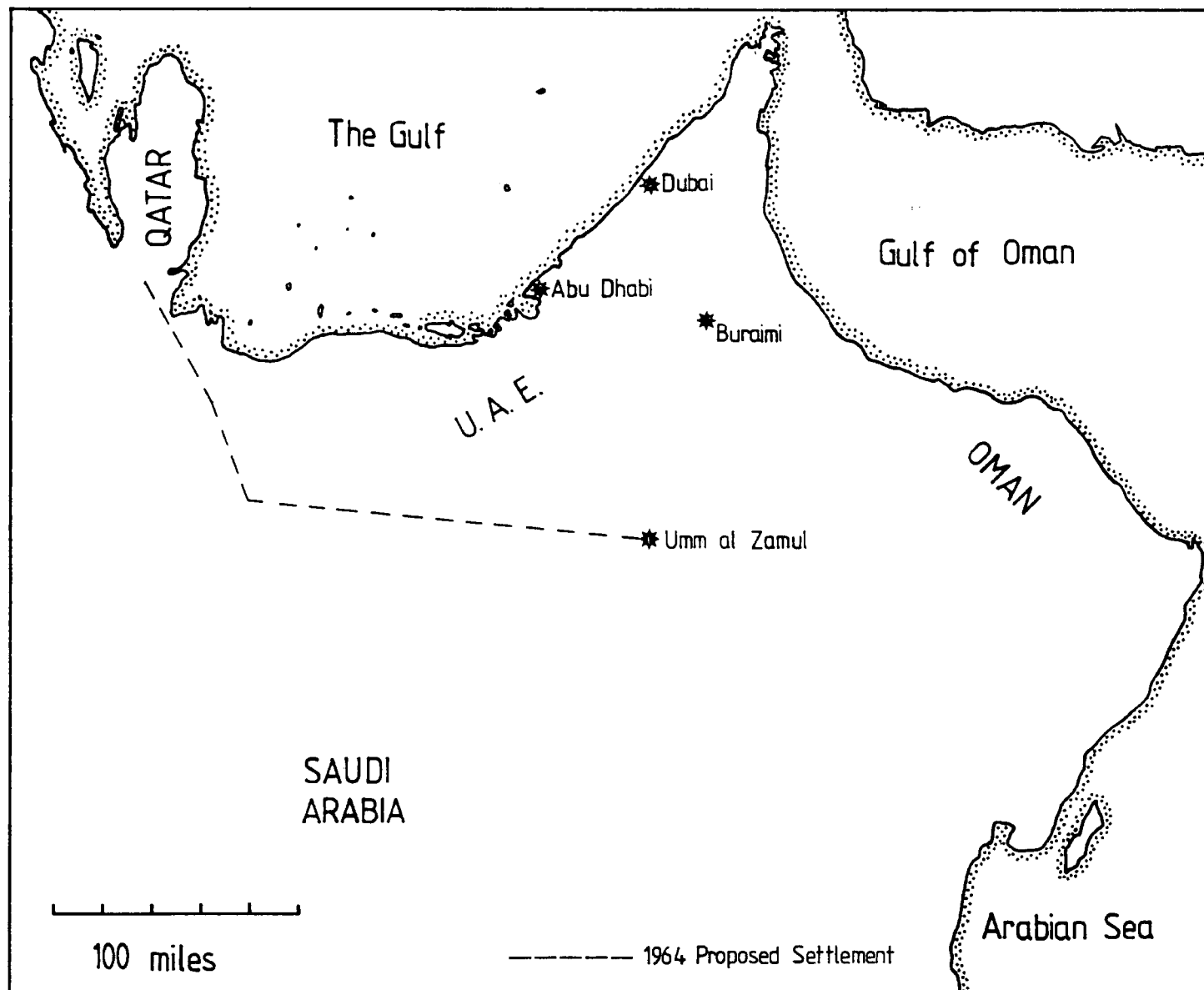
heart-searching in Whitehall, to bring the arbitration to an end and to reoccupy the oasis of Buraimi and turn out the Saudi detachment.

The final reason could have been that Britain used military might to solve the Buraimi dispute as a sort of punishment of King Sa'ūd b. 'Abd al-'Aziz because Eden, the British Prime Minister, came to believe that Saudi Arabia was undermining the British position in the Middle East. He wrote in his memoirs that "the situation in the Middle East was being rapidly undermined and corrupted by Saudi money."<sup>119</sup> Heikal, the Egyptian writer, has suggested that Britain sought to punish Saudi Arabia over Buraimi because Saudi Arabian money was being used in cooperation with the new revolutionary government in Egypt against Western interests in Iraq, Jordan, Syria and the Gulf, therefore a swift punishment was justified.<sup>120</sup>

The relations between Saudi Arabia and Britain were further undermined by the Suez crisis when Saudi Arabia broke off diplomatic relations with Britain in November 1956. Thus the Buraimi dispute was allowed to lie dormant until 1963 when the two countries re-established their diplomatic relations due to the Yemen civil war (see chapter 2).

On August 14 1964 the Foreign Office submitted a new proposal for solving the Buraimi dispute to the Saudi Arabia Government. It proposed a new frontier between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia very similar to that of 25 November 1935 (see Map 7.2). However, the new point in the proposal was the suggestion that joint oil exploration between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia be carried out in the disputed areas. The British Foreign Secretary, R. A. Butler, wrote to Crown Prince Fayṣal as follows:<sup>121</sup>

I propose that the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and Your Royal Highness should establish a joint oil exploration and production area, which I believe would be designated



SOURCE:- 2/33 Letter from R.A. Butler, HM secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Prince Faisal bin Abdul 'Aziz Al Saud, Viceroy of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Londn, 14.8.1964, (confidential).

Map 7.2

on either side of the agreed frontier, without prejudice to the existing concessions awarded to the Arabian American Oil Company by Saudi Arabia and to the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company by Abū Dhabi. The operational arrangements would be made by the two companies, each of which would pay royalties and tax to the government from which it obtained its concession. The two governments would then share the total receipts from the joint area equally between them.

The same letter also addressed the Saudi demand for access to the Gulf coast:<sup>122</sup>

The Ruler of Abū Dhabi would announce his willingness to give favourable considerations to applications from any Saudi concessionary for way-leaves to the Abu Dhabi coast for pipelines and servicing roads and for terminal installations for the export of oil.

However, as Saudi Arabia was preoccupied with Nasser's involvement in the Yemen civil war, the Buraimi issue was once again shelved (except for a minor contact between Sheikh Zayed and King Fayṣal in 1967) until 1970.<sup>123</sup>

#### **7.4.1 Buraimi dispute and the British withdrawal**

The decision to withdraw from the Gulf at the end of 1971 brought the frontier question into sharper focus. In May 1970 Sheikh Zayed paid a visit to King Fayṣal in Riyadh. The King immediately brought up the subject since he wanted the dispute settled before the British withdrawal. He produced a new proposal that, in comparison with 1949 was a retreat, but still did not abandon the Saudi claim to Buraimi oasis, Khaur al-ʿUdaid and the oil-rich structure of Zarārah (see map 7.1).<sup>124</sup> Also King Fayṣal insisted that ADPC stop operating in the disputed areas. Sheikh Zayed, on the advice of the British Government<sup>125</sup>, agreed to stop oil drilling but refused to agree to the territorial claim, especially the claim to the Buraimi oasis.

The Foreign Office reacted strongly to Sheikh Zayed's visit to Riyadh because

it had been made without prior consultation with British officials. Sir Geoffrey Arthur expressed this feeling to N.D.Ḥamūdī during a meeting in the Foreign Office on 26 August 1970. He told him that "Sheikh Zayed's initiative to visit Saudi Arabia was without our consultation. I discovered that and informed the Foreign Office."<sup>126</sup> This over-sensitive reaction of the British Government was no doubt influenced by the withdrawal time-table, since any mistake by Zayed could provoke trouble that might disturb the withdrawal schedule.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore the British Government had her own plans to solve the Buraimi dispute through the mediation of Sir William Luce.

Throughout his Gulf tours, in 1970-71, Sir William Luce visited Riyadh regularly. His primary concern was to seek Riyadh's help in establishing a Federation of the Emirates, to enrol Saudi Arabia in Gulf security and to solve the Buraimi dispute. During his first meeting with King Fayṣal in August 1970 Luce was surprised by Fayṣal's determination. Sir Geoffrey Arthur in conversation with N. D. Ḥamūdī, the Abu Dhabi Government official stated:<sup>130</sup>

Sir William Luce's talks with King Fayṣal were not encouraging. The King is hard and immovable. It looks as if there will be no solution unless Abu Dhabi makes some concessions by relinquishing Buraimi or Khaur al-'Udaid, because Saudi Arabia refused to make any settlement without some concessions, especially in the western part of the disputed area. It is not an easy job because the King cannot come out of it empty-handed.

It looks as if the British officials were sympathizing with King Fayṣal by pressing Abu Dhabi to relinquish part of her territory as a face-saving formula for the King. Sir William and other British officials tried to find a diplomatic solution to the long-standing dispute by shuttling between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. In October 1970, Sir Antony Acland and Sir Stephen Egerton from the Arabian Department in the Foreign Office also visited both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi as part of

the Luard Mission. (Evan Luard was the Labour Minister of State who had visited the Gulf in May 1970). During their discussions with Abu Dhabi Government officials they warned them that they should "Tell Sheikh Zayed that time is not on his side because after withdrawal Saudi Arabia can occupy it [Buraimi] by force."<sup>129</sup> At the same time they explained the situation in Saudi Arabia and indicated that King Fayṣal might possibly return to the 1949 proposal which claimed most of Abu Dhabi territory. They urged Abu Dhabi to seize the opportunity now:<sup>130</sup>

The King is strong, but there is some opposition to his proposal from the younger princes. If Abū Dhabi neglects him, he might believe the princes and withdraw his proposal. There is a genuine opposition to the King, no doubt of that.

This caused considerable concern to the Abu Dhabi Government and so, with the approval of the British, they sent an envoy that met Prince Nawwāf bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Al Sa'ūd, King Fayṣal's brother and personal advisor, and his advisor Nūrī Ibrāhīm on October 10-12, 1970. The purpose of the meeting between Prince Nawwāf and Abu Dhabi officials was to find common ground for serious negotiations over the dispute. Nūrī Ibrāhīm explained the King's position with regard to the dispute to N.D. Ḥamūdī:<sup>131</sup>

The King wanted a settlement but he does not want to be seen by the younger princes and the Saudi military officers as giving up in the face of a small emirate. Some of those young princes wanted to retain their right by force, but the King is stopping them. He always says to them that he does not believe in military force against Arab brothers. He seriously wanted a solution to the problem as soon as possible. The King, because of old age and many responsibilities, is now also becoming more impatient.

This description of King Fayṣal by Nūrī Ibrāhīm was meant as a hint to the Abu Dhabi officials that the King might let the younger princes invade Abū Dhabi. However during the meeting with Prince Nawwāf, the Prince blamed the British for all the complications of the Buraimi dispute. He explained that by saying:<sup>132</sup>

The British have complicated the issue because every now and then they express contradictory opinions. They extended the problem, that was limited to the Buraimi

oasis, to include al-‘Udaid. What they were looking for was oil but in the end they did not find any.

Then Prince Nawwāf explained why Saudi Arabia insisted on negotiating with Abu Dhabi over Buraimi, and why the King could not easily give it up :<sup>133</sup>

As a matter of fact, my brother, praise to Allah that we do not need oil because we have the biggest reserve in the World and we do not want to oppress anyone. Besides, we in the Gulf should not follow our emotions; that is how we lost Palestine. On the contrary, we should cooperate. The dispute with Abu Dhabi is an obstacle to our cooperation. In the proposal that we offered to Sheikh Zayed there were specific points that we demanded and in return we gave up most of our previous demands. The King was not unopposed when he made these concessions. Clearly, after the dispute in 1952 that was known to everybody, it is difficult for the King to be seen by his brothers and public opinion as giving up Saudi rights. As a result, the King must get something in return. He gave you all the disputed areas, including the oil-rich area, and what we want is just a corridor to the sea for our oil pipelines and for other purposes.

J.B. Kelly has stated that Sheikh Zayed agreed to provide transit rights through Abu Dhabi territory for Saudi pipelines but that the Saudis rejected this offer.<sup>134</sup> As a matter of fact the Saudis wanted Khaur al-‘Udaid not so much for oil terminals but more for internal security reasons. It is not correct, however, as Alkim suggested that Saudi Arabia wanted Khaur al-‘Udaid because of the Saudis’ aspiration to be the predominant power in the region<sup>135</sup>, for it seems clear that Saudi Arabia wanted it for internal security reasons rather than economic or strategic ones. This last point was clarified by Nūrī Ibrāhīm to Mr. Ḥamūdī in a separate meeting in October 1970.<sup>136</sup>

Nūrī said that Prince Nawwāf has stated that there is opposition to the King because as he [Nūrī] knows, there is strong opposition to the points that he agreed to in the Saudi proposal. Genuine opposition had come from junior members of the royal family as well as from junior military officers. What they complain about is why the Saudi government should give so much account to a little emirate. It is understandable that we could seize it by force if we wait until the British withdrawal and after that we could divide the whole area between us and Iran. However the King personally accepted the responsibility to solve the dispute. As a result he must gain something out of it which he can show to the people, as Prince Nawwāf has said. He is not after oil, but he really wanted a corridor to the sea for an oil pipeline and for other reasons. Given such a corridor we should have an alternative route by which troops could intervene, in the event of a crisis in Dhammam.

Here again, Saudi officials were reiterating the same argument that had been used before in negotiations with Abu Dhabi officials. It is doubtful whether there was in fact any serious opposition to King Fayṣal with regard to Buraimi and, as Mr. Ḥamūdī stated to the present writer, "the truth is that the King was more difficult than anyone" in regard to Buraimi. For example, during an official visit to Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi's envoy heard some sharp words from the King. Aḥmad bin Ḥāmed and N.D. Ḥamūdī seeking King Fayṣal's blessing for the federation were told in strong language: "I have been always a supporter of the federation and I always will be, so what more do you want me to do? Do you want me to start beating the drums? Why are you raising a strong army and frightening your neighbours with it ?."137

A corridor to the sea, west of Sabkhat Maṭī, (see Map 7.1) would have enabled Saudi Arabia to seek outside help (from the Americans for instance) if the northern parts of the upper Gulf happened to fall into enemy hands through, say, a Shī'at uprising in the Eastern Province.

Furthermore, Saudi Government insistence on Khaur al-'Udaid could be because of their principles. The humiliation inflicted upon the Saudis in 1955 by the British RAF and the TOS were not forgotten by King Fayṣal and the presence of refugees from Buraimi in his country were always a reminder to him. The Buraimi issue was thus an issue of pride and principles. Saleem al-Luzī quoted a Saudi official who told him that "The problem between us and Abu Dhabi is not a territorial question we have a huge country, nor is it an oil problem because we have plenty, but a problem of honour."138

Sir William Luce came to Riyadh in January 1971 and, as Frank Brenchley

an ex-Foreign Office diplomat pointed out, he presented a compromise solution to King Fayṣal<sup>139</sup>, although neither Brenchley nor Balfour-Paul have given any details of the proposal.<sup>140</sup> Burrell has suggested that "In January 1971, the British Government is reported to have suggested the creation of a neutral zone, similar to those previously in existence between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, in the crucial area and for the equal sharing of profits from the exploitation of any oil found"<sup>141</sup>, in which case the British Government had repeated the 1964 proposal with minor amendments. Sheikh Zayed was again pressed to make concessions but it seems that they were not enough to win Fayṣal's approval. The question to be raised here is why did the British Government go back on its policy towards Buraimi established in the 1950s.

The change in Britain's position over Buraimi from that of strong support for the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in the fifties, to one which urged him to make some concessions to Saudi Arabia, apparently stemmed from several factors. The first factor was Britain's intention to withdraw from the Gulf by the end of 1971 and thus any strong support for Sheikh Zayed over Buraimi would probably disturb the withdrawal schedule.

The second factor may have been Britain's concern over her economic interests in Saudi Arabia. The 1950s dispute had manifestly affected Britain's commercial relations with Saudi Arabia: for instance, at the time of the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1963 there were only six British businessmen resident in Jeddah and none elsewhere in the whole Kingdom.<sup>142</sup> Thus Britain, which was leaving the Gulf anyhow, did not want to lose the Saudi market which was huge in comparison with Abu Dhabi. The last British Political Agent in the Trucial States, Julian Walker, put it this way:<sup>143</sup>



Britain certainly regarded Saudi Arabia as a profitable market but, at least until 1971, she retained very strong political and commercial links with Abu Dhabi. After British withdrawal from the Gulf there was a tendency for the British to neglect the nurturing of her relationships with the Gulf states and to look on the area of the Arabian Peninsula from a commercial basis only.

Accordingly, there was a shift of emphasis in British foreign policy towards the Gulf from a close connection with the Gulf emirates to a policy that was built on commercial relations with the whole region. Mr. Ḥamūdī, Adviser to the Abu Dhabi Government, explained the impact of that on Abu Dhabi as follows:<sup>144</sup>

During the period before federation, Sheikh Zayed had to face, for the first time on his own, many problems of an international character. Furthermore, most of his neighbours were causing problems: Iran had seized the Islands, Iraq refused to recognize the federation and Saudi Arabia revived the Buraimi dispute. Britain, which had defended Abu Dhabi for so many years, took a pro-Saudi stand on Buraimi after it had decided to depart from the area. British officials also extended pressure on Abu Dhabi to concede to the Saudi demands.

Britain's role of intermediary between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia was in fact more one of putting pressure on Abū Dhābi. For example, during Sheikh Zayed's trip to Tehran, the British Political Agent had followed him there and had said to him "We heard that you are not going to accept the points of King Fayṣal's proposal. I am afraid that if he received such news he might go back to his original claim, which was for two thirds of Abu Dhabi.

The reason for Britain's change of attitude towards Abu Dhabi was that British interests in Saudi Arabia had begun to grow, because it is a huge country with numerous contracts and business opportunities. What the British were saying was that they wanted Sheikh Zayed to concentrate on his internal affairs.

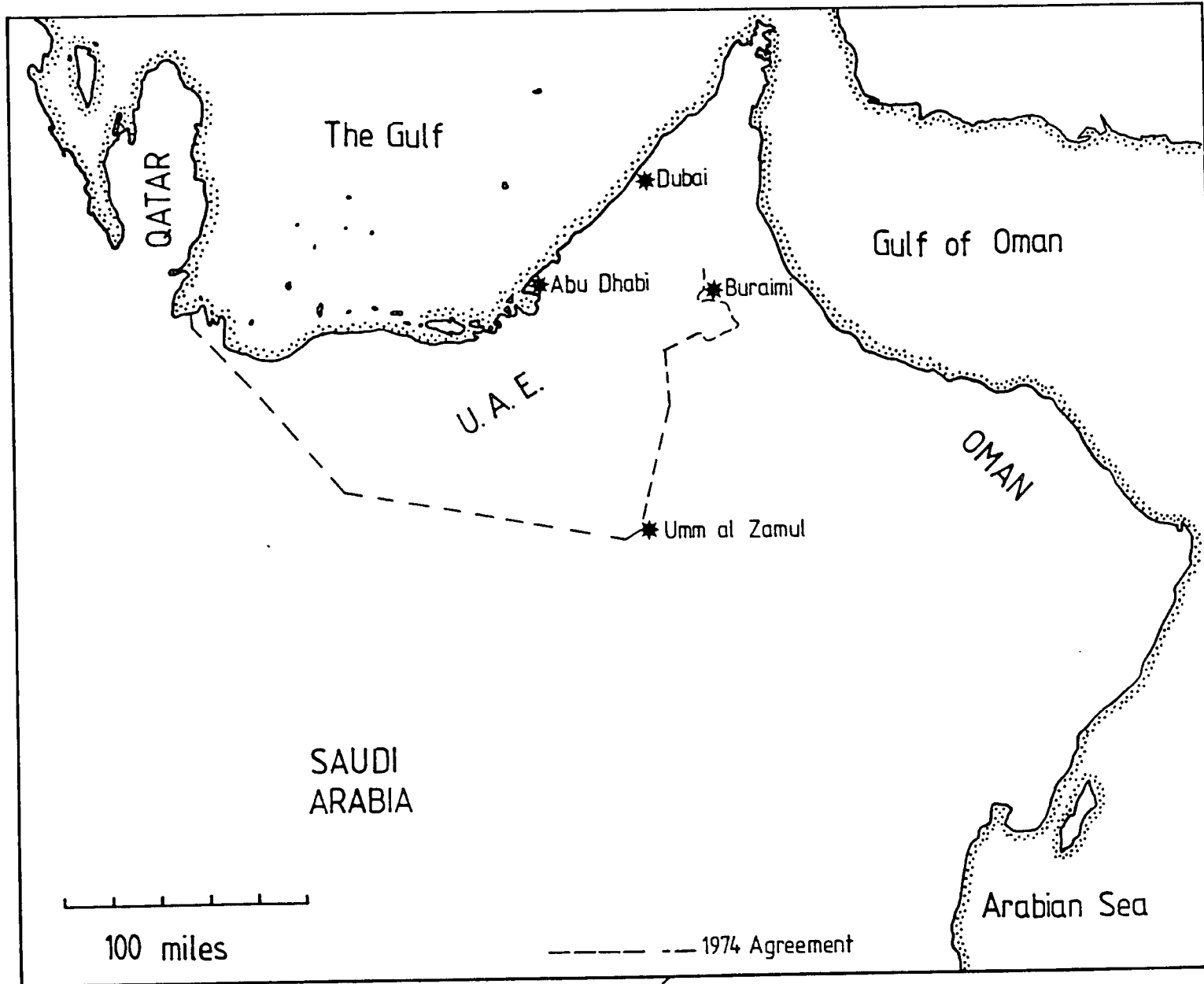
The third factor was the reassessment of security in the Gulf after the withdrawal (see Twin Pillars). Britain did not want to provoke King Fayṣal since he along with the Shah, was crucial in filling the vacuum that the withdrawal of British troops would inevitably create. Evan Luard, the Labour Foreign Minister, expressed this feeling after a visit to the Gulf in April 1970. He told a press conference in Kuwait:<sup>145</sup>

What I have seen and heard everywhere in the Gulf area is the complete trust in, and reliance on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to create peace and hope for the region. It is a fact that I cannot deny.

However one cannot be sure whether or not Saudi Arabia had linked her willingness to cooperate in the Gulf security system with the actual Buraimi issue. *Al-Ḥawādith* reported that during the visit of the Saudi Minister of the Interior, Prince Fahad, to London in December 1970, the Prince threatened British officials: "you took Buraimi from us in the fifties and we expect you to return it before your withdrawal unless you do not wish to keep good relations with us."<sup>146</sup>

The fourth factor could have been that Britain needed King Fayṣal's help in persuading the Emirates to form the federation. The King, unlike the Shah of Iran, did not express publicly any linkage between Buraimi and the establishment of the federation. On the contrary, he had despatched his brother Prince Nawwāf with Sheikh Ṣabāḥ, the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, to encourage the rulers of the Emirates to form a union among themselves (for the Saudi-Kuwaiti mission see 6.2). The King was not threatening to use force to take over Buraimi as the Shah was doing over the Islands. Presumably this was because the King was not prepared to risk military confrontation with another monarchical regime because it would be seen first as an example of bullying and secondly might disturb the stability of the area. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia did not recognize the UAE federation until the Buraimi issue was solved in 1974.

The fifth factor might have been due to the American role in the Buraimi dispute. US officials were mostly concerned about the stability of the region in the face of any radical revolutionary movements like that of Dhofar. This concern was expressed by the American mission that toured the Gulf in January 1971. During a meeting in Abu Dhabi with two American officials, Frank Shakespere and David Nalle, the Abu Dhabi officials had sought the help of the U.S. with regard to Buraimi by putting pressure on Saudi Arabia. The American official, David Nalle,



Map 7.3

SOURCE:- MFA 1/6/2, UAE/Saudi Arabia boundaries agreement. 21.8.1974

inquired whether Sheikh Zayed's concession over Buraimi was going to create any internal problems for him or not.<sup>147</sup> This demonstrates that US concern was for the stability of the region. Since the Saudis had already explained to them how dangerous it would be for Fayṣal to give in, the American officials hinted that it would be much easier for Sheikh Zayed to make concessions over Buraimi. In other words, the Saudi King could not withdraw his claim over Buraimi because he would then face some opposition, whereas Sheikh Zayed had full control of the situation and was unlikely to be criticized for any action he took. Thus, any compromise on the part of Sheikh Zayed would not create political problems for him as it would do for the King.<sup>148</sup> In addition to direct contact between US officials and officials from Abu Dhabi, it may well be that the US also sought to influence Britain to persuade Sheikh Zayed to cooperate on the Buraimi issue.

In conclusion, the Buraimi dispute was a thorn in Saudi-Emirates relations until it was eventually solved in August 1974 (see map 7.3). However, throughout the negotiations Abu Dhabi officials blamed the British authorities for attempting to put pressure on them to give in to the Saudis. That was seen as a betrayal of the long period of friendship and protection that had existed between Britain and Abu Dhabi, and consequently the commercial relationship between them was impaired for a short time. However, the efforts of British officials over Buraimi were not in vain because the 1974 agreement was in fact based on suggestions similar to those put forward by Sir William Luce in 1971.<sup>149</sup>

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99. *Memorial of the Government of Saudi Arabia: Arbitration for the settlement of the Territorial Dispute between Muscat and Abū Dhabi on one side and Saudi Arabia on the other*, vol. 1, 31.7.1955. pp. 28-38. Further see: J.B. Kelly, *Eastern Arabia Frontiers*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1964); Idem., *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, op. cit.; Zahlan, *the Origins of the United*

*Arab Emirates*, op. cit.; Lenczowski, op. cit.; Shuckburgh, op. cit.; Al-Baharna, op. cit.; Heard-Bey, *From the Trucial States*, op. cit.; ‘Abdullāh, *Dawlat al Imārāt*, op. cit.; Henderson, *Eventual History*, op. cit.

100. See M. al-Hedaithy, "Modernization and Islam in Saudi Arabia: A Sociological Study of Public Morality Committees," (University of Durham, Ph.D. thesis, 1989).

101. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

102. *Fu'ād Line*: April 1935, was presented by Fu'ād Ḥamzah, Saudi Arabian Deputy Foreign Minister. He proposed a frontier between Abū Dhabi and the Kingdom that began at a point about 16 miles south of Khaur al-‘Udaid, ran southwards for about 10 miles, then east-south-east in a curve until it met longitude 56 degrees E at its junction with latitude 22 degrees N. From there it ran down longitude 56 degrees E to its junction with latitude 19 degrees N, then turned south-westwards until it reached longitude 52 degrees E at its junction with latitude 17 degrees N and followed latitude 17 degrees N.

*Riyadh Line*, 25 November, 1935 was handed to the Saudi Government in Riyadh by the British Minister, Sir Andrew Ryan. It proposed a frontier between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and also other British protected States. It assigned Khaūr al-‘Udaid to Abu Dhabi but gave certain wells to Saudi Arabia in the Rub‘ al-Khālī. It ran from Salwah south-eastwards through Ṣabkhat Maṭī, and eastwards to the junction of longitude 55 degrees E with latitude 22 degrees 30 N. From there it ran south down longitude 55 degrees E, to its junction with latitude 20 degrees N, then turned approximately south-westwards to run in a straight line to the junction of longitude 52 degree E, with

latitude 19 degrees N.

See: Zahlan, *The Origins of the UAE*, op. cit., pp. 130-137; and, Kelly, *Eastern Arabia Frontier*, op. cit., pp. 123-128.

103. Ibid., pp. 107-119.

104. FO 371/121234, outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office, (secret) 23.1.1956; FO 371/120525, American Views on Buraimi and Oman, a paper draft by D. Rose; and see Bernard Burrows, *Footnotes in the Sand: the Gulf in Transition 1953-1958*, (London: Michael Russell, 1990) p. 104.

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106. FO 371/91341 Proposed visit of Sir R. Makins to the Gulf. C.M.Rose, 13.9.1951; FO 371/121370, Sir Roger Makins' Report on the Persian Gulf. D.A.Greenhill, 20.3.1953; FO 371/98343; Summary of Sir Roger Makins's Report, in Annex 2 of B. Burrows, op. cit.

107. Ibid., p. 159.

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## CONCLUSION

In January 1968 the British Labour Government announced its decision to withdraw from the Gulf by the end of 1971. The withdrawal decision thus terminated Britain's special position in the Gulf that dated back to 1820, when the rulers of the area entered into an agreement with Britain that secured her routes to India. In 1892 the rulers signed other agreements allowing Britain to look after their defence and foreign policy. Thus British supremacy in the Gulf was closely bound up with British rule in India. However, even though India became independent in 1947 the British special position in the Gulf survived for more than another twenty years. The reasons for remaining in the Gulf after 1947 were economic. For the first time in its modern history the Gulf had become of prime importance not because of its geographical position but for what it contained: oil.

Therefore the security of the oil supply to Britain and indeed to western Europe, and the investment of the oil companies in the Gulf were of prime importance for the British Government. That probably motivated Britain to create some institutions such as the Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS) in 1951, the Trucial States Council in 1952, and the Trucial States Development Office (TSDO) in 1965. Furthermore, the oil concessions prompted the British authorities to define precisely the boundaries of the Sheikhdoms and to appoint British Political Agents instead of the Arab

agents. In addition after the 1961 Kuwait operation, Britain expanded its military bases in Bahrain, Sharjah and on Masīrah island off Oman.

But with the civil war in Yemen, rebellion in Aden, the Imamate war in Oman and the Dhofar revolution Britain could hardly keep the Gulf as isolated as before and nationalism was finding its way into the area. For example, in 1964 Sheikh Ṣaqr, ruler of Sharjah, welcomed an Arab League delegation and accepted their offer of an economic development programme for his emirate and the other non-oil producing emirates of the Trucial States. The British officials interpreted the Arab League involvement in the Emirates as a direct threat to their position and believed that this new development ought to be stopped. Accordingly, the second delegation in 1965 was not permitted to land in Sharjah and Sheikh Ṣaqr was deposed as a consequence.

Whereas Taryam and al-Mutawa have concentrated on the strength of the role of nationalism in influencing the British withdrawal, this thesis has revealed few manifestations of Arab nationalism in the Trucial States. However, the British officials who were influenced by their experience in the South Arabia Federation (Aden and the Protectorates) may have concluded that *prolonging* the British presence in the Gulf might lead to the same situation as had occurred in Aden. It could be argued that after its experience in the South Arabian Federation Britain sought to develop the Emirates in order to prepare for the eventual withdrawal of British troops. While unable to withdraw the British troops at that time Britain sought to create and introduce an environment that would make such a policy possible in the future.

The most important preparation was the economic development of the Trucial

States. In 1965 the Trucial States Development Office was established with the purpose of developing the non-oil producing northern emirates of Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah. The other two emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi were rich so they did not need financial help but they did need encouragement and guidance. In contrast to the ruler of Dubai, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Shakhbūt, rejected British advice and refused to cooperate with the Political Agent in developing his emirate and to share his oil wealth with other poorer emirates. The reason for his stance was probably influenced by the earlier British role over Ḥalūl island that was a subject of dispute with Qatar and not, as many writers have argued, Shakhbūt's eccentricity. In 1966 Sheikh Shakhbūt was deposed by Britain and his brother Sheikh Zayed replaced him. During the latter era Abu Dhabi and indeed the rest of the Trucial States witnessed a massive economic transformation.

Besides the economic development of the Trucial States, the British officials sought to prepare the area in various other fields for eventual independence; opening up the emirates to international contacts especially with the Arab world; encouraging the rulers to establish their own police and military forces; and retroceding some legal responsibilities to the rulers' courts. However, there were some problems associated with such policies, in particular illegal immigration and the creation of various defence forces which threatened internal stability, and these were not solved by Britain. They remained problems for the new federation.

Before the withdrawal Britain also encouraged the oil companies and other British firms working in the Emirates to rely on their own methods of survival instead of the British Government's influence and protection. The oil companies and the long established British firms in the Emirates welcomed this policy be-

cause they realized that they could build on the advantages that they had acquired over the years, for example their personal connection with the various ruling families. Furthermore, British companies such as the British Bank of the Middle East had realized that the withdrawal policy would encourage the rulers to allocate a considerable amount of funds in order to establish the new state and that these companies were in a good position to gain lucrative contracts.

Finally before the withdrawal Britain introduced certain important political arrangements and territorial settlements. The federation of the nine Arab emirates of the Gulf that included the seven Trucial States, together with Bahrain and Qatar was Britain's first priority, but when that aim became impossible in June 1971, the seven Trucial States were encouraged to form their smaller federation. Heard-Bey and other writers allege that Britain expected from the beginning that the federation of the nine would fail, but if that was the case then it is difficult to understand the continued efforts of the British officials to achieve a federation of the nine. Nevertheless it must be emphasized that certain British policies towards the region before the withdrawal period made it more difficult for Britain to introduce a new political structure to prepare for eventual independence. For example when it created a quasi-federal institution, the Trucial States Council in 1952, Bahrain and Qatar were not included. Indeed rivalry between Qatar and Bahrain continued throughout the federation discussions. In addition, for many years it was the British Government's policy to encourage only limited cooperation and links between the emirates, even when the rulers requested certain forms of federation. Therefore when the decision was made to withdraw, previous policies carried out by the British seriously undermined the British attempt to introduce a new stronger federal structure.

The British role in the establishment of the smaller federation of the seven was completely ignored by Taryam who emphasized its Arab roots. However, by comparing the Basic Law (which was drawn up by the Trucial States Council's legal adviser and thus was under British supervision) with the Emirates' provisional constitution one can appreciate a considerable British influence. Furthermore, after Bahrain and Qatar were allowed to seek unilateral independence Sir William Luce, the British adviser on the Gulf, warned the seven Trucial States that Britain was not prepared to recognize any emirate outside the federation. The only way for the small non-oil producing emirates to survive was through cooperation with the oil rich emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Sheikh Ṣaqr of Ras al-Khaimah did not accept the dominance of Dubai and Abu Dhabi and therefore refused to sign the provisional constitution on 18th July 1971 (Ras al-Khaimah did not join the Federation until February 1972). In December 1971 the formation of the United Arab Emirates was announced with a federal structure which left substantial powers in the hands of the individual emirates.

The territorial settlements of Bahrain, Ṭunbs, Abū Mūsā and Buraimi were part of Britain's aim to leave a stable Gulf after its withdrawal. Although the Shah of Iran's long-standing claim to Bahrain was eventually solved through the United Nations in May 1970, he then claimed the islands of Abū Mūsā and the Ṭunbs in the Gulf. This thesis argues that British officials played an important role in negotiations with the Shah over both of these issues. In these negotiations the Shah was permitted to take over the small islands in return for giving up Bahrain. After all, the British saw no vital economic interests in the small islands and Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah, the owners of the Ṭunbs and Abū Mūsā respectively, were poor emirates. They offered no significant opportunities for British firms so

provoking them was not a great loss. Furthermore, it seems that Britain was convinced by the Shah's argument that leaving these strategically important islands in the hands of weak emirates was dangerous for the security of oil shipments. He argued that the Gulf would be more secure if these islands were under Iranian control.

The Buraimi dispute was another territorial settlement that witnessed a complete change of policy by the British Government. In 1955 Britain carried out a military operation against the Saudi garrison in Buraimi to express her strong support for the ruler of Abu Dhabi in the dispute, but in 1970-71 Britain was pressing Abu Dhabi to compromise with Saudi Arabia. The reasons for Britain's change of heart were that Saudi Arabia was a much bigger country than Abu Dhabi and thus had more opportunities for British businessmen. At the same time Britain was seeking King Fayṣal's cooperation with Iran over Gulf security, so Britain did not want to provoke the King over the Buraimi issue. But since Sheikh Zayed refused to give in the Buraimi dispute was not solved until 1974.

The key finding that this research stresses is that the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971 was a policy that was carried out because Britain sought to establish a different basis of stability in the area. Through economic development of the emirates; transfer of legal and internal security to the Sheikhdoms; the ability of the oil companies and other British firms to establish their relations with the host emirates on a new basis; establishment of the Federation; settlements of most of the territorial disputes; and encouragement of Iranian and Saudi cooperation through the twin pillars system, Britain endeavoured to build a new era of stability in the Gulf which did not require the presence of the British troops.

## **Suggestions for future research**

This study has attempted to study the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971. But throughout the research we found that there are interesting subjects which need more concentrated work. In addition to general research on the British policy toward the area post withdrawal, we suggest the following topics for further study.

### **1. The Oil Companies in the Emirates:**

The history and role of the oil companies working in the Emirates such as ADMA, ADPC and Dubai Petroleum Company offers a number of interesting aspects. For example in the other oil-producing countries the oil companies had to fight to save their concessions, but in Abu Dhabi the oil companies willingly gave up part of their concessions and invited Sheikh Shaḫhbūt to accept the 50-50 profit sharing arrangements. This probably shows that the relations between the oil companies and the Emirates were significantly different from those in other Middle Eastern countries.

### **2. The British Companies in the Emirates**

In the specific case of the British companies working in the Emirates apart from the oil companies, more research is required into the effect of the withdrawal on these companies. Also desirable is a study of the British companies that were established in the Emirates before 1971 such as Costain and the British Bank of the Middle East, and their position after the withdrawal. This study covered a relatively short period of time and future research is needed to see how the withdrawal affected these companies in the long term and whether they were capable of continuing to dominate the market.



### **3. The Political Agents' role**

The British Political Agents, Political Residents, military advisers and other British personalities were closely involved in the affairs of the Emirates. Their role was an importance and a study is urgently needed based on interviews with all the available former British officials before they pass away or their memories grow dim. Indeed recording their wide experience could provide much valuable knowledge for future historians of the area.

### **4. The Trucial States Development Office**

This subject is unavoidable for anyone making a study of the economic development of the Emirates. But so far there is no study that adequately addresses this issue. A synthesis of the documents that are becoming available through the Public Records Office in London and through the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, together with interviews with the handful of former Arab and British employees could form the basis for useful research.

### **5. T.O.S.**

We should point out that the Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS) was the first organised institution that covered the whole Emirates, although as far as one can tell there is no study of this distinguished military establishment. A study that covers its role since it was established in 1951 until it became part of the Emirates defence force in 1971 would have a wider readership, well beyond academic circles. However, the location of the TOS documents is uncertain with the exception of those in the Public Records Office. Nevertheless, an important source of information for such a study could be interviews with the former British and Arab officers who served in the TOS.

## **6. The role of the Arab advisers**

In the 1960s a substantial number of Arab advisers were employed by various rulers. The Arab advisers played an important role in shaping the Emirates' policies and in establishing various institutions. Thus to study their role, who appointed them and how far they influenced the Emirates would be an interesting and important subject. Documentary sources are limited but it was found that some of them accumulated private files of letters and documents which remain in their possession. Identifying these documents and interviewing those Arab advisers who are still alive could enrich our knowledge and expand our understanding of important aspects of the political life of the Emirates.

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