

THE DHOFAR WAR 1965 – 1975

by

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Abstract

This project examines the nature of UK relations with the Omani Sultans, Sultan Said bin Taimur (1932-1970) and his son, Sultan Qaboos (1970-present), in the context of the Dhofar War (1965-1975). The internal and external circumstances of this conflict give valuable insights into Omani independence and sovereignty, thereby addressing the paucity of Omani writing on this conflict (e.g. Al Hamdani, 2010, Al Amri, 2012, Ja'boub, 2010; Muqaibl, 2002).

This study utilises a qualitative descriptive analytical methodology to study documents from British, American, Egyptian, and Omani sources, including archival texts from government officials and the revolutionaries. Interviews were also conducted with key military and civilian figures in the Sultanate of Oman and Britain.

Examination of the actions undertaken by Sultan Said and Sultan Qaboos in the war highlights a dichotomy between the need to ensure compatibility with British politics at that time and the desire of the Omani leaders to maintain independence in the face of British imperialism. Despite the fact the profound differences between the policies of both Sultans, this study shows that both governments had a developing and negotiable autonomy, rather than existing as a direct colony or an informal colony (see Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Fadel, 1995, p. 212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Nageeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332). Importantly, the relationship with the British is shown to have been a less important factor in the events and should therefore not be over-stated as informal imperialism. The main political values in the conflict were: (1) the support of tribal leaders; (2) the role of Islam and communism; (3) the unity of the leadership; and (4) the relations between the Sultans and other Gulf leaders. Overall, the relationship between the Omani rulers and the British was one of friendship, cooperation, and exchange of interests, which the Sultans used to maintain the independent needs of Oman.

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Abbreviations

ANM	Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement
DCA	Dhofar Charitable Association
DLF	Dhofar Liberation Front
DSO	Dhofar Soldiers' Organisation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FR	Former Reference
GCC	Gulf Countries Council (contains Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait)
HC	Hamrin Conference
HCD	Hamrin Conference Decisions
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
OMCI	Oman Ministry of Commerce and Industries
OME	Oman Ministry of Education
OMH	Oman Ministry of Health
OMR	Omani Riyal (equivalent to £1.8 GBP)
MoD	Ministry of Defence
PDRY	Democratic Republic of Yemen
PFLO	Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman
PFLOAG	Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf
PLA	Popular Liberation Army
RA	Requested anonymity
SAF	Sultan of Oman Armed Forces
SOAF	Sultan of Oman Air Force

UAE	United Arab Emirates
UKNA	United Kingdom National Archives

Glossary of Terms

Bin	The son of...
Front	Dhofar revolution
Imam	A religious leader who governed the interior of Oman until 1957
Imamate	The democratically inspired religious system of governing Oman
Jabel	Mountain
Sayyid	A member of the Omani ruling family similar to a prince (rather than a descendant of the Prophet, as is the case in some Arab countries, such as Morocco)
Sheikh	Tribal leader
Wadi	Valley
Wali	District governor

Dhofar War 1965 – 1975

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction

The Importance of the Study

This study provides a discussion of one of the most important political and military events in Oman during the twentieth century. The Dhofar War is named after the southern region of the Sultanate of Oman in which it took place. It lasted for ten years (1965-1975) and is significant for a number of reasons, including the fact that it constitutes an important example of British diplomatic policy with regard to Oman and the nature of UK relations with the Omani Sultans: Sultan Said bin Taimur and his son, Sultan Qaboos. The reign of Sultan Said ended in 1970, during the Dhofar War, and he was succeeded by Qaboos. In many ways, the Dhofar War precipitated this important event. In fact, the war united Oman as never before, with profound ramifications for the internal and external policies of the nation, as will be explored in this thesis.

Although there were good reasons for ending the Dhofar conflict, quickly, regional and international intervention resulted in it becoming the Arab world's longest lasting war, with the fighting continuing for more than a decade. The rebels in Dhofar began their opposition to the policies of Sultan Said from 1965, but due to the official policy of not investigating the past, there is a paucity of Omani writing on this conflict, except for general studies by a handful of scholars (e.g. Al Hamdani, 2010; Al Amri, 2012; Ja'boub, 2010; Muqaibl, 2002). Al Hamdani (2010) focus on the policy that Sultan Qaboos used to win the hearts and minds of the revolutionaries, while Al Amri (2012) exclusively narrated the events of the war. In contrast, Ja'boub (2010) compared the interests of the revolutionaries and the sultans from an educational perspective, with particular focus on the development of the educational process in the government and rebel areas of Dhofar, especially after the adoption of the communist ideology by the rebels, as this was accompanied by a major development in the curriculum and methods of education. Muqaibl (2002) covered the Dhofar War in one chapter of his book, with his discussion concentrating on the role played by Sultan Qaboos in uniting Oman.

The consequence of this is that many people, including most Omanis, are unaware of the events, despite many of those who witnessed the rebellion still being alive. The majority of the books about the conflict were either written by Britons (e.g. Buttenshaw 2010; Dunsire, 2011; Fiennes, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Halliday, 2008; Jeapes, 1996; Jessop, 1985; Wilkinson, 2006) or by non-Omani scholars (e.g. Al Rayes, 2002; Fadel, 1995; Haglawi, 2003; Kechichian, 2013; Medhi, 1995; Takriti, 2013; Trabulsy, 2004). As a consequence of these studies being written by non-Omani, there is very little research that provides local perspectives of the events. The perception of

Omani scholars with regards to the Dhofar War is typically that Britain acted as if Oman was under its protection. However, the reality is otherwise, at least from a legal perspective, with Omani rulers refusing British control in different ways and proportions, according to the circumstances. Overall, however the Dhofar War is given little attention in Oman for several reasons. At the time, it was a largely secret war (Fiennes, 1974, p. 15; Halliday, 2008; Jeapes, 1996, p. 11; Ordeman, 2016, p. 2.). As noted above, there is also a government policy of avoiding discussion of tumultuous past events (Sultan Qaboos' Speech, 1990, p. 16). As a consequence of this, there is a serious shortage of local writing about this important period of time, despite the profound impact that it has had on the history and policy of the Sultanate of Oman.

This research will constitute an important addition to the literature on a significant period in Middle Eastern history, enriching understanding of not only the Sultanate of Oman, but also the surrounding area. It is hoped that studying Britain's diplomatic policy towards the Dhofar conflict, the pursuit of its own national interests during the Cold War period, and the nature of the relationship between the Omani Sultans and the British government, will provide valuable insights into this significant decade in the history of the region, into British attitudes towards the Dhofar War, and especially into the philosophy that underpins the current internal and international policies of the Sultanate. Therefore, this thesis will study the Dhofar War from a local perspective within the context of British diplomacy in an attempt to address the gap in historical understanding of the relations between Britain and Oman.

The analysis in this chapter is organised into the following sections. First the chapter delineates the objectives of the research and defines its viewpoint in terms of the relationship between British diplomacy and Oman, as well as the corresponding Omani interaction with this diplomacy. As part of this overview, the main sources and methods utilised in this study are outlined. Secondly, this is followed by a background chronology within which to locate and understand the Dhofar War in internal Omani terms. Thirdly, in order to locate the arguments and interpretation of the present study, an investigation is then provided into the secondary literature, with particular reference to the various ways in which Omani history has been classified by both Arab and western historians. Finally, this chapter discusses the background and historiographical relationship between Britain and Oman during the Dhofar War, with the aim of understanding why British diplomacy sought a compromise with the Sultans in pursuit of its own national interests. Meanwhile, the Sultans sought to preserve their national sovereignty and independence, attempting

to unite and secure the stability of Oman from internal and external threats in an attempt to provide developing and negotiable autonomy for the country.

1.1: Objectives of the Study

On the one hand, this study examines the Dhofar War in relation to British diplomatic policy. Particular attention is given to its political interactions with the Sultanate during that period. The involvement of Britain in the internal affairs of Oman will be studied in conjunction with the reasons for British diplomacy following a policy of war and the outcomes of that approach. An exploration will also be provided of the role played by British diplomacy in the overthrow of Sultan Said during the war, which allowed for a new era in the Omani-British relations upon the succession of his son, Sultan Qaboos. On the other hand, an investigation will be conducted into the strategies utilised by Oman in this area to make decisions independently of Britain. The study will highlight the role of Sultan Said and Sultan Qaboos in the war, with particular focus on how that role was compatible with British politics and the desire of the Omani leaders to maintain independence in the face of threatened British imperialism. The plan of Sultan Qaboos to defeat the rebellion will be discussed in conjunction with the internal instability of Oman, his success in engaging support from Britain and the effect that this had on the course of the war, as well as on his plan to reunite the country after the war. The study will prove that the Omani government had a developing and negotiable autonomy, rather than existing as a direct colony or an informal colony (See Owtram, 2004, p. 122).

In contrast to much of the current literature, this thesis will highlight the Omanis perspective on British diplomacy in the Dhofar War, namely that Britain was principally or exclusively focused on its own interests, especially its economic concerns. In other words, Britain sought to obtain strategic and economic benefits from its relationship with Oman. Before the exploitation of oil, Oman was important to Britain because of its geographical location, which enabled the sea route to India to be secured. With the discovery of oil and the important role played by British companies in capitalising upon it, Oman became economically more important for Britain. This raises the question of why Oman collaborated with British control, suggesting that the Sultanate managed to preserve Oman's unity through the use of British support. Indeed, British military aid played an important role in resolving the war in favour of the Omani government, ensuring national unity and

preventing the fall of the country into the hands of the communist rebels. The Omani perspective is that while British diplomacy in Oman was based on perpetuating its own national interests, this also interest was for the benefit of Oman because of required the protection of the country against both external and internal threats. Hence, Omani rulers traditionally benefited from good relations with Britain, as it preserved its unity and stability, ultimately keeping them in power. Although Britain gained more from the relationship, at least in economic terms, Oman retained its independence and was not a colony. It is also crucial to understand that Oman used Britain to create positive conditions for the nation and that the Sultans were able to use their relationship with Britain to their advantage. In this sense, this study will be conducted on the premise that neither side benefited exclusively from the relationship. The decade of the Dhofar War (1965-1975) has a special importance and thus respect in the contemporary history of Oman. Particular focus will be given to the year 1970, during which Sultan Said was overthrown by his son, Sultan Qaboos. Sultan Qaboos radically changed the course of war, which had important ramifications for British diplomacy during this period. During these years, Oman also witnessed notable economic, social and political developments, the most important of which was the transition to an oil-based economy, which profoundly affected the construction of the modern nation of Oman. The unity that prevails in modern Oman can arguably be attributed to the conflicts and separation movements witnessed during those years.

The thesis is principally therefore concerned with the overall argument that the Omani government had more autonomy from the British government than is normally conceded by the literature in this field. In effect, this thesis argues that Oman did not operate under direct colonialism or informal colonialism, instead functioning with developing and negotiable autonomy. There were five distinguishing 'local' values of political relations in Oman during the Dhofar War, in addition to which the relationship with the British was not the most important. These main political values were: (1) the relationships with tribal leaders and the importance of gaining their support in the conflict; (2) the role of Islam and communism; (3) the unity of the leadership on the side of the state and rebels; (4) the relations between the Sultans, the rebels and the other countries in the region; and regional countries; as well as (5) the diplomatic and military relations between Oman and Britain. It is argued that these 'local' values were as and at times more important in determining Oman's autonomy than the predominant focus in the secondary literature on British-Omani relations.

1.2: Methodology

This study utilises a descriptive analytical methodology (qualitative research) to study documents from the British National Archives, a selection of relevant American documents, and important Omani documents of the policies led by the revolutionaries, especially those related to the decisions of their conferences and meetings. The analysis also includes the most important speeches of Sultan Said and Sultan Qaboos, which have been selected based on their relevance to the policy of the new government led by Sultan Qaboos. This documentary analysis will be supplemented with interviews with key military and civilian figures in the Sultanate of Oman and Britain. Relevant Articles, magazines and newspaper have also been accessed in Egyptian libraries and archives. Photographs and maps have been taken from the following archives in Oman: the archives of the HE Minister responsible for Defence Affairs, the Chief of the Sultan Armed Force, the Royal Army of Oman archives, the Royal Air Force archives, the National Survey Authority (NSA), Ministry of Media archives, Oman, Oman oil company library, and the National Records and Archives Authority.

Documents Selection: A plan of action was formulated to enable selection of the most appropriate documents. The sources focused on the nature of the relationship between the sultans of Oman and the British government, looking at how the sultans received the wishes and aspirations of the British side regarding Oman, and how British diplomats viewed the Omani sultans. It was also important to consider how the sultans of Oman viewed the British diplomats and the nature of British diplomacy towards Oman in terms of its priorities and areas of focus. In addition, special attention was given to the documents which focused on any value, whether local, regional or international, that affected the course of the war.

Interviews: the researcher focused on a very important topic, namely the tribal loyalties of the local inhabitants of Dhofar. As explained in section 1.2, the geography of the Dhofar region is divided into three main categories: the plains, the mountains and the desert, which separates the region from the rest of Oman. Each of these regions is inhabited by competing tribes. A resident of the desert will tend to highlight what was done or said by the elders of the desert tribe. This is also the case with the other tribes. By interviewing a mixture of the tribes of the three regions, it was possible to ensure that accurate data was extracted through interviews, thus overcoming the subject of tribal loyalties. Cross correlation of different types of sources made this data more reliable.

1.3: The Internal Background to the Dhofar War

The Arabs constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of Oman, although there are several other important racial groups: the Baluchi, the Persians, the Africans, the Hindus and the Persians (Philips, 2012, p. 11). These numbers are believed to have risen in response to Oman's openness to the outside world, which is reflected in the government's complacency towards the naturalisation of non-Omanis, as well as non-Ibadi. Most of the Arabs in northern Oman reject the Ibadi doctrine, except those who migrated after the establishment of the first, second and third Saudi state. Some Sunni Arabs migrated to northern Oman from Saudi Arabia as a result of the persecution from Wahhabism and were thus able to retain their faith, although the Wahhabi invaded some parts of Oman in response. Most of the Dhofar population forms part of a Sunni sect. They were adherents of the Ibadi doctrine until they changed their beliefs in the eleventh century (Interview, Al Shaibani, 24th January 2017).

Geographical factors, such as location, environment, terrain, and climate, have long played a significant role in the shaping of historical events. The important location of Oman, the diversity of terrain, its long coast, and the abundance of its natural resources are all factors that have ensured its strategic importance across the millennia. Administratively, the country comprises eight governorates, one of which is the governorate of Dhofar, which borders Yemen in the west and Saudi Arabia to the north and northwest. The administrative capital of the region is Salalah, which is the largest of the governorate's nine cities and is situated 1000 kilometres away from the capital Muscat (see figure1).



Fig. 1: Map showing Oman and Dhofar (Source: National Survey, NSA OM 154)

There are three types of climates in Oman: the prevailing desert climate of the centre; the Mediterranean region climate of the northern mountains. This climate occurs because of the rise of the green mountains up to 10,000 feet above sea level, resulting in weather and native flora that resembles the countries of the Mediterranean region. The climate can become quite cool throughout the year, with temperatures falling below 5 ° C below zero in winter and during the seasonal rain climate of the Dhofar region. From June to September, the Jabal receives moisture-laden monsoon winds and is shrouded in cloud, leaving it green and lush for at least part of the year. The Dhofar

rebels took advantage of this season and the heavy forests in their guerrilla operations against the Sultan's forces. The nature of the terrain and the changing climate of Dhofar region, especially its fog and rain, made the task facing the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and their allies considerably more difficult and were key factors in prolonging the war.

A comprehensive understanding of the Dhofar War also requires knowledge of the local geography. Dhofar is also bordered by Yemen on the west and extends eastward for about 300 kilometres. South Yemen expelled the British in 1967 and became the most important supporter of the rebels, who were inspired to believe that nationalist revolutions were able to overthrow colonial rulers. The province of Dhofar also borders Saudi Arabia in the northwest. These shared borders enabled Saudi support for the rebels at the beginning of the conflict. Importantly, because Dhofar also overlooks the Indian Ocean, the conflict attracted international and regional powers. The result was that although the conflict started as a rebellion against poverty and illness, default and abuse of power, and evolved into a proxy war between the ideologies of capitalism and communism in the wider Cold War conflict.

The terrain of Dhofar can be divided into three different regions. The desert area in the north and constitutes two-thirds of Dhofar, where oil and natural gas fields are found. It is called the Najed area, which means 'high place'. The second is the Dhofar Mountain Chain in the south of the governorate. These mountains were the most important war zones. The third region is a plain called the Jarbeeb, which is situated to the south of this mountainous range. The capital of Salalah is located on the Jarbeeb and was the residence of Sultan Said during the war. During the majority of the conflict, this plain was controlled by the Sultan of Oman Armed Forces (SAF), while the mountains were held by the rebels.

Oman has historically been ruled by an Imamate. The relationship between the Imamate and the Sultans' government, supported by the British, is an important factor in the complexity of the Dhofar War. The Imamate is a very old notion in Oman and has been applied for several centuries. The Imamate is an old political system in Oman, dating back to the hostility of the Sahaba in 657. After the Islamic state turned from democracy to dictatorship at the end of the rule of the Khlifas, which only lasted for 29 years, the Umayyads assumed the rule of the Islamic state and made it hereditary (Philips, pp. 25-26). In response, a group of Muslims at that time decided to follow the approach of the Khlifas, who were later known as the Ibadis, and migrated to Oman in response to the restrictions placed on them by the Umayyads rulers. Having applied the teachings of the Khlifas

for centuries in Oman, some powers appeared and assumed power, calling themselves the sultans. One of these groups was the Al Busaid dynasty, who rule Oman until today. Although the leaders of the Imamate and the Sultans of Al Busaid owe the Ibadi doctrine, there is an ancient disagreement between the groups due to the Ibadi imams insisting on the election of the ruler, whether he be from the family of Bousaid or any other family. In contrast, the regime of the Ba'thid sultans is hereditary and therefore views the imamate system as a threat to their rule. It is therefore important to note that the difference between these powerful groups is political in terms of the system of government, not religious. Al Busaid family, which has ruled Oman for 270 years, making it the oldest ruling family in the Arab World. However, several rebellions have threatened the position of the Al Busaid family. British support of the Sultans has been an important factor in the continuation of their rule despite the threat of local tribes, which can be largely attributed to the imposition of high taxation and, under British pressure, an embargo on tribal trading in arms. Usually, the tribes of Oman used an intellectual traditional style deeply rooted in the Ibadism, which is a democratic form for electing an Imam. This created a conflict between the democratic selection approach of the Imamate and the inherited rule of the sultans, leading to repeated attempts to overthrow the rule of the rulers and end associated foreign interference. For example, the removal of Sultan Salim bin Thuwaini (1865-68) by Imam Azzan bin Qais Al Busaidi (1868-71) in 1865. The Dhofar War and the rebellion of the Imamate, later known as the Al Jabal Al Akhdhar War, are however the most important conflicts since 1900. The Imamate rebellion began in 1913 in the areas surrounding the Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, after the election of an Imam. In 1920, the Treaty of Seeb was signed between the Imam of Oman (1913-1919) and Sultan Timor (1913-1932), the father of Sultan Said (1932-1970). In effect, this agreement was considered as consent to the independence of the Imamate of Oman from the Sultan of Muscat. However, after 1939, British oil companies received concessions from Sultan Said for oil exploration. When they failed to discover commercial quantities of oil in the lands of the Sultan, they moved towards the areas under the influence of the Imamate. The Imam refused to allow these companies exploration rights, which resulted in the Sultan declaring war in 1957, with the support of the British and the oil companies (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 28; Halliday, 2008, p. 344; Kechichian, 2013, p. 251). After the death of Imam Muhammad Al Khalili (1920-1954), Imam Ghaleb bin Ali Al Hinai (1954-1957) was elected in 1954. Sultan Said had been waiting for the death of Imam Muhammad, who had exercised a strong influence over the imamate areas, to begin an oil exploration campaign into the areas under these areas, supported by a military campaign and in cooperation with some tribal leaders that he had bribed, to occupy these areas of

the Imamate. After several armed clashes between the parties and the arrest of many collaborators, Sultan Said entered Nizwa, the capital of the Imam. In response, Saudi Arabia and Egypt provided support to the Imam in the form of weapons that were smuggled through the mountains, resulting in Imam announcing the revolution. The Sultan's forces regained influence from the imamate in 1957, when Sultan Said managed to persuade the Royal Air Force to bomb the Imam's sites in Jabal Al Akhdar for two years, until the leaders of the Imamate fled into exile in Saudi Arabia in 1959 (Philips, 2012, pp. 440-464).

After a two year guerrilla-style war in the Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, fought with the participation of the British Army and Royal Air Force, the Imam fled Oman and led the rebellion from Saudi Arabia, with the financial and political support of the Saudi Kingdom. The Imam remained politically active in the international arena until the rise of Sultan Qaboos in 1970. Saudi Arabia tried to take advantage of the presence of the Imam in its territory, coordinating with the Imam and the leaders of the Dhofar rebellion to obtain political gains by opposing their common enemy, Sultan Said with the support of British troops. As this thesis will demonstrate, the success of the British against the forces of the Imam was not only good for Britain, as it resulted in the country being opened up for oil exploration by British companies, but was also good for Sultan Said, because it united Oman and ensured great wealth from oil revenues.

When Yemen was strong, Dhofar came under its sway, but when the rulers in Oman were strong, the area was incorporated into Oman. At other times, when the Dhofar region was governed by powerful rulers, it was independent. For example, Dhofar became part of Oman after 1879, during the reign of Sultan Turki (1871-1888), the great-grandfather of Sultan Said, who took the region after a civil war between the mountain tribes and plains tribes. The latter group, who were the weaker party at the time, sought the intervention of the Sultan of Muscat. In 1895, during the rule of Sultan Faisal (1888-1913) (the grandfather of Sultan Said), the local tribes revolted and imposed their control over the region. However, the Sultan's forces eventually re-established control with the help of the British military (Al Taei, 2008, pp. 274-275). Since taking power in 1932, Sultan Said bin Taimur was more strongly associated with Dhofar than his ancestors. He turned the city of Salalah into a summer capital and strengthened his association with the region by marrying into one of the powerful Dhofari tribes. This wife is the mother of Sultan Qaboos, the current Sultan of Oman. Historically, Dhofar fluctuated between Yemen, Omani and independent control.

The rebellions of 1879 and 1895 were limited tribal conflicts that resulted from accidental events. As a consequence they lacked material and organisational capabilities, as well as external support. On some occasions, the sultans applied the policy of divide and rule to the tribes of the plain and the mountain, whereas at other times they attempted to balance power among those tribes (Muqaibl, 2002, p. 235). British support enabled Sultans Turki and Faisal to end these conflicts, thus further indebting them to Britain. In contrast, the rebellion that led to the Dhofar War (1965-1975), the subject of this study, united the majority of the people of Dhofar against the rule of the Sultan Said, making it a different kind of phenomenon.

The roots of the rebellion that sought to free Dhofar from the rule of the Sultans in Muscat can be traced to 1962, when Musalim bin Nafal founded what was later to become the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF), with Saudi and Iraqi support. Initially, because of the harsh policies of the Sultan towards them, the movement focused on armed struggle to secure independence from Oman for the people of the Dhofar Region, encapsulated in the slogan, “Dhofar for Dhofari people”. This objective was to be achieved through the provision of money, weapons, and training for the fighters (Haglawi, 2003, pp. 308-309). However, after their military and political successes during the subsequent years, the leaders of the rebellion committed to wider aims of expelling British troops, toppling ruling families in the Gulf, and transforming Oman into a socialist democratic society.

This Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) began as the Dhofar Charity Association, which was organised to engender financial support from Omani students studying in the other Gulf countries and eventually to encourage them to fight for the revolution. This group developed into the Dhofar Soldiers Organisation, and finally, through the local organisations of the Arab National Movement, into the Dhofar Liberation Front. The activities of the DLF escalated between 1965 and 1968 due to continued aid from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and

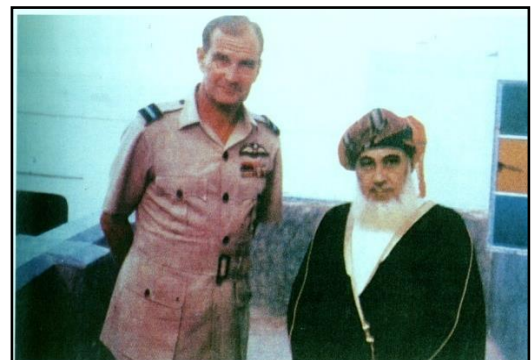


Fig. 2: Mid-1960s, Sultan Said meeting a visiting RAF officer at Salalah in Dhofar (Source: Royal Army of Oman Archives, Sultan Said 034)

Egypt. Egyptian political, military and moral support was particularly valuable to the rebellion, with President Jamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, still strong after his Suez crisis victory, encouraging Arab nationalist movements to eradicate British influence throughout the region (Haglawi, 2003, pp. 307-309). Support also began from the People’s Republic of China as it sought to gain a foothold in the

region, which had been largely monopolised by the west and was witnessing an economic boom associated with its oil revenues. China promoted an anti-western and anti-capitalist policy by backing the rebels and spreading its own brand of communist ideology into the region (Al Amri, 2012, p. 105).

Another important ally for the rebels came from South Yemen, which had gained independence from the British in 1967, following generous aid provided by the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria). Once the Communists came to power, the state declared itself to be the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), providing moral, military and economic support to the rebels in Dhofar (Dunsire, 2011, p. 1). It can be argued that the success of the nationalists in ousting the British from Aden and the Protectorate of South Yemen encouraged the leaders of the Dhofar Liberation Front to increase their efforts to drive the Omanis out of Dhofar. However, communist ideology gained prominence, with the rebel leaders subscribing closely to a Maoist interpretation of Marxist theory (Jessop, 1985, pp. 50,271). They assumed that this ideology clarified the issues of the national and social struggle in the colonised world. However, in the struggle to liberate Dhofar, the nationalists discovered that they had unleashed a much larger force than they had intended.

By 1970, in response to fears that his policies would result in the loss of Dhofar and then the whole country, a coup was executed against Sultan Said by Omanis with the full coordination, support and planning of the British who were working in the Sultan's forces (see figure 3) (Al Busaidi, 1965, pp. 3-5). The harsh policies of the Sultan were even exercised against members of his own family, particularly after an unsuccessful assassination attempt by soldiers sympathetic to the rebel cause in Dhofar in 1966. This eventually resulted in the Sultan retiring to his palace in Salalah (Fadel, 1995, p. 380). Some Arab historians consider the coup to be part of Britain's arrangement to ensure their "strategic, economic and security" interests before leaving the regions east of Suez in 1971 (Dhiab, 1984, p. 109). Al Takriti claims that Britain supported the coup because they felt threatened by a dictatorial ruler (2013, p. 140), while Agwani (1978, p. 71) adds that Britain intended to support attempts to replace the ruling system in response to these dangerous developments. Other historians have argued that the coup primarily arose from



Fig. 3: July 1970, Sultan Qaboos meets the Sultan Armed Forces officers at Muscat after the coup (Source: Royal Army of Oman Archives, RAO, Sultan Qaboos 5470)

the desires of an elite group of Omanis, rather than the British, led by Sultan Qaboos with the support of his uncle Tariq (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 153-152; Bahbahani, 1984, p. 155; Jeapes, 1996, p. 27; Muqaibl, 2002, p.285). Moreover, the prevailing Arab national situation in the region at that time would not allow the continuation of any traditional government, such as the government of Sultan Said who had been opposing scio-economic change (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 462). The palace coup of 1970 was clearly the most prominent internal political fallout of the Dhofar War. It has been argued that this was a watershed event that radically altered Oman and was instrumental in the country moving from tradition to modernity (Rabi, 2011, p. 76).

Until the mid-1970s, the rebels enjoyed military superiority. However, following the British strategy supporting the removal of recalcitrant leaders, the new Sultan Qaboos quickly introduced reformist policies that split the ranks of the rebels. As a result, he received extensive support from a large number of countries, especially those who perceived that a successful rebellion might spread to other Gulf Arab states, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the balance of power in the form of military, political and economic factors was altered in favour of the new Sultan. Following the failures suffered by the rebellion in combat and politics in the 1970s, rebel leaders reduced their aspirations from “the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf” to only “the Liberation of Oman”, renaming the movement to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) in 1974.

It is also important to understand that anti-western countries, such as Egypt, played a major role in supporting the rebels because their policy was to support those working to remove western intervention, especially that of Britain. This approach increased following the failure of the tripartite aggression (Britain, Israel, and France) against Egypt after President Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956. Its failure gave Arab people more confidence that colonialism could be defeated. Sultan Said was hostile to Egypt under the leadership of Abdel Nasser because of their Arab nationalist approach against hereditary rulers, which he considered to be an Egyptian intervention in the affairs of other independent states, most importantly his own regime. Nevertheless, he did not have a certain official position because of its isolation from international affairs (interview, Sheikh Ahmed Al Falahi, 31st March 2018). Taking a historical overview of Oman, it is clear that British policy in Oman was based on supporting the Sultans of Muscat against internal revolution. Several revolutions broke out in northern Oman, but these were doomed to failure because of the financial, military and political support that was provided to the

Sultans by the British in return for their commitment to treaties that served and protected the interests of Britain. In the rule of the relatively stable Al Busaidi sultans, the British government secured a guarantee not to stand against their interests in the region, while the Omani rulers found a strong ally that provided a means with which to improve the unity and stability of their country.

1.4: The concept of informal and formal imperialism

This idea was first advanced by Robinson and Gallagher in their article ‘The Imperialism of Free Trade’ (1953) (*Economic History Review*, 1953, pp. 1–15), which looks at formal and informal empires. The key features of an ‘informal empire’ as a classification or ideal type can be understood as follows (Osterhammel, 1986):

in a situation of power differentials, a strong country (S) possesses an effective veto over a weaker country (W) whilst avoiding direct rule. The stronger a country has the high capacity to impose basic guidelines on the foreign policy of the weaker country. S maintains a substantial military presence in W and brings influence to bear through aid and advisers. In the economic and financial realm W is entrenched in those sectors of the economy of S which shows above average rates of growth. W is a net recipient of capital and investment. The hold of S over W is aided by the collaboration of indigenous rulers and ‘comprador’ groups (Outram, pp. 11-20).

The general argument is that Britain enjoyed informal political influence over those countries that were economically dependent upon the United Kingdom. Its formal empire was British territory, over which it exercised full sovereignty, namely its colonies. In contrast, Britain’s informal empire consisted of foreign territories over which the UK had partial sovereignty through treaties: namely, “protectorates, condominiums, mandates, and protected states” (Jenks, 1919, pp. 87–92). According to this definition, Britain’s formal empire in the Middle East included the colonies of Malta, Cyprus, and Aden, while its informal empire was much larger, consisting of the Aden Protectorate, some Arab Gulf states, British-protected Egypt (1914–36), the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, British Somaliland, and the mandates of Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and Palestine as well as certain parts of Persia (Malta, Cyprus, and Aden, while its informal empire was much larger, consisting of the Aden Protectorate, some Arab Gulf states, British-protected Egypt (1914–36), the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, British Somaliland, and the mandates of Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and Palestine as well as certain parts of Onley, 2005, p. 36-37). Aside from their constitutional status, these states were as integrated into the British imperial system as protected states, with most aspects of their state infrastructures—from their militaries and civil services to their postal offices and schools—being organised and operated

along British lines (Elliot, 1996, PP. 176-180). Whether or not regions were regarded as informal parts of the Empire and or within the sphere of imperial influence depended only on the presence of rival imperial influence (Onley, 2005, pp. 36-37). The primary aim of the informal British Empire in the Gulf was to protect British India and its trade and communication routes. Britain obtained the collaboration of local rulers in the pacification of the Gulf was in return for treaties of maritime protection. Later, these parties would exclude foreign influences that threatened British India. Britain entered into treaties with the rulers and tribal leaders of the Aden Protectorate, in order to protect its important base at Aden and thereby ensure the protection of British India (ibid, p.42). The concept of informal imperialism in different forms has therefore been an important model in the secondary literature for describing the relationship between Britain and Oman as the following section 1.5 reveals.

1.5: Secondary literature review: Providing an Omani Perspective

The overwhelming majority of the literature on the Dhofar War is based on the wartime diaries of soldiers. Therefore, texts are primarily focused on the military angle, such as the efficiency of the weapons or the quantity of soldiers. Although such personal testimonies are important, there has been neglect of civilians and other groups, such as the opinions of locals, as well as a lack of focus upon political and security issues. Furthermore, the most of the original writings on the Dhofar War were from British authors (e.g. Buttenshaw 2010; Dunsire, 2011; Fiennes, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Halliday, 2008; Jeapes, 1996; Jessop, 1985; Wilkinson, 2006), meaning that the Omani voice in particular and Arab view in general is downplayed. This relates to what was, in many ways, a secret war, which today would be impossible to conduct. Jeapes (1996, p.11) and Medhi (1995, p. 54) look at the war from this military approach and explain the military tactics and weapons used, as well as the operational names of the attacks launched by the Sultan's Forces against the rebels. Other texts have extensively highlighted the tactical aspects of the conflict, in addition to other military operations, ambushes, loss of lives, destruction of property, and war equipment (Buttenshaw, 2010; Dunsire, 2011; Fiennes, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Ladwig, 2008; Peterson, 2007).

In addition to the aforementioned military perspectives, there is a rich literature of a regional and international dimension. Al Amri (2012) discusses the Dhofar war in its broader international dimensions through analysis of developments in the Arab World, China and the Soviet Union's

support for the rebels. Trabulsy (2004) also takes a broader regional perspective, arguing that the participating world powers supported opposing sides for their own national interests. Haglawi (2003) focuses on the impact of the involvement of aid from Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt. He is most interested in the motivations of these states and their agendas for encouraging nationalist movements, such as South Yemen and Algeria. The military and diplomatic support that Egypt sent to the revolutionaries during the early years of the revolution also had a significant impact on the growing military and tactical superiority of the rebels.

Some texts focus on local aspects which led to the Dhofar War. Ghobash (1997) emphasises the role of Ibadism as an example of original democracy, discussing this in the context of Sultan Said's heavy handed approach with his people which led to the outbreak of the Dhofar War. Landen (1983, pp. 480-481) has also focused on the influence of Ibadism in the formation of Imamate rule in Oman and the harsh approach of Sultan Said in dealing with his people, which likely exacerbated the situation. This local approach offers valuable insights into the cultural aspect of events and relations in the region. Looking at the causes of the war, Kechichian (2013, pp. 255-256) argues that the isolation of Oman from the surrounding Arab region brought about by Sultan Said was a primary cause of the war and eventually led to Arab League recognition of the rebellion. Rabi (2011, p. 24) argues that the war broke out because of the migration of Dhofaris to work in other Arab Gulf States, which gave them a better idea of how oil money had improved other countries in the region compared with Oman, which sparked waves of anger that eventually led to the insurgency. People were also profoundly affected by the rhetoric of Jamal Abdel Nasser, the ruler of Egypt at that time, who called for the expulsion of the British and their associates in the region. Ja'boub (2010, p. 248) adds to this understanding through a discussion of the strategy of the rebellion and Sultan's education system, while Al Hamdani (2010, pp. 106-107) focuses on a pro-sultan interpretation, looking at the strategy to alleviate poverty and gain the confidence of the people alongside military operations, comparing this to contemporary events in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Some books have also taken an ideological approach to the discussion of the war, with scholars like Randolph (1974) and Karam (1974) focusing on the disadvantages of communism in Dhofar and the suffering brought about by the war, given that communism was alien to the religion, customs and traditions of the natives. Other literature follows colonisation and imperialism models. The Egyptian writer, Omar (2008, pp. 6-7), discusses the relationship between Britain and the rulers

of the Arabian Gulf counties, describing it as being colonial in nature, with Sultan Said doing what he was asked by British authorities. Similarly, Halliday (2008, p. 232) adopts a western imperialist approach in discussions of Omani history, such as by asserting that Oman had been fully controlled by Britain since the 19th century because of its strategic importance. Halliday concludes that the British government assertion of the independence of Oman was actually a cover to serve its own interests in the region and to conceal the consequences of its national policies (ibid, p. 331). Others support this assertion that Oman was under British influence (Abdulsamed, 2016, p. 273; Beasant, 2002, pp. 200-201; Fadel, 1995, p. 212; Sultan & Nageeb, 2008, p. 26).

Many studies provided specific examples of this British influence and imperialism. For example, Wilson(2012, pp. 331-332) claims that in order to protect its interests in Oman, the British informed all tribal chiefs that they would not allow any attacks on Muscat in 1914. The Imam of Oman retorted by attacking Muscat in an attempt to oust the British in 1916, in response to which the British forcefully protected the Sultan's interests, killing more than 300 of the Imam's forces. The British also pressured the Sultan to end cooperation with France in 1891, which would have limited British influence, demonstrating clearly that they were unwilling to share their authority in Oman with another country. The contemporary writings of Miles (1920)also offer interesting insights into British influence and imperialism.

However, they tend to focus on the treaties that the British signed with political and tribal leaders in the area, which enabled them to control the Indian Ocean area (figure 4). Certain tribes were given special treatment when they lived in strategic locations, such as near sea ports that could be used as naval bases, or open areas that could be used as airfields. This is especially true of areas like Dhofar, which were believed to have oil reserves. Miles (1920, pp.



Fig. 4: Map showing Indian Ocean (Source: Oman National Survey Authority, NSA IO 14)

222-230)analysed tribal loyalties to provide an advantageous position from which the British could begin negotiations and extend their influence and illustrates one way in which the British were always looking for ways to enhance their long-term economic interests. In a similar manner, Owtram (2004, p. 16) argues that British imperialism practiced an informal colonisation with respect to Oman. He indicates that it was responsible for the formation of the Sultanate after 1920,

as well as heavily influencing the course of events in the country, creating much of its modern history and even participating in the formation of the modern state of Oman. This can be seen in the example of the Al Jabal Al Akhdar War (1957-1959), which was funded by the oil companies with the full support of Britain. This conflict resulted in the expansion of the Sultanate of Muscat and the amalgamation of the oil-rich parts of the Imamate of Oman into the Sultanate. Importantly this occurred within the context of Anglo-American competition to recover and secure oil reserves in the Arabian Peninsula and eventually led to the formation of the current Sultanate of Oman, which might otherwise have been divided into three states. The focus in this literature is on the formal control of British imperialism in Oman.

Other literature has highlighted the Dhofar War from an economic perspective. For instance, Wilkinson (2006) believes that oil companies were behind all of the major conflicts in the Sultanate in the twentieth century. In fact, he argues that the boundaries of the Middle East countries were ultimately shaped by oil companies, who financed conflicts for their own financial gains. Also relevant in this context is that Sultan Said deliberately entered into agreements with American oil companies to prevent British dominance, which angered his erstwhile allies. Morton (2013, p. 112) discusses the Al Buraimi Conflict (fig. 5) that occurred between Saudi Arabia and Britain in the 1950s from an economic and diplomatic perspective. He also addresses British diplomacy in Oman, explaining that Al Buraimi is an oasis located on Oman's northern border and was believed to possess vast quantities of oil. Because of this, oil companies had been competing fiercely to enter the Gulf region, redrawing the borders on the maps in their favour, irrespective of the prevailing local conditions. No matter how hard Saudi Arabia tried to occupy the oasis, Britain successfully prevented Aramco (the US-Saudi Oil Company) from entering the area, defending the territory to enable and facilitate the presence of the British oil companies through effective use of international arbitrations on Buraimi (*ibid*, p. 112).



Fig. 5: Map of Al Buraimi oasis in red
(Source: Oman National Survey Authority, NSA OM 67)

The reason for the involvement of Britain in Dhofar is also likely to have occurred because of its needs for naval and air bases or facilities, which made the strategic location of Oman especially valuable. Lunt (1981, p. 32) supports this assertion that British interests in the Arabian Gulf were principally concerned with ensuring control over this strategic economic area, because it initially secured the route to India. Importantly, this access also granted Britain the ability to move oil companies into the region to exploit the rich natural resources of the area at the lowest cost and to ensure uninterrupted oil supplies. In other words, strategic interests were driven by economic goals after the discovery of oil, which has played an important role in Dhofar's modern history since the middle of the 20th century. Oil was also a pretext for the Americans to find their way to the Gulf States (Abdalsatar, 1989; Gardner, 2007). The interest of the Europeans and especially the British changed from originally securing the sea route to India to further economic interests once oil was discovered in the Middle East during the first half of the twentieth century. In effect, this discovery of oil changed their interest from a focus on the coastline to include the interior of the country.

Although some have argued that the Gulf States were “puppet-like in the hands of western powers” (Abdalsatar, 1989, p.46), others have argued that Oman was not a British possession and that it enjoyed a certain political independence (Murad, 1989, p. 463; Shdad, 1989, pp. 122-123), a position explicitly rejected by Abdalsatar (1989). Geraghty (1982, pp. 98-100) is one of a number of experts who claims that Oman was not subject to British colonialism, with the British merely offering advice and assistance to the Sultan. Lunt (1981, p. 32) adopted a similar stance with respect to the importance of Oman's location, resources and the British interest in the region. In addition, Philips, the economic advisor of Sultan Said stated that the British activities in Oman could not be described as imperialism, because the British were acting with the permission of the government (Philips, 2012, pp. 352-353). There is a limited literature which suggests varying degrees of Omani independence.

Officially, however Oman was an independent, sovereign state. The cooperation of the Sultanate with the British was in the Omani national interest, characterised by the success of the Omani government diplomacy in persuading the British to intervene militarily in its internal disputes. This support in the Battle of Al Jabal Al Akhdar (1957-1959) and the Dhofar War (1965-1970) was a major diplomatic achievement that ensured national unity by exploiting British military strength. The Omani side did not have the resources and expertise to confront such violent

revolutions, especially the Dhofar war, given the support provided to the rebels by a number of regional and international powers. This thesis seeks to better understand the validity of the existing secondary literature, which generally depicts the British-Omani relationship in terms of British imperial control, Omani submission, non-independence, formal or informal colonialism, and to emphasise its role as an independent and sovereign state. Therefore, this research will examine whether the Omani government was more independent and self-motivated than the literatures argues, not functioning as a direct or informal colony, but instead with a developing and negotiable autonomy.

1.6: The History of Omani-British Relations

All of the secondary literature on Oman accords a prominent role to the relations with Britain. Anglo-Omani relations began with the first contacts between rulers of Oman and Britain in 1644, which occurred as part of the Omani campaign to end the influence of the Portuguese, who occupied the region at that time. The then ruler of Oman, Imam Nasir bin Murshid Al Ya'rubi (1624-1649), requested an envoy from the headquarters of the East India Company in India, to undertake negotiations to establish business relations, as well as to oppose Portuguese economic interests in the region. An agreement was made whereby Englishmen were to enjoy the freedom of trade in Oman, the freedom to bear arms and the freedom of religious practice, in addition to regulations for the arbitration of disputes between Omani and British nationals (Al Dhoyani, 2004, pp. 234-235). Although signed in 1646, this agreement was not implemented because of the impact of Dutch involvement on trade in the Arabian Gulf and as a result of the conflict between Imam Nasir and the Portuguese. The East India Company took the initiative in 1665, delegating Colonel Rainsford to establish a trade agency in Muscat. Negotiations were followed by a treaty under which Imam Sultan bin Saif (1640-1680) would grant one of Muscat's forts to the British (1649-1679), permitting them to establish a garrison of no more than a hundred soldiers, in return for an equal share of custom revenues. However, this treaty was also not implemented, because of the death of Rainsford and because Imam Sultan bin Saif later changed his mind, deciding not to allow any European presence in Muscat. It is worth noting that this approach regarding the settlement of foreign powers in Oman was a principle followed by successive Imams (Al Dhoyani, 2004, pp. 235-236). In addition, the treaty was pressured by the Dutch gaining the support of the ruler of Oman to oppose British monopoly of the Arabian Gulf trade. The conflict between the British and the

Netherlands began with both struggling to control trade in the region. The Dutch had the upper hand until the end of the seventeenth century, when British influence became preeminent in the eighteenth century onwards (Rushd, 2009, p. 70).

When Britain reached India in the eighteenth century, it found itself in confrontation with the Omani empire, which stretched from the Persian Gulf to East Africa. Britain established good relations with the Omani empire in order to meet its two primary aims in the region: preventing the entrance of France into the region and fully controlling the area to ensure effective control in India (Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 7). The intervention of the British Empire in the affairs of Oman increased over time, through actions such as the exploitation of the differences between the rulers of the Asian part of the Omani Empire and the African part, effectively bringing an end to an Omani territory that had extended across vast areas of continental Asia and Africa.

British control over India made it essential for them to retain influence over the Arabian Gulf, in order to secure the vital route to the east. At this time, the ruling family in Oman changed with the collapse of the Ya'raiba dynasty in 1741 and the rise of Ahmed bin Said Al Busaidi, the Imam whose family still rule the country today. During this period, the East India Company played an important political role in maintaining the commercial interests of Britain in the region, signing different political treaties with the Sultans of Oman, which were the first formal agreements between the British and the ruling families in the region. For example, Sultan bin Ahmed Al Busaidi (1793-1804) signed a treaty with the British in 1798 (Ateeqi, 2007, p. 11). In this treaty, the Sultan vowed not to cooperate with the French and Dutch, who were competing with the British over the Arabian Gulf. In addition, he granted the British a commercial agency in Bandar Abbas in southern Iran, which was part of Oman at that time. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Busaidi took control of the port of Bandar Abbas in 1798, in order to strengthen his grip on the Gulf, stimulate trade and resist the Wahhabis. This region remained underfull Omani control until 1871, when the Iranians regained Bandar Abbas. They have retained control of this port until today (Landen 1983, pp. 298-299).

Sultan Al Busaidi signed another treaty in 1800s in which A.H. Bogle was appointed by Britain as a representative of the East India Company in Muscat, where he established the first British agency. Bogle was the first British resident in the Gulf region, representing his country on the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf (Ateeqi, 2007, p. 12). During the Sultan's era (1745-1804), the first great communication between Oman and Baluchistan (now part of Pakistan) was through

Gwadar port, which the Omanis had seized in 1798 to secure access to the Sea of Oman, extend their commercial and military influence, as well as stimulate trade and resist the Wahhabis. In addition, the sultans used Baluchi at Gwadar as soldiers to fight any opposition to their rule (Al Batashi, 1998, p. 234). Gwadar remained under full Omani control until 1955, when it was sold to Pakistan by Sultan Said (1932-1970) in order to fund the Jabel Akhder War (1957-1959).

Omani-British relations continued during the reign of Sultan Said (1806-1856) and the two parties cooperated in 1820 to subjugate the Al Qawasim, a tribe that controlled areas of northern Oman (now part of the United Arab Emirates) who were cooperating with Saudi Arabia to secure their independence from Oman. For this reason, a General Treaty was signed with the Sheikhs (tribal leaders) of the coast of Oman (known now as the United Arab Emirates), which is considered to be the beginning of the separation of the UAE from Oman by the British (Ghobash, 1997, p. 173). Later, the two parties cooperated to suppress the revolution of Bani Bu Ali, an Omani Wahhabi tribe which was attempting to become independent from Oman in 1821, again with the support of Saudi Arabia.

This relationship was crowned by the British treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation in 1898 (Baghi, 1981). A major objective of the Sultan was to reduce the influence of the Al Qawasim tribe, which had embraced the strict Wahhabi sect of Islam, which opposed the tolerant Ibadism of Oman. The Wahhabis had emerged in Saudi Arabia and expanded along the coast of what is now the United Arab Emirates, as well as occupying Buraymi and several areas along the north coast of Oman. The political difference between Ibadism, which originated more than 1,400 years ago, and Wahhabism, which was established in the mid-18th century, is that Ibadism is not used as a political tool, where the aspect of political control is central to Wahhabism. The Wahhabis spread their doctrine across the Arabian Peninsula, with the expansion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its demands in the Buraimi and Phenomenon regions, as well as in Oman. The spread of this doctrine was accompanied by the formation of Islamic minorities that began to exert influence on their countries, such as in Syria, Libya and Yemen, for the benefit of Saudi Arabia. In contrast, the Ibadi doctrine is not actively spread and is largely confined to Oman. Ibadi is not only the oldest Islamic sect, but also the most tolerant. No terrorist groups are Ibadi, unlike Wahhabism which is followed by organisations like Boko Haram in Nigeria, Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, Al Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda. In general, the supremacy of the Ibadi doctrine in Oman is one of the most important pillars of the rule of the Busaidi family of the

Sultanate (Interview, Al Kharusi, 30th March 2018). The Sultan took several measures in an attempt to repel their influence, including forging an alliance with the British. Al Nomani (2013) argues that the treaty drafted by Britain in 1898 and called a treaty of friendship was in fact a treaty of protection that imposed many restrictions on the Omani people and controlled the future of the country to an unprecedented degree.

In fact, the British signed treaties with the majority of the leaders of the Gulf region, imposing British protection on them. Oman was the exception, instead remaining outside actual British domination and only being linked to Britain by means of friendship and trade treaties. The British tried to intervene in the internal affairs of the Omani Empire during the time of Sultan Said, through the formulation of several arguments, including attempts to combat the slave trade. Although Sultan Said bin Sultan (1806-1854) signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Slave Trade in 1945, he was also able to limit British influence by adding a ban on the slave trade that required British ships to be inspected by Omani vessels (Philips, p. 204-207).

Oman was prevented from becoming a British protectorate by the legal status it enjoyed with countries like the Netherlands in 1666 and the US in 1833. This was reinforced by the Anglo-French declaration of 1862, under which both countries pledged to respect the sovereignty of Oman and considered it to be an independent state. This situation led the British to search for alternative means by which to offer protection and exert control. Their close relations with the rulers of Oman granted the British the ability to pursue these goals through the use of subsidies. Perhaps the most important of these was the Zanzibar Subsidy, which came about after the death of Sultan Said bin Sultan (1806-1856), whose empire stretched from the Arabian Gulf to East Africa. After his death, the Sultan's two sons disagreed over who should become ruler. Britain opposed the Omani ruler, Sultan Thuwayni, who was attempting to eject his brother, Majid, the ruler of the African part of the empire. This disagreement was settled in 1861 by the British, represented by Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India in 1861, who convinced the brothers to divide their empire: Thuwayni ruled the Asian part, with its capital in Muscat (1856-1866), while Majid ruled the African part, with its capital in Zanzibar (1856-1870). Due to the fact that Zanzibar was economically stronger than Muscat, it was agreed that an annual subsidy should be paid by the ruler of Zanzibar to the ruler of Oman. When the ruler of Zanzibar later refused to pay the subsidy to Oman, Britain pledged that it would pay, effectively putting political pressure on Oman to support British policies in order to continue receiving the subsidy. However, French protests about British intervention led

to a bilateral agreement being signed between the two countries in 1862, which provided that both Britain and France should respect the independence of Muscat and Zanzibar (Al Arimi, 2010, p. 43). Another subsidy made by the British in an attempt to strengthen its relationship with Oman was the Arms Subsidy in 1889 (Al Hashmi, 2000, pp. 102-103). This agreement involved Britain persuading Sultan Thuwayni to adopt a British plan in return for annual compensation of 100,000 rupees. The plan concerned the construction of an arms depot in Oman, thereby preventing the proliferation of weapons through northern India and the Arabian Gulf. This annual subsidy was continually provided to Oman, strengthening the bonds by which the Omani rulers were tied to the British (Fadel, 1995, p. 210).

During the reign of Sultan Timour (1913-1932), a number of British employees were appointed to key government positions for Oman to capitalise on their expertise. These individuals served as the ministers of the Ministries of Foreign, Interior and Defence Affairs, which were three of the important departments in the government. The first British finance minister in the Omani government was McCollum in 1920, McCarthy was in charge of the Omani army in 1921, Bauer was responsible for customs in 1924, and Bertram Thomas was the financial adviser to the Sultan in 1925, after which he was promoted to the rank of finance minister in 1926. All of these individuals played a role in quelling unrest and uprisings against the Sultan, using military force where necessary. They also wrested the concession of oil exploration in Dhofar from the Americans and officially influenced the Sultan only to grant concessions to the British. In addition, British ministers also interfered in the financial affairs of the Sultanate. The British planned to improve the Omani economy under the supervision of the British Consul Haworth, after whom the project was named. During this period, the British political agents and consuls often opposed Omani relations with other countries, even if these were simply personal visits. In this way, the British operated with a view to making Oman one of its protectorates, despite this not being the case from a legal perspective (Fadel, 1995, p. 212).

The rulers of Oman refused any form of control, although the manner of their rejections varied from one Sultan to another, according to the circumstances and capabilities of each leader. Sometimes they expressed their rejection through indirect methods, such as pretending to be sick, travelling abroad, or abdicating the throne, while other rejections were articulated directly, by refusing all forms of British cooperation, including subsidies. However, those who rejected British aid inevitably eventually returned due to the realisation that it was the capabilities and expertise of

the British Empire that protected Oman from many internal or external problems (Mowafi, 1994, pp. 10-11). This can be seen during the period of World War II, when both the British and Sultan Said recognised the need to ensure friendship and cooperation in order to prevent their relationship from dissolving.

Nevertheless, Sultan Said bin Taimur (1932-1970) managed to recover a measure of power from the British, forcing the removal of many informal supervisors and experts who had been recruited in Oman in the years since 1889. Instead, he depended more heavily on Arabs who had anti-British feelings (Shdad, 1989, p. 122). Sultan Said realised that many of the problems that had faced his predecessors could be attributed to the high levels of national debt and the corresponding threat of subsidies being withheld by the British for non-compliance with their interests. As a way out, he attempted to use the few resources available in Oman to repay the national debt. Determined to possess a greater degree of independence than his father, he also confronted the British (Shdad, 1989, p. 123) through the purchase of weapons from other countries. This policy reflected the Sultan's general desire to retain his legitimate rights and his determination to be independent, with the freedom to act as he wished. In this way, Sultan Said negotiated and developed his autonomy as a ruler and the independence of his country.

It is clear that the British feared the threat of international competition, recognising that any new power in the region would threaten its presence in India and potentially breach its security. For this reason, the British government in London took a hand in overseeing the internal and external affairs of the Sultanate. Sultan Said confronted a range of political, economic and military challenges. The most notable political issue was that of the Imamate (1913-1957) in the interior area of the country, which staunchly opposed his rule in the Sultanate, and which he managed to incorporate into Oman with British assistance. The continuation of the Anglo-Omani relationship was characterised by friendship and cooperation in all fields. A new agreement, the Treaty of Friendship, Navigation and Trade, was signed between the two parties in 1951 (Murad, 1989, p. 463). The British Consulate in Muscat became the Consulate-General in 1957, during the reign of Sultan Said, later becoming an embassy in 1971, during the era of Sultan Qaboos. Oman was able to consolidate its national unity through the intensive military support provided by the British government to Oman, effectively eliminating the attempted separation of the interior (Izzi, 1994, p. 9), and suppressing the revolution in Dhofar.

Despite the closeness of this relationship, Halliday (2008, p. 331) argues that Britain has never recognised Oman as a British colony, because Oman had entered into treaties with Britain and France. Nonetheless, the British army and consultants supported and financed Sultan Said, providing half of his income until 1967, and were intimately involved in Omani affairs, although they gave free rein to Sultan Said provided that he protected the interests of Great Britain (Halliday, p. 331). The British withdrawal from east of Suez in the last 1960s also caused changes and potential instability for Oman. Ladwig (2008, pp. 106-108) provides interesting insights into the political decisions made in London regarding the withdrawal of the British Army from Aden and the Arabian Gulf between 1961 and 1969. The Labour Government, led by Harold Wilson, had surprised the world with its intention to withdraw all British troops from east of Suez by 1969. They were motivated to take this action by the sterling crisis of November 1967, which significantly damaged the British economy, clearly illustrating that Britain was in sharp decline as a world power. Worrall (2014, pp. 25,33) supports the argument that this withdrawal took place due to economic decline, adding that the Palestinian issue and the loss of Aden were also important factors. Peterson (2011, pp. 2,77) suggests that the withdrawal, terminating all obligations and limiting British influence was motivated by the ideological goals of the socialist government. He argues that the British economic situation only accelerated the withdrawal process, adding that the US tried to persuade Britain to stay in the Arabian Gulf by opening up business opportunities in Saudi Arabia. Obviously, the economic factor and the liberation movements that strained the British presence in regions, such as Yemen and Suez, led British politicians to expedite the withdrawal from the areas east of Suez. In general, the evidence however suggests that the real nature of the relationship between the Omani rulers and the British continued to be one of friendship, cooperation and exchange of mutual interests, as described by many non-Omani writers (e.g. Geraghty, 1982, pp. 98-100; Lunt, 1981, p. 32; Murad, 1989, p. 463; Philips, 2012, p. 352-353; Shdad, 1989, pp. 122-123).

In this sense, unlike the position of many Arab writers, particularly those biased towards the Imamate and the revolution in Dhofar, Sultan Said was not a traitor who laboured under the control of a foreign colonial power (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Beasant, 2002, pp. 200-201; Fadel, 1995, p.212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332).

Instead, the relationship was initially imposed on the Omani rulers because of their poor administrative and economic capabilities, which was exacerbated by their inability to confront a superior force, but this situation led Omani rulers to utilise the relationship with Britain to maintain national unity and stability, while creating a form of independence from Britain that was distinct from colonial relations. In sum, the Omani government developed a more effective autonomy and negotiated independence than argued by the extant literature.

1.7: British diplomacy towards Oman in relation to the Dhofar War 1965-1975

In terms of British involvement in the Dhofar War itself, Ladwig (2008, p. 17) focuses on the instrumental role played by the British troops in the victory in Dhofar in 1975, in which a small group of British officers, advisers and trainers led Oman to victory. The campaign was an excellent example of counter-insurgency using a minimum of men and money. Peterson (2007, p. 501) covers the war in Dhofar from a military and security perspective, discussing the nature of the insurgency and the measures taken to combat it. He outlines shifts in the war in 1968 from nationalism to Marxism, after which he summarises the military and security development since 1970 (Peterson, 2007, p. 501). He argues that British diplomacy was based on creating political legitimacy, which was granted through providing locals with every day requirements, and the military effort, which was largely successful because of their support for Sultan Said and later Sultan Qaboos (ibid, p. 501). In discussing British diplomacy in Oman, Peterson (2011, p. 110) also argues that there was an attempt to protect Western security interests in the Arab region before the withdrawal of the British in 1971. This process sought to ensure the strengthening of economic cooperation and the conversion of agents into allies. Some Arab Gulf Countries were even to become the West's largest buyers of weapons, turning those customers to nominally independent allies. Peterson (2011, p. 128) adds that there was Anglo-American cooperation at this time, in addition to an agreement about how best to facilitate strategic goals. In the same context, Worrall (2014, pp. 161, 197) explains that the rebels in the War of Dhofar sought the overthrow of the Sultan and to bring about the expulsion of the British from the region. This was a challenge to the Wilson and Heath governments in Britain and was confronted by securing the political system in Oman, thereby ensuring the protection of British interests in the future. It was only once those political and stability interests were secured that the British withdrew their troops. Both the Ministry of defence (MoD) and the Foreign and

Commonwealth Office (FCO) agreed that Britain's interests in Oman were significant, particular in terms of oil (Worrall, 2014, pp. 17, 126). Alston and Laing also argue that,

the point of departure in Oman was one in which the British Government took the precaution of concluding an agreement in 1923 with Sultan Taymur giving Britain exclusive rights to control oil exploration in the Sultan's territories (2012, p. 264).

Nevertheless, British policy towards Oman changed over time and in 1971, British aims in the Arabian Gulf were much more comprehensive:

First, to contribute by all possible means to the creation of conditions which would ensure peace and stability. Second, to preserve as much influence as possible with a view to maintaining that stability and to limit communist influence in that area to the greatest possible extent. Third, to maintain the uninterrupted flow of oil on reasonable terms. Finally, to increase British exports to a rapidly growing market (Worrall, 2014, p. 96).

In order to leave the Gulf in a stable and peaceful condition, as well as to maintain British interests, an entire modern state had to be constructed in the Sultanate (Worrall, 2014, p. 221). The creation of a settled area and stables state in the Arabian Gulf was incredibly important for British interests. Britain had recognised the importance of forming an active central government in the Sultanate shortly before the commencement of the war in Dhofar (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 451). Abdalsatar (1989, p. 153) argues that their interests in Oman led the British government to commit to a widening political and military presence to ensure Oman's unity and settlement. Clearly, peace and stability in Oman was viewed as essential for the national interests of Britain, given the special relationship that they enjoyed with the Omani ruling family. British diplomacy was therefore predicated on protecting its own economic interests by ensuring the stability of Oman, and defending it against both internal and external threats. To this end, the British ensured that they had arranged Oman's political system in their favour before withdrawing from the region in 1971 (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 235-236; Peterson, 2011, p. 110; Worrall, 2014, pp. 17,126). The long established independence of Oman in its relationship with Britain was thereby consolidated in an independent and stable state by the Dhofar War.

1.8: Chapter I Conclusion

The Dhofar rebellion began with an uprising against poverty, disease and the carelessness of the rule of Sultan Said, later evolving into a fierce guerrilla war. Geographical factors played a

major role in the Dhofar War, with the mountains and seasonal climate being instrumental to the guerrilla war tactics used against Sultan Said. This conflict was complicated and prolonged by the proximity of Dhofar to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, which was able to provide international aid to the rebels after the British withdrawal in 1967. A number of regional and global states like Britain intervened in the conflict, both directly and indirectly, with the aim of serving and protecting their national interests. They were encouraged to take this action by the Sultanate's wealth of oil and natural gas, as well as the sensitive location of Oman facing India and controlling the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway through which approximately 40% of the world's oil shipments passed. Later, when the rebels adopted communism in 1967, the war received backing of powerful states in opposition to capitalist development, such as China and the Soviet Union, who provided support alongside other regional countries, including Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Syria, Algeria, Palestine, East Germany, North Korea, Tanzania, Vietnam and Cuba. In contrast, the Sultan relied upon backing from Britain and certain regional countries, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

British policy during this period seems to have been to provide support to the Sultans of Oman against any internal revolution in order to serve British own strategic interests. The Sultans, in turn, sought to exploit the presence of the British in order to perpetuate the independence of Oman. This relationship afforded Oman a degree of stability and security from internal and external threats. Officially Oman was not an imperial state or an informal colony, because of existing treaties with America, France and the Netherlands, as well as the control that the Sultans retained over the country. Economically, however, Britain gained more from the relationship. In essence, there exists a fascinating balance between the British interests in securing their national interests in Oman, versus the manoeuvring of the Omani Sultans to ensure the unity and security of the country from internal and external threats at minimal cost to themselves. In this sense, this thesis seeks to explore and question the validity of the existing secondary literature, which generally conceptualises the British-Omani relationship in terms of British imperial control and Omani subservience, lack of autonomy, and effective colonial role (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Fadel, 1995, p. 212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332).

However, it also questions the claims by other academics who describe the Omani government as fully autonomous and sovereign (e.g. Geraghty, 1982, pp. 98-100; Lunt, 1981, p. 32;

Murad,1989, p. 463; Philips, 2012, pp. 352-353; Shdad, 1989, pp. 220-221). This thesis seeks to investigate whether the Omani government may be described as having a developing and negotiable autonomy rather than the status of either a direct / informal colony.

Dhofar War 1965 – 1975

CHAPTER 2:

The First Phase of the Revolution

(June 1965- August 1967)

2.1: The Reasons for the Outbreak of the Dhofar War

The revolution in Dhofar against the reign of Sultan Said bin Taimur (see figure 6) began in 1965. However, dissent had been fermenting since the late 1950s. When Dhofaris travelled to other Gulf Countries Council (GCC) countries to work, they formed organisations that had different ideologies, but which were united under the single goal of ensuring the independence of Dhofar. Later, the organisations united into a single group called the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF). There are a number of important questions that are fundamental to the understanding of this important event in the history of Oman, such as what actually drove the Dhofaris to revolt against the reign of the Sultan? What were the organisations that formed the DLF? How did the Dhofaris plan to achieve their goals? How did they seek to implement those plans through their secret organisations that existed among the workers in the Arab Gulf States? What occurred during the early stages that paved the way to the unification of their organisations? Did they achieve their common goal after the declaration of the armed struggle on 9th June 1965? What was Sultan Said's policy? How did the British policy deal with his political agenda during this phase? This chapter seeks to answer these questions and provide a cohesive understanding of the first phase of the revolution.



Fig. 6: 1966, Sultan Said bin Taimur
(Source: Royal Air Force of Oman Archives, RAFOSS 667)

2.1.1: Internal Variables

The outbreak of the revolution against the rule of Sultan Said bin Taimur can be attributed to numerous individual and often interrelated factors. First, and perhaps most influential of these, was the situation of the population of Dhofar (see figure 7), which was characterised by widespread poverty,



Fig 7: Dhofari man is using a camel for transportation of goods (Source: Royal Air Force of Oman Archives, RAFODR 6654)

ignorance and disease, as well as harsh control from Sultan Said. The myriad prohibitions included one that forbade women and children under 18 years old from travelling. Even for men, the travel procedures were so complex that those Dhofaris who wanted to travel usually bought Yemeni passports to do so. Others used their Omani passport to travel to countries that had no entry restrictions and the Yemeni passport for ones that did. There were also extensive prohibitions on many products, like transistor radios, which could only be owned with a license, and on numerous activities, including smoking, football and cycling (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 2). It can be argued that the social, economic and cultural backwardness that prevailed in Dhofar was a result of the Sultan's determination to exclude any form of modern civilization and progress from the region (Al Sa'adi, 1976, p. 12). Until the mid-1970s, the World Health Organization was not able to reach this place. This was especially problematic because the local culture of the people meant that many avoided visiting doctors. Because most of the locals did not travel abroad, modern life frightened them (Al Arabi magazine, 1973, pp. 83-90). Instead, many would gather around the graves of the righteous for them to be healed by proximity. Others visited popular healers who treated them with fire (ibid). When journalists from the *Arabi magazine* the most famous magazine in the Arab world visited Dhofar, they found the streets in some cities were paved with cows, goats and fish bones, and there were so many flies that they could not open their mouths. When the municipality employees were asked for the reasons for these conditions, they stated that Dhofar had not been cleaned in over 40 years during the reign of Sultan Said (Al Arabi magazine, 1973, pp. 83-90).

His constraints on public freedom and his closed method of rule forced people to migrate out of Oman, especially to Gulf countries, where employment opportunities were available as a result of the oil wealth (Al Khasibi, 1994, p. 157). Unemployment spread among Omanis during the reign of Sultan Said, despite the existence of work opportunities, because these were often limited to foreign workers (Al Zaidi, 2000, p. 310). Discrimination between citizens and foreigners in both training and accommodation increased the population's feeling of differentiation and inequality.

There are no statistics on poverty in Oman at that time, however, there were only three small hospitals, one of which was in Dhofar (OMH, 1980, p. 7) and only three primary schools in Oman, with only one being situated in Dhofar (OMH, 1980, p. 5). Of the regions of Oman, Dhofar has traditionally been one of the most economically and socially backwards, with most of the population working as farmers, and the region often experiencing widespread problems with poverty, disease and deprivation (Abdul Redha, 1972, p. 58) (see figure 8). The workers of Dhofar

were often oppressed and exploited by foreign companies in ports and oil fields, suffering from poor economic, social and health conditions.

As a result of these factors, during the first half of the 1960s, immediately prior to the outbreak of the revolution, the number of Omanis who worked in other Arab Gulf states (see figure 9) was very high. Half of these migrant workers were from Dhofar (Interview rebel leader, 17th

August 2016, RA1). A robust mountain people, the Dhofari Omanis were concentrated in physical professions, like the military and police. Dhofaris comprised half of all the police in Qatar, a quarter of workers in low-professions in Bahrain, half of all military personnel in the UAE, and a significant proportion in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Interview Rebel Leader, 17th August 2016, RA1). At that time, of the estimated 150,000 Dhofaris, approximately thirty thousand lived in other GCC states as migrant workers (Interview member of National Center for Statistics and Information 16th March 2016, RA2). During this period, Oman became

completely isolated from the surrounding region and the rest of the world. This situation was compounded by the isolation of every area within the Sultanate. Because they worked abroad, the Dhofaris became familiar with the different patterns of life in the Arab Gulf States, all of which were more advanced than Oman. This experience inspired a desire for change in the Dhofaris. Recognising this, the Sultan imprisoned some of those who had travelled abroad (Al Khasibi, 1994, p. 157). This is an example of the style of rule that characterised the rule of Sultan Said, which Peterson (1978, p. 501) argues was feudalistic with regards to the rule of Dhofar.



Fig. 8: A Dhofari family are in front of their house which is made from trees banches and leaves, 1966 (Source: Royal Air Force of Oman Archives, RAFODR 65)



Fig. 9: Map of GCC States
(Source: Oman National Survey Authority, NSA GCC 154)

According to historical sources, such as Landen (1983, pp. 480-481), Sultan Said did not trust even those who were close to him, and was known particularly to hate and distrust the Dhofaris. Peter Sichel observed that Sultan Said had commented that, “If you find a snake and a Dhofari in a place, kill the Dhofari and leave the snake” (Interview Peter Sichel, 8th December 2015). This negative attitude that the Sultan harboured towards the Dhofari people was clearly illustrated by the anecdote of J.S.R. Duncan, a British diplomat who visited the Sultan in Salalah. Duncan suggested that Qaboos, his only son, should tour around the regions of Oman to meet prominent tribal leaders. Sultan Said welcomed the idea and expressed a preference for Qaboos to be accompanied by a British person because Omanis put their trust in him. This surprised Duncan, who stated the following:

I then reminded him that he had spoken some time ago of his intention to send Qaboos on a tour of the sultanate. He said he still had that in mind but the problem was to find a trustworthy companion. Perhaps he would send Chauncy with him... I said I thought it would surely be better for him to be accompanied by leaders from amongst his own people. The sultan agreed in a quandary about this (UKNA, F.O, BC1015/7, 1965).

The beginning of the revolution can, to a large degree, be attributed to the status of the Sultanate under the leadership of Said. This excerpt grants a useful insight into the range of challenges facing the Sultan at that time:

The Sultan’s main problems were: firstly the creation of an administration more suited to the times; secondly the consolidation and development of his armed forces; thirdly, improvement of his international relations (which must include coming to terms with the rebels abroad); fourthly, a measure of constitutional devolution... first the primitive nature of administration in the sultanate (UKNA, F.O., BC 1015/13, 1965). (For the full document, see Appendix 1).

In this respect, the Sultan’s dependence on foreign personnel and experts in the administration and in the Armed Forces was closely linked to his neglect of education. In effect, the limited development of education in Oman hindered the creation of an educated class that could play an important role in the administrative and economic development of the country. The Omani population also laboured under high taxes on internal trade, which in some cases reached 300%, severely limiting economic growth and driving many to make a living in other countries. When these people later returned to Oman, they found that the type of social services available abroad did not exist in their own country and that little had been done to improve the life of the people (UKNA, BC 1071/2). In a report by the Al Arabi magazine, the most famous publication of its kind

in the Arab world at that time, the journalists stated that Sultan Said had not completed his development projects. For example, the hospital in Salalah had been partially constructed and then left without a roof for 17 years. An agricultural survey had been carried out that froze the reports, but which did not result in any new alternatives being implemented. He brought in equipment for the construction of roads, but placed them in the yard of his palace and did not undertake the improvement of roads (Al Arabi magazine, 1973, p. 78).

These factors contributed to a high risk of internal conflict in Oman which was evident to many commentators, as illustrated by a letter to Sir William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf, from D.C. Carden, the Consul General in Muscat on 15th January 1966. This letter clearly placed the blame for the outbreak of the revolution on Sultan Said, who was said to be surprised at the number of people opposed to his rule in Oman. However, the Sultan still believed that there was no use in responding to the many criticisms he faced, including from international bodies like Amnesty International, who opposed the detention centres in Oman (ibid, p. 69-75). In a report addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 8th January 1965, Abdul Rahman Bazwaq, the delegate of Afghanistan and President of the United Nations General Assembly for the 1966-1967 session, stated that Sultan Said treated the inhabitants of Dhofar as slaves. He noted that there was little available employment in Dhofar, which was exacerbated by no support for the construction of houses, or imports and exports. Perhaps most seriously, he found that there were no schools or hospitals (1966, pp. 232-233). In effect, at least according to this perception, the Sultan did not care about internal and external public opinion, which left his population with very few meaningful options.

2.1.2: External Variables

The British also believed that the deterioration of Sultan Said's reputation abroad had principally occurred as a result of the onerous restrictions that he had imposed on his people, as evidenced in the following commentary:

It was not only ignorance of development which gave the sultanate a bad name abroad, but also reports of restrictions of personal liberty ... Foreign opinion is very sensitive... The sultanate's reputation abroad especially in the U.K. which must be of concern to H.M.G., would be very valuable if the sultan could bear this factor in mind in determining his future policies (UKNA, FCO 8/569, 1967).

In addition, one of the most significant problems facing Sultan Said was his relationships with various international organisations and regional countries. British government sources indicated the unwillingness of the Sultan to join international organisations:

He feels reluctant to join international organisations because he is deeply embittered by his experiences with some of the organisations. He applied to join the World Health Organisation and was black-balled. The issue of his own postage stamps and the taking over of his postal services may provide an opportunity for him to join the postal union. If this were successful, other organisations could then be joined... His independent image in the outside world would grow in strength ... (UKNA, BC 1015/13, 1965) (see Appendix 2 for the full document).

This issue was also recognised by other contemporary documents. A report to William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf, from D.C. Carden, the Consul General in Muscat in 1965 stated:

His image abroad is not that of an entirely independent country in that he neither makes contract with other countries in international matters such as air traffic regulations or postal communications, which could make full use of our good offices. The impression given is that of limited sovereignty, in the Arab world and the United Nations, his enemies... play on the theme of his dependence on the British government. It is clearly desirable that this image be repaired. He cares not one whit for international opinion nor any other opinion (UKNA, BC 1015/13, 1965).

A letter sent on 4th April 1970 from D.G. Crawford in Muscat to the British Consulate General in Bahrain, M. S. Weir, also provides a useful insight into the opinions of “one of the main tribal leaders in the north of Oman, Sheikh (tribal leader) Ahmad bin Mohammed Al Harthi, who had met with Crawford. During the meeting, the Sheikh complained of a lack of job opportunities for the citizens, which necessitated many to look for work abroad. This was not a problem in itself, as they were only trying to improve the living conditions of their families in Oman, but those individuals learned new ideas when they travelled, which created resentment when they returned to visit their families. Sheikh Ahmad strongly believed that the British needed to explain to the Sultan the consequences of his policies. In addition, the Sheikh made suggestions to develop the agricultural sector, encouraging the use of Omani labour in order to reduce their need to travel abroad” (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 611-621). It is worth mentioning that this Sheikh was one of Said’s top supporters and a loyal figure to the Sultan in the north of Oman. However, regardless of their posts, the economic situation in Oman had clearly caused low morale and feelings of bitterness

towards the Sultan, even among those close to him. The failure of Sultan Said to establish effective international associations also undermined his government.

2.1.3: The Sultan's Perspective

Given its importance to understanding the events that transpired in Oman during the Dhofari War, an overview will therefore be presented to offer an insight into the personality and core orientations of Sultan Said. Clearly, he was a man with a forceful personality and reputation, as noted in one anecdote:

One of the tribal elders told a researcher that Sultan Said had a very strong and powerful personality, adding that he was tough in dealing with his people. He also recounted a story that he had witnessed the Sultan being greeted by a village man playing the drums. The Sultan reproved the villager so violently that the man urinated on himself (Interview with a tribal leader Al Ansari, 17th June 2014).

A detailed profile was also recorded by George Thomson, the British Minister of State, in the Foreign Office, who noted in 1966 that Sultan Said was smart, educated, with a fascinating personality, and an attractive way of speaking. He added:

Like most other people who visit the Sultan, I was impressed by his personality, frankness and logic within his own terms of reference. His interest in his development plan... what we call personal liberty and democratic rights, is obviously much more difficult. The Sultan believes that autocratic rule and extensive regulations are necessary to preserve the unity and national identity of the Sultanate (UKNA, FCO 8/569, FR: BC1/2, 1966).

This account corroborates the impression of a leading British diplomat, Sir Alec Kirkbride, who foresaw problems for Oman when he met Sultan Said in Salalah, the capital of Dhofar in 1965. Kirkbride mentioned that 'The longer the Sultan tries to keep a dam against the outside world, the worse will be the crash when it falls' (UKNA, BC1016/42, 1965). Nevertheless, US reports described the Sultan in 1965 as shrewd and energetic, strong willed, an attractive figure, prestigious, enjoying the spirit of quietness, and proficient in English (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 3).

Given this knowledge and the personality of Sultan Said, it may be possible to determine what justifications existed for the application of his harsh policies. Importantly, when the Sultan took over rule of Oman in 1932, the country was totally bankrupt. After taking power, Said personally reorganised the financial management of the Sultanate, enthusiastically and with tangible

skill, laying the foundations to lead his country towards a relatively prosperous financial situation. His strong inclination to regulate financial affairs fulfilled the important aim of limiting the ability of the British to use his debts to exert diplomatic pressure. The Sultan was very sensitive on this issue of British control and always wished to be an independent decision-maker (Mansy, 1996, p. 245; Ateeqi, 2007, pp. 211-212), even if this required years of sacrifice in order to ensure that debts were repaid. W. H. Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf explained in 1965 that it was possible to see that the Sultan did not wish to start national development until oil export revenue had been received, in order to limit reliance on foreign powers (UKNA, BC1052/3, 1965).

Oman benefitted from the economic reforms that the Sultan put in place, with foreign trade improving considerably under his guidance. During the first year of the Sultan's reign, 1932-1933, the total value of Oman's trade was about 5,444,445 Indian rupees, rising to 6,175,103 rupees in 1934-1935, then 7,717,602 rupees in 1936-1937, and with total exports and imports reaching 8,208,132 rupees in the fiscal year 1938-1939. In the fiscal year 1935-1936 Oman's exports converged with its imports, with exports of 3,264,984 rupees and imports of 3,837,835 rupees (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 303). In general, it can be argued that Sultan Said was successful in improving the economy of Oman in the pre-oil era, relying on limited resources at the time and without any external loans. However, the popular aspirations in Oman were much greater and so these meagre resources did not allow him to develop the country as his people had hoped. A British diplomat, D. Pragnell, outlined some of the reasons given by the Sultan for delaying the country's development:

He had always been determined, not to borrow as this would put his country under the influence of his creditors. It was for lack of resources that his country had remained backward ... H.M.G. had made certain grants for modest improvements possible. With the prospect of oil revenue he plans to embark on his wider plans... no palaces or Cadillac (UKNA, FCO 8/569, FR: BC1/2, 1967).

Moreover, despite a desire to increase the wealth of the country and to lessen its reliance on international partners, the rule of the Sultan remained one characterised by isolation. This was an intentional move, based in large part on poor relationships with other parties and in fulfilment of his policy aims. As explained by a prominent British official, D.C. Carden, to the British Consulate General:

Undeniable that he has erected a wall around his country... people of the interior have over the years hated non-Muslim intruders. The Sultan's restrictions on foreigners entering the interior stem from this fact and from his dislike of the consequences which would result from a foreigner being murdered. His

experiences of neighbouring Arabs having access to his country have been unhappy. The Sultan's dealings with international organisations have also been unhappy (UKNA, F.O., BC1016/42 (8), 1965).

This prohibition policy was also discussed in an interview between the Sultan and the aforementioned British diplomat, Pragnell:

The restriction on personal liberty... e.g. the ban on the importation of dolls was rooted in his religion; the regulations about forms of dress, traditional Omani way of life and control on women going abroad, were designed to prevent abuse and were relaxed for good reasons. It was foreigners in the country who raised complaints ... many of his people especially those in the mountains were very conservative and suspicious of foreigners. ... Change affecting religious matters would arouse hostility, upset unity and the balance of the country (UKNA, FCO 8/569, FR: BC1/2, 1967).

Overall, it seems that the decision not to develop the educational system was because the Sultan felt that this would necessitate the hiring of teachers from other countries. As will be discussed later in this chapter, he particularly feared the potential for a national intellectual Nasserite revolution, which could provoke the young Omani through the transferral of ideologies from foreign teachers to Omani students. This was mentioned in one British document:

...The Sultan is persuaded that there is no desire for change on education. He sees perhaps one more primary school somewhere. He will not want teachers from any Arab country, except possibly the Sudan. That the Sultan believed that there should be restriction in the movement of expatriates, even the skilled labour required for the oil industry in the Oman. This position was explained by a desire to preserve the culture of Omani cities from sabotage... He will forbid the semi-skilled labour movement from within their barbed-wire entanglement. He would not like to see Matrah and Muscat spoiled in any way (UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965).

In summary, Sultan Said's perspective was determined by fears of the destabilisation which might be caused by foreign debt, power workers and ideas.

2.1.4: British Diplomacy towards the Sultan's policy

During this early phase of the revolution (1965-1967), British diplomacy seemed to ignore the Sultan's treatment of his own people. A message to the British by the Imam's government in exile clearly explained the reasons for the deterioration in the Sultanate and attributed the outbreak of the revolution in Dhofar to Britain's decision to overlook Said's policy. It stated that, "H.M.G. are morally responsible for an alleged deterioration in the situation in Muscat and Oman and call

upon them to use their influence to promote political change there” (UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965). In response to the accusation that British diplomacy could be blamed for the miserable conditions in Oman, officials stated:

the position of H.M.G. is that the sultan of Muscat and Oman is a sovereign independent ruler and H.M.G. are in no position to put effective pressure on him to increase the pace of economic and political development (UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965).

The British government did not put any pressure on the Sultan to develop his government at this time. William Luce, the British political resident in the Persian Gulf observed that when discussing the development of the Oman’s government administration with the Sultan, he found out that the Sultan had not yet made any progress and that he found it very difficult to see how it could be worked out (UKNA, BC 1015/13, 1965). Some writers, such as Halliday (2008, pp. 331-332) and Omar (2008, pp. 6-7), argue that Britain was responsible for the suffering of the Omani people. This position is based upon the argument that Britain allowed Sultan Said to isolate the country and not develop it, thereby causing the suffering of the population. A letter from George Thomson, the British Minister of State in the Foreign Office, shows Britain’s response to this argument was the formal (and indeed the actual) position that they had no responsibility for the affairs of the sultanate, which was a sovereign independent state. As a consequence, the British stated that they were in no position to advise the Sultan directly.

We have repeatedly taken our stand on this position in face of attempts by U.N. committees and others (such as the Saudi government) to get us to admit to some responsibility for the internal affairs of Muscat and Oman, and I fear that if we gave any indication of a willingness to intervene- even from humanitarian motives (except of course in relation to British subjects) this would prove the thin edge of the wedge (UKNA, BC1081/7, 1965, 22nd October 1965).

In response to international criticism, the Sultan also prevented journalists from entering Oman. This move was supported by the British. This suggests that the British were more interested in securing their own interests than improving the conditions of people in Oman. In a letter from D.C. Carden to Sir William Luce on 15th January 1966, it was noted that, “...uncontrolled or premature entry of journalists in the sultanate would do more harm than good... could be allowed to travel to the sultanate as soon as there was some evidence of development” (UKNA, BC 1017/2, 17th January 1966). British diplomats came to realise that any decision to delay the development of Oman would be likely to form a counter-opinion that might embarrass them and potentially cause others to blame the situation in Oman on them. Therefore, they made attempts,

to try and persuade the Sultan that pressures of public opinion cannot be ignored in the U.K. even if they can in the Sultanate, and that if H.M.G. are to continue to support him as effectively as they would wish, he owes it to them to help on this issue (UKNA, BC 1017/2, 17th January 1966).

British diplomacy also considered the conflict from an international angle, seeking to avoid being drawn into the internal war of another state, especially given the damage already done to the British reputation by the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by President Nasser in 1956. Secret documents suggested the solution to avoiding international condemnation was to crush any resistance to Sultan Said as soon as possible. In a letter written from Carden to Luce position on 15th January 1966, as the Dhofar rebellion emerged, he stated that:

A possible objection to this plan is the political embarrassment that we might suffer if it becomes known that British aircraft were being used in support in this internal security operation in Sultanate territory. But there is no reason otherwise why we should not meet the request of a friendly government, and there are good arguments for doing so. It is very much in our interests that this rebel group should be eliminated as speedily as possible, lest its existence and success will become widely known and therefore an international embarrassment to us (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 69).

In 1958 Britain agreed to provide annual subsidies to the Sultan for a “civil development program in the sultanate at the rate of £77,000 and £50,000 per annum”(UKNA, F.O., BC1102/16, 1965; UKNA, BC 1051/15, 1965). Under the 1958 agreement, the British Government also agreed that they would provide secondary personnel to the Sultan of Oman Armed Forces (SAF) and meet their salaries and other expenses incurred in the UK, in addition to providing assistance towards the cost of the SAF themselves. They also agreed to meet the cost of the Sultan of Oman’s Air Force, including that of the necessary secondary personnel. It was estimated that recruitment expenditure would amount to £67,950 (9 lakhs) and the British government made provision to meet this cost (UKNA, BC 1051/15, 1965).

British government sources also followed the development of the revolution and the increasing danger posed by the rebels after the Hamrin Conference. An official document warned that the life of the British in the region had become dangerous, especially those who were working in the RAF base in Salalah. The diplomats therefore urged the Sultan to take action in order to avert this serious threat:

Her Majesty’s Government have become increasingly concerned about the problem in the area and the revolt in Dhofar in particular. We have a special worry that British

personnel, both civilian and RAF, are finding themselves in increasing danger from the rebel movement. (UKNA, NBM10/2, 1970).

An important point within the agreement, signed between the two countries in 1958, was the permission granted for British troops to operate in two air bases, in Salalah and Masirah. The agreement stipulated that British forces were be entitled to use the two bases together or to withdraw from both bases. After the rebels increased the attack on Salalah base, the British side requested permission to withdraw and settle in Masirah. This was refused under the conditions of the agreement, meaning that the British were forced to enter the war to protect the base in Salalah. In this way, the Sultan achieved his aim of ensuring that the British troops were involved into the conflict, which was to be highly significant in the events of the Dhofar War.

Because of its economic situation, the United Kingdom was not able to help extensively in the development of Oman (UKNA, FCO 8/569, FR: BC1/2, 1967). However, the reasons that encouraged the British government to support Sultan Said's regime were clarified in a very important document, entitled "Philosophy", which states that:

The philosophy behind the Muscat civil development subsidy has been as follows. A friendly and stable regime in Muscat is important to our political position in the Arabian Peninsula and affords us essential military facilities. We have in the past had to intervene militarily to support the Sultan against rebellion in the interior. This has caused us considerable international embarrassment; to avoid a repetition of this we pay the Sultan a substantial military subsidy to maintain armed forces to deter future rebellion (UKNA, BC1051/10, 1965). (For the full document, see Appendix 3).

'Philosophy' emphasised the importance of British national interests in the Sultanate of Oman and clearly indicated the need to support the regime in order to achieve these interests. Before their official withdrawal from Yemen in 1967, Britain also contributed to the drawing of Oman's border in the Dhofar region with South Yemen. This was an important step towards the protection of Omani national security and ensuring its long term stability by defusing potential border crises between Oman and Yemen (UKNA, BC1081/7, 1965). Furthermore, the Sultan actively exploited his relations with the British in several areas, such as the creation of the first radio station in Oman. Said also requested the contribution of British experts and advisers in the field of petroleum, as stated in a classified British document (UKNA, BC 1052/3, 1965). The same document showed that the British position was that they were willing to help develop Oman and the Sultan's government when the export of oil began:

The Sultan's administration is very rudimentary and inefficient. Before the changes which will accompany the beginning of oil production in 1967, the Sultan

recognizes the serious weaknesses and the need for change and has therefore asked for expert for about a month (UKNA, BC 1052/3, 1965).

The diplomatic position of the British was to support Sultan Said in the hope that he would make more progressive development after exporting oil and receiving the needed money required for those improvements. The Sultan clarified that he had no intention to start developments until the export of oil began.

2.2: The role of Jamal Abdel Nasser

Jamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970) was one of the foremost Arab leaders opposing colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s. He led the Free Officer Movement in Egypt that overthrew the monarchy on 23rd July 1952 and was later appointed as the President of the Republic of Egypt on 23rd June 1956. It is generally agreed that his greatest achievements in Egypt were the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956 and laying the foundation stone of the High Dam. He remained President of Egypt and the leader of Arab nationalism until his death on 28th September 1970. Through his revolutionary ideology, Nasser had a profound impact on the Arab world, including in Oman, influencing the hearts and minds of the people across the Arab nations.

Many people were influenced by the Arab national tide in the 1950s, especially in the wake of the defeat of the combined force of Israel, Britain and France by Egypt in 1956. The Dhofaris were among those Arab people influenced by the Arab national ideology, largely due to the dire injustice under which many lived in Oman, especially in Dhofar. This situation played into the hands of the Arab nationalists because of Sultan Said's role in the oppression and the accusations of his collaboration with the British government (Al Amri, 2012, p. 64). Nasser had successfully supported Yemen's southern revolution against British colonialism until its independence on 30th November 1967, after which he established a union of Egypt and Syria to create the so-called United Arab Republic in 1958. He had further aspirations to unify the 22 Arab countries and it was this climate in which his beliefs took root in Dhofar. In fact, Egypt played a major role in the cooperation between the rebel leaders in Dhofar and the rebels in Southern Yemen (Bahbahani, 1984, pp. 144-145). Nasser played a major role in the unification of the three organisations into "The Liberation of Dhofar", providing rebels with aid, in order to create a strong national front like the National Front of South Yemen, which had successfully freed Yemen from British rule.

2.2.1: The influence of Nasserite principles on the revolution leaders

In the Arab nationalist movement (otherwise known as Nasserite, after Abdul Nasser), the leaders of the revolution found ideology and motive to liberate them from the Sultan's rule. It was a particularly attractive and compelling movement for Dhofaris, who felt that they were under occupation, as they believed that Britain indirectly occupied Oman under the cover of international conventions through the British Resident commissioner in Muscat (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 47). It has been argued that it was the construction of the air base in Dhofar during World War II that made the Dhofaris realise the degree of influence held by the British (Abbas, 1986, p. 103). These factors contributed to the Dhofaris feeling that the British exerted too much control over their country, which led them to push for separation from the remainder of Oman. The aforementioned spread of Arab nationalism and anti-imperialism in the area, principally supported by Egypt and Abdul Nasser, confirmed the direction of their movement.

The first statement of the Dhofar front, which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, stated an intention to free the Dhofaris from the British (DLF, 1974, p. 9). Sheikh Saleh, one of the important Omani tribal Sheikhs of that era, stated that Britain was the absolute enemy of Arabs, working hard to separate them and sow disunity (Oman Imamate Publications, 1945, pp. 6-7). As part of the overall atmosphere in the Arab world and the growing influence of the Nasserites, one of the organisations formed in Dhofar shifted to the *At Tayyār an Nāṣṣerī*, otherwise known as "The Local Organisation of the Arab Nationalist Movement". The organisation successfully recruited many young Dhofari immigrants in other Gulf countries in the pursuit of Arab nationalism. This movement can be defined as the belief that the Arab people share one identity, united by language, culture, history, geography and interests, and that one Arab state will be established to unite all Arab states into one entity. The first statement of the revolution carried many signs of the influence of Nasserite ideology. For example, the statement addressed the Dhofari people as the (Arab people in Dhofar) and it focused on the Arab identity of Dhofar as a part of the Arab homeland (People of the Arab Nation in the South and the Gulf and in every inch of the land of Arabism). In addition, it requested the provision of financial and moral support for the armed struggle in the Arab Dhofar. Importantly, the document also emphasised the belief of the Dhofar Liberation Front in Unity of the Arab Nation, which would eventually lead to Revolutionary Coalescence with revolutionary organisations in the Arab Gulf and the South. The statement ended by founding a conference to be held in the mountains of Dhofar and proposed the adoption of a

slogan “long live Dhofar, Free and Arab” and “long live the Arab Nation Front”, which reflected the influence of the Nasserites on the rebels. As part of the support of the United Arab Republic, the Nasserite Subhi Abdul Al Hamid, commander of military operations, trained many of the Front members (approximately 160 soldiers) and provided them with weapons in 1963 (Haglawi, 2003, pp. 310-311).

The support that Nasser provided for the revolution indicated his desire to achieve Egyptian national interests through forging close ties with the rebels. This support included a direct role played by the Egyptians, with three Egyptian officers spending three months in Oman studying the topography and talking to Omani rebel contacts inside the country (Barut, 1996 p. 395). Furthermore, Cairo became the media activity centre for the Dhofar liberation front (Haglawi, 2003, p. 310) and supplied fighters with money and weapons during the first phase of the revolution (1965-1967). Abdulkader Hatem, the Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt (1962-1966), stated that Arab nationalism was at its climax during Abdul Nasser’s era (1954-1970), manifesting itself in a political and military uprising across the Gulf that had a huge influence upon the revolutionaries in Dhofar. Likewise Sheikh Saleh, one of the most important tribal leaders in Oman, quoted Abdul Nasser in his speech to Omanis, saying,

as the greatest President Abdul Nasser says: we will fight, we will fight, we will fight until the last drop of our blood, we will not give up, we are going to win, God with us, weapons in our hands and pluck in our hearts (Imamate Office, 1958, p. 8).

Ahmed Al Falahi, an intellectual and one of the founders of the radio in Oman in 1970, claimed that a wide variety of people were listening to the famous (Arab Voice) radio, which was broadcast from Cairo (Interview Ahmed Al Falahi, 13th June 2012)(Appendix 4 shows an example of how this radio supported the revolution in Dhofar). This “radical support” reached the revolutionaries in Dhofar and provided military techniques through broadcasts, stating that “we must take-over the enemy weapons to arm new units in the liberation army, it is a war of life or death, we have to obtain the perfect military tactics for the civil war which is hit and run” (Halliday, 2008, p. 340).

Records also exist of the Dhofari case being mentioned in the Egyptian press, which considered it as one of the essential issues in Oman at that time. The press also included some information about the Dhofar Liberation Front, with the Egyptian newspaper media reporting that “21 British soldiers were killed and a soldier was wounded during an attack on British bases by the Dhofari liberation army force (The News Newspaper, 9th November, 1965, p. 6). Six days later, the

press added that 11 soldiers had been killed and another 7 wounded during a clash between the liberation army in Dhofar and a British caravan in Hamrin region (The News Press, 1965, p. 4). The next day, it was reported that the liberation army force had shot down a military plane, destroying it completely and killing the pilot and three other soldiers (The News Press, 1965, p. 4). The Egyptian media (Republic Press) wrote a front page story about the visit of a delegation from the Dhofar Liberation Front to Cairo to hold talks with Egyptian officials in the Arab League about the military situation in Dhofar (UKNA, F.C.O., ME2655, 1967). A clear example of the Egyptian media support for the Dhofar revolutionaries can be seen in the following speech that was broadcast to the rebels from Cairo:

Brothers in rebellious Dhofar... our armed revolution also aims at achieving for the people freedom, national independence and a dignified free life...forced the tottering regime of the sultan of Muscat. They are using every means to get supporters and friends among the sons of the rebellious people of Dhofar. ... The best evidence that the regime of the Sultan of Muscat and imperialism wants to liquidate the people of Dhofar was the act of withdrawing the silver Riyal from the public and replacing it with a nickel Riyal. However, brothers, no matter what tricks imperialism resorts to, the revolution continues to gain strength and power, and freedom from the regime of imperialism and the Sultan is bound to be achieved. As long as we are vigilant, united and in solidarity, neither imperialism or the Sultan of Muscat nor the traitors can dominate us...so forward the sons of the people of Dhofar. Forward to the sacrifice of blood and lives in the fields of struggle and battle. Forward to freedom and independence, dignity and honour, our struggling masses (UKNA, F.C.O., ME2655, 1967).

2.3: Organisations forming Dhofar Liberation Front and their union

At the beginning of the revolution, the Dhofaris initially formed a number of secret groups. The Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) was subsequently formed through the union of the three most important of these organisations. In seniority they were as follows: The Dhofar Branch of the Arab National Movement (ANM), the Dhofar Charitable Association (DCA), and the Dhofar Soldiers Organisation (DSO). These organisations will be discussed in detail below and briefly compared.

2.3.1: Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement (ANM)

This organisation was formed in the late 1950s. Its membership comprised a large number of young Dhofaris who were working in the Arab Gulf States. The headquarters of the organisation

was in Kuwait, although it also had links with the central administration of the Arab National Movement in Beirut. The organisation took the form of the majority of the political organisations that were prevalent in the Arab world at that time and adopted the same ideological thoughts as the Arab nationalist movement, calling for the glorification of Arabs and the establishment of a new, united country on the basis of blood, language, history and geography. Nationalism was very popular among Arab people at that time, especially after the rise of Nasser, and the union between Egypt and Syria under the name of the United Arab Republic and, it can be said that the Dhofar Liberation Front was derived from the Nasserite ideology.

The Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement was considered to be the least important organisation in the DLF, in terms of both number and popularity in Dhofar. However, unlike the others, its members were an elected group with political maturity (Al Amri, 2012, p. 67). Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Ghassani was one of the most important rebel leaders from its formation until 1986, when he left revolutionary activity and returned to the Sultanate of Oman. Another well-known member of the organisation was Ali bin Ahmed Al Ketaini Al Rawas. He spent 5 years in the prison of Sultan Said bin Taimur until his release in 1970, after which he worked for the government of Sultan Qaboos and was even the Director of Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah for many years. Said bin Masood Muraikh bait Said was an instrumental rebel figure at the beginning of the revolutionary action. As a result he was imprisoned for five years in Jalali fort (1965-1970) in Muscat, until he was released and rejoined the rebels. He is still alive at the time of writing. Said bin Faraj Al Rawas and his brother Mohammed bin Faraj Al Rawas were among the figures arrested by the Armed Forces of Sultan Said in 1965. They spent 5 years in jail and then they joined the work for the Government of Sultan Qaboos (Interview with current diplomat, 2nd August 2014, RA3). These figures are particularly significant in this context, except those who were captured, because that they took control of the revolution after the second conference in 1967. Most importantly, Mohammed Al Ghassani became the first leader of the revolution after the deportation of Musalim bin Nafal in 1968.

2.3.2: Dhofar Charitable Association (DCA)

This organisation was formed in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia in 1962 (Al Nafisi, 1976) as an offshoot of the clandestine Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement (ANM).

Most of the founders were Dhofari who worked for the Arab American Oil Company (Aramco). The group had hidden objectives behind an overt goal. Its apparent objectives were charitable, such as the construction of mosques and helping the poor in Dhofar. However, its real objective was to incite the Dhofari to armed aggression against Sultan Said bin Taimur and his regime. The DCA enjoyed good relations with Imam Ghalib bin Ali Al Hinai, the last Imam and Governor of the Interior of Oman (1913-1957), who British troops toppled in favour of Sultan Said during the Al Jabal Al Akhdhar (Green Mountain) War in 1959 (Al Amri, 2012, p. 67). The DCA was the most widely accepted and influential organisation in Dhofar before the integration of the three main groups, not least because of its charitable work. It also had a number of important external relations, especially with Imam Ghalib and with Egypt, the undisputed leader of the National Liberation Movement against western colonisation in the Arab World. The top leaders of the Association were also influential figures in Dhofar social life. Most of the leaders lived in Salalah, where the DCA enjoyed wide spread popularity (Al Amri, 2012, p. 67).

There were many high profile and influential figures in the Association, such as Sheikh Mussalem bin Nufl Al Kathiri, who is generally credited as firing the bullet that began the Dhofar Revolution in April 1963. He was the main figure in the drive to unify Dhofar's various groups under one powerful and effective leadership, although he later worked for the Government of Sultan Qaboos as an undersecretary. Other influential figures include Salem bin Mohammed Shaaban Al Ojaili who was one of the founders of the revolutionary action and one of the top members in the Association. He was arrested in 1965 and imprisoned for five years. After his release, Al Ojaili also worked for the Government of Sultan Qaboos as an undersecretary. Until recently, he held the position of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil and Gas in the Sultanate of Oman. An important rebel in Kuwait, Mohammed bin Alawi Ali Moqaibel, also continues to hold significant power. After chairing the liaison committee in Kuwait, he joined the Government of Sultan Qaboos and is currently an ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other important members include Yousuf bin Alawi Abdullah Ibrahim, who has been the Minister for Foreign Affairs for more than 15 years, Salem Bakhit Zidan Al Burama, Mussalem bin Amor Al Burama, Awad bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Said bin Ahmed Jaeidi Bait Fadhil, Ahmed Thairen Kashoob, and Mohammed Abdullah Al Bahar Al Rawas. Al Rawas joined the revolutionary action at the beginning and is still alive today. He entered government when Sultan Qaboos took power and was eventually appointed as the Minister of Information, a post that he occupied from 1979 until 2001. Other key members include Salem Abdullah Al Bahar Al Rawas, Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Salem Al Marhoon, and Sheikh

Al Faqih Shaaban bin Salem Ali Al Ojaili. The Sheikh was a religious scholar, who died on 10th March 1994 (Interview Rebel Leader, 2nd August 2014, RA3). The orientation of the association was generally religious in general, rather than in favour of communism and Arab nationalism. As a consequence of this, their relationship with Saudi Arabia and Imam Ghalib was good.

It is worth mentioning here that the aims of this organisation were the construction of mosques and support for the poor and needy, such as through distribution of essential supplies. The leaders of the organisation, who were committed to Islam, also enjoyed a close relationship with Saudi Arabia. Their relationship with Egypt was largely attributable to Nasser speaking out against those leaders who cooperated with imperialism power. As Nasser considered the Saudi leaders to be serving as the right hand of American imperialism in the region, he was instigating people to overturn Saudi leaders and hence there are huge intellectual differences between the Arab National movement and the Dhofar Charitable Association the effects of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.3.3: Dhofar Soldiers' Organisation (DSO)

The DSO was formed out of the integration of three small groups of Dhofari soldiers working in the Trucial States (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain. The first clandestine group was formed in 1961 in the "Trucial Oman Scouts" in UAE, now known as the UAE Army. This was followed in 1962 by a group of Dhofaris working in the Qatar military forces and later, in 1963, the formation of another organisation called the Bahrain Defence Force. These three clandestine groups eventually united in 1964, under the name "Dhofar Soldiers' Organisation" (DSO).

The first union was achieved by three soldiers. The first of these was Mohammed bin Said Qoton who was the representative of the Dhofar soldiers in the Bahrain Defence Force. He reached the position of deputy commander of the Dhofar Liberation Army, which he eventually left after the Hamrin Conference. He joined the Special Force of Sultan Qaboos and reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He is still alive. The next leader, Mahad bin Suhail Sirad Al Amri, represented the soldiers in the Qatar Force. He was one of the leaders at the beginning of the revolutionary action, leading to an accusation of treason and his subsequent execution. Finally, the leader of the soldiers in the UAE was Ahmed bin Suhail Al Mashani, who unified the soldiers into a single

organisation, achieving the first union between the members of Dhofar organisations who were working in the military forces of each of the three Gulf States.

After its formation, the DSO became the driving force to unify the other political organisations. After the DSO was formed, four people were nominated to represent the organisation in negotiations to unify revolutionary action in Dhofar with the other organisations in KSA and Kuwait: Mahad bin Suhail Sirad Al Amri, Mussalem bin Saad Omrah Al Kathiri, Ahmed bin Salem Al Nubi Al Kathiri, and Salem bin Mohammed Mahad Al Amri (Interview Ali Ghawas, 23rd January 2014).

The DSO was likely the most important organisation in the DLF, at least in terms of military power. Seventy percent of the first fighters who carried out military operations were from the DSO and its members can be described as the most willing to sacrifice their lives for the revolution, as well as the least likely to be working in pursuit of personal gain. However, despite its obvious importance and the significant role it played in unifying revolutionary activities, as well as providing the largest number of top fighters, the DSO is the least well known in historical writings about the Dhofar Revolution. This might be at least partially explained by its secret combat nature, which was not involved in politics.

During the 1950s, soldiers left Oman to work in the military and security agencies of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain. As Qatar is situated between the UAE and Bahrain, the majority of their meetings were held there. The soldiers were close, especially because they all spoke Jabali, the language of the mountains of Dhofar. One of the reasons that this organisation was the most essential military arm of the revolutionaries is because its members were experienced from work in other Gulf countries. They decided to join the revolutionaries in Dhofar believing that it was their ethical responsibility to rescue the governorate from Sultan Said. The ideology of the soldiers was predicated upon a moral responsibility for improving the living conditions of the citizens of Dhofar. Since they were military trained, the members of this group believed that they were able forcefully to end the rule of Sultan Said, thereby providing the Dhofari people with a decent life. The members of the DSO were not ideologically oriented, because most of the soldiers came from minor tribes in Dhofar, rather than from strong tribes which had clear ideological tendencies, like those of the leaders of other organisations.

2.3.4: Comparing the Three Organisations

When making a comparison between the three organisations, their location clearly influenced the formation of their ideologies. The Dhofar branch of ANM in Kuwait was heavily influenced by the Arab nationalism that prevailed at that time, marginalising the teaching of Islam (Barut, 1996, p. 395). Similarly, the DCA members were influenced by their life in the KSA, the birthplace of the Islamic religion and the home of the exiled Imam Ghalib bin Ali Al Hinai. The charitable works required under Islamic law, such as building mosques and helping the poor, were carried out by the DCA and served to attract the largest possible number of people in Dhofar in their attempt to overthrow the rule of Sultan Said (Dhiab, 1984, p. 87). Finally, the DSO was influenced by the military situation in the Trucial States of the Coast of Oman, Qatar and Bahrain, where British occupation was imposed by military power. The Trucial States of the Coast of Oman, now known as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain, remained under British occupation through agreements with the princes of the coast. This lasted until the withdrawal of Britain from those states in late 1971. This situation resulted in the ideology of the soldiers being a hybrid of combat and revolt through the use of armed force.

Of the three organisations, the Dhofar branch of the ANM was the oldest and the most politically mature. It combined with the DCA to form a single organisation. Meanwhile the DSO was formed quickly in response to fast-moving events and was the first union to rebel against the rule of Sultan Said. It is important to note that all three organisations which had similar living conditions and geographic origins in Dhofar were formed by members who had one similar perspective, namely the desire to end the rule of Sultan Said. The majority of the nationalists and the Association members were from Salalah, although some came from the desert to the north. However, most of the soldiers were from the mountains of Dhofar.

Overall, each organisation had a special defining feature: the ANM was characterised by organisational and political maturity; the DCA was cultured because of its dependence on people living in cities, leading it to establish effective international relations; and the DSO was characterised by tough warriors of the Dhofar Mountains, who were driven by tribal unity. Thus, the union of the organisations brought together organisational and political maturity with education and military expertise which gave great impetus to the revolution.

2.3.5: The Union of the Dhofari Revolutionary Organisations

The beginning of the Dhofar conflict can be traced to an operation carried out by Mussalem bin Nufl Al Kathiri, who shot at a car belonging to a British oil company which was in a contract with the Omani government. Although this could be called an individual revolution, the action resonated throughout Dhofar. It was important to support this single act, which was well known in both local and foreign circles, and which was widely considered to be the beginning of a new phase of action against the reign of Sultan Said bin Taimur. Many parties wanted to make use of this action in the fulfilment of their aims. As a consequence, bin Nufl, the plotter and the executor, sent a delegation to Saudi Arabia to make



Fig. 10: logo of DLF.

Note that the map contains Oman and UAE
(Source: Royal Army of Oman Archives,
RAO, DLF, 12)

contact with the Kingdom, in order to seek the material and political support of Imam Ghalib bin Ali. This move led the eastern region of the KSA to become the focus of Dhofari attention and the headquarters of the representatives of bin Nufl. Two main groups moved to KSA in 1964, the first of which was the previously mentioned group who sent a delegation of DSO from Qatar to Dammam in eastern Saudi Arabia to represent them in negotiations with the other organisations. This was the start of the early stages of the Union of the Dhofari Revolutionary Organisations. Negotiations were undertaken with Imam Ghalib regarding aid motives and the joint work to achieve their common goals, namely the liberation of Dhofar from the rule of Sultan Said. It was a major shift in the Dhofari Revolutionary path, representing the first time in recent history that they had put aside tribalism and ethnicity to stand together against a common enemy. Despite its opponents and those parties ambivalent to the revolt, the majority supported the rebellion (Haglawi, 2003, pp. 310- 311).

In Kuwait, other participants continued to discuss the integration of the three organisations, reaching an agreement on 26th December 1964 that replaced the individual groups with the Dhofar Liberation Front. To achieve this purpose, a pentagonal committee was formed with two members from DCA, namely Salem Shaaban Al Ojaili and Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Marhoon; two members from DSO, namely Mahad Sirad Al Amri and Mussalem bin Saad Al Kathiri; and one

member from ANM, namely Mohammad Ahmad Al Ghassani. (Interview Ali Ghawas, 23rd January 2014). These men were clearly selected as representatives of all three organisations. This Pentagonal Committee, was given three major tasks: preparing for the First Congress; making contact with a country willing to host the First Congress, with Iraq as the main contender; and making contact with key figures in the Dhofari organisations to assign delegations who would attend the First Congress. The extended meetings held in Kuwait were effectively the beginning of the integration of the three organisations (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 87).

2.3.6: Representatives of bin Nufl in Saudi Arabia

When Sheikh Mussalem bin Nufl arrived in Dammam in KSA, the news of his operation was widespread. He met Imam Ghalib bin Ali, who provided unconditional assistance to the Dhofaris, and gifted him with weapons, mines and cash. Bin Nufl left a number of Dhofari representatives with the Imam. Foremost among these was Said bin Ali Jaih Quton, who had tried to lead armed operations against the Forces of the Sultan in 1964. The other representatives were: Said Suhail Al Ghadhban bait Kathir, Said bin Samhan Al Mashali, Ahmed bin Suhail Quintah Al Shanfari, Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Nahari, Hafeedh bin Abdullah Salmeen Al Rawas, and Masood bin Salem Jaaboub. Bin Nufl and his group eventually managed to successfully deliver the weapons and mines to Dhofar in 1963. In addition to this, Imam Ghalib provided money for the group to form armed organisations against his opponent, Sultan Said. Volunteers willing to take up arms against the Sultan received their initial instruction at the Imam's training camp in Basra, Iraq, which had thirty volunteers under training by mid-1964, under the supervision of Said bin Ali Jaih Quton (Interview Salim Kashoob, 17th August 2013).

When the four representatives of the DSO (Maha Sirad Al Amri, Mussalembin Saad Al Kathiri, Ahmed Al Nubi and Salem AlAttar) arrived in Saudi Arabia, they were joined by another delegation representing nationalists who had come from Kuwait. This group comprised Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Ghassani, Salem bin Zidan Al Burami, Said bin Ahmed Jaeidi bait Fadhil, Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Rawas, Said bin Masood Muraikh bait Said, and Mussalem bin Amor Al Burami (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 75-77). The two delegations met with the seven representatives of bin Nufl and the members of DCA. The assembly had various discussions in an extended meeting that reached almost unanimous agreement that the revolutionary action against the rule of Sultan Said

should be well organised. A meeting with the Imam was also necessary to gain an understanding of his motives for providing support to the Dhofaris, as well as to explain clearly their general view to him. For these reasons, a delegation was assigned to meet with Imam Ghalib in 1964. This group included the bin Nafal group, Imam Ghalib's group and a total of 20 rebels from other groups. Those who reached Dhofar participated in the first conference and in the armed struggle against Sultan Said.

2.3.7: The relationship between DLF and Imam Ghalib bin Ali

The first chapter outlined the important Imamate issue in Oman, which was ruled over as an independent entity in Ad Dakhiliyah (the interior region) by Oman. The attempts of the British oil companies to include this province in its activities had encouraged Sultan Said to join the region to the territories of Oman. However, the Omani Imam was still able to prevent foreign oil companies from entering his territories. Saudi Arabia supported the Imamate leaders, due to existing hostility with Sultan Said with regards to the border dispute around the Al Buraimi Oasis. Nevertheless, British military air and naval intervention resulted in the defeat of Imam Ghalib in 1957, who ruled the interior of Oman with the accordance with the traditions of the Ibadism doctrine (see section 2.3.1.2 for more details), after which he moved to Saudi Arabia, where he started a front against the Sultan's policy and the British presence in Oman. Imam Ghalib's government, in exile in Saudi Arabia, was one of the destinations of the Dhofari leaders after the rebellion in Dhofar had erupted. There, they attempted to get help against their common enemy, the Sultan and the British who supported him.

The DLF delegation met Imam Ghalib bin Ali in Dammam. "The first question of the delegation to the Imam was the reason for the Imam helping the Dhofaris, to which he replied: that they had a common goal: to fight Said bin Taimur and overthrow his regime. The second question was to know what was required from the Dhofaris. The Imam replied that currently, he was not asking for anything. Their goal was to eliminate the regime and they could ask the Arab Countries to help and provide material aid. Later, the members of the delegation explained their general point of view by saying they neither believed in the cause of the Sultan nor in the cause of the Imamate. Similarly, they were not going to fight on behalf of anyone neither the Americans nor British. They were seeking our freedom, independence and rights. If he was giving aid and support without covert

or overt conditions, then it was welcomed and therefore they ask for his political, military, financial and diplomatic support by facilitating their movements using the passport of Imamate of Oman. If, however, his support was conditional, they would consider his terms and decide accordingly" (Interview Ali Ghawas, 23rd January 2014). After a series of dialogues, the Imam agreed to provide unconditional assistance to the Dhofar rebels. A coordination committee was then named to supervise the delivery of the aid supplied by the Imam and to coordinate the political and military requirements of the rebels. The members of this committee were as follows: Awadh bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Salem bin Bukhait Al Burami, and Mussalem bin Amor Al Burami (Interview Salim Kashoob, 1st March 2014). This membership was clearly chosen because it represented the three organisations.

In November 1964, the representatives of the Dhofari Organisations were holding extensive meetings about how best to integrate the various Dhofari groups into one organisation. Said bin Jaih, who was a leader of Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement, was summoned to attend the meeting in Kuwait, which he attended with a group of colleagues. However, the participants were unable to convince bin Jaih to join the united front. As a consequence, he returned to Saudi Arabia to terminate the understanding with the Imam, who in turn halted coordination with the Committee that had been assigned by the organisations, telling them that the assistance would be limited to representatives of bin Nufl. The representatives agreed that the aid the Imam provided was limited to bin Nufl and that the two Dhofari organisations did not have any moral obligation towards the Imam for the assistance he offered (Al Amri, 2012, p. 75).

The main reason for this disengagement was the disagreement between Said bin Ali Jaih and the Dhofari Charity Association, led by Mussalem bin Nufl. Said bin Ali Jaih was a man who had wanted more power for himself. Bin Jaih had been training recruits at the Imam's training camp in Basra in Iraq when he received the news of the agreement between the Imam and the DSO delegation. He called for a demonstration by his soldiers, then stopped the training and returned to Saudi Arabia to terminate the agreement between the Imam and the delegation. There, Said bin Jaih asked Imam Ghalib to support the rebels through representatives from various organisations, rather than through Mussalem bin Nufl, who represented one of the three organisations that formed the DLF. The reason for Jaih's action was the complaint that the aid was only serving bin Nafal, who he rejected as the representative of the Imam. This thinking illustrated significant ideological differences among the rebels (Interview Mohammed Al Amri, 29th February 2016).

In summary, this meant that the local organisation of the Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement that Said bin Jaih represented was an Arab nationalist group, whereas the Dhofar Charitable Association of Mussalem bin Nufl was religious and was close to the Imam. The ANM was explicitly opposed to the imperialist powers and any leaders who cooperated with them, as well as any monarchies or religious rulers, like Imam Ghalib, who were described as backward powers. At the beginning of the revolution, Egypt was in contact with the local Arab nationalist organisations, while Saudi Arabia supported the Dhofari Charity Association via the Imam. The support offered by the KSA to the rebels was intended to establish close ties with the anti-authority powers on one hand and to contain the expansion of the anti-monarchy Nasserites on the other (Dhiab, 1984, p. 90). Despite as a result of the disintegration of the Imam's role, the character of the Union was dominated by the rebellion leaders, which continued to receive support from Saudi Arabia through the DCA.

2.4: The Beginning of the Revolution

The actual beginning of the revolution in Dhofar is measured from the shots fired by Sheikh Mussalem bin Nufl, which killed a British employee. Some considered this a purely individual tribal move, for the Sheikh sought to take revenge on Sultan Said bin Taimur, who had imprisoned him on multiple occasions in early 1952. While in Mirbat, he had used a transistor radio, a device that had been banned, to listen to broadcasts of the Voice of the Arabs from Cairo. The radio station vociferously attacked western colonialism and the Arabian sultans, emirs and kings who enjoyed good relations with the imperialist powers, and who were therefore described as traitors. Upon hearing that he was listening to illegal broadcasts, the Sultan gave orders for bin Nufl to be jailed. This proved reason enough for him to later merge the Dhofari groups into one organisation. Sheikh Mussalem participated in the meetings of the DCA, which were often held in the house of Sheikh Salem bin Mohammed Ghassani. Sheikh Mussalem bin Nufl, Said Al Hamar and Nasser Al Mashali staged the ambush in Harit area or (Um Al Khashab) between Salalah and Thumrait, in order to cut the road used by the oil company vehicles. He did not tell them of his intention, instead preferring to execute the operation with the help of his cousins (Al Amri, 2012, p. 68). Their objective was to start the revolution and to seize vehicles that could be used to cross the Empty Quarter towards Saudi Arabia. Three days later, two vehicles arrived from the John Mecom-Pure Oil Company, which had been granted a concession to search for oil in the Dhofar region. The

vehicles were attacked and one of their military escorts was killed. Both drivers, one from Yemen and the other from Italy, were released. The news of the attack spread widely and was quickly welcomed by Dhofaris at home and abroad. Certainly, Peter Sichel, who witnessed the war, made it clear to the researcher that most of the population in Dhofar supported the rebels in the early years of the revolution (Interview Sichel, 10th December 2015).

This attack on 13th April 1963 is considered to be the beginning of the Dhofar rebellion. However, Sichel considers the initial meeting in Kuwait on 26th December 1964 to be the actual start of the conflict, while others argue that 9th June 1965 was the actual date, because this is when explicit approval to commence the revolution was officially given, after the First Congress in Al Wadi Al Khabeer (The Great Valley) in the central mountains of Dhofar. The revolutionaries asserted that this date was an important official reference point (Interview Sichel, 10th December 2015). However, it is probable that without the shots of bin Nufl and his companions the Congress would not have been held nor would the revolution have been declared.

The Iraqi government agreed, upon the request of the Dhofari revolutionary groups, to host a congress in order to consolidate the various groups that opposed Sultan Said into a single organisation. The Iraqi government allocated one of its camps in northern Iraq for that purpose, as well as to train fighters in the guerrilla warfare necessary to wage effectively military operations in Dhofar. For this reason, some of the soldiers who had finished their mission from the Gulf countries went to the camp. Most of the 150 personnel who attended training had belonged to the previously mentioned Dhofari Soldiers Organisation (Barut, 1996, p. 354). However, security precautions led the rebels to shift their training facilities from Iraq to the mountains of Dhofar, which prevented Britain from carrying out acts against the revolutionaries abroad. This is important, because it demonstrates that British intelligence was actively operating in the area and was tracing the movements of the rebels, as a manifestation of its desire to eliminate the revolution in its infancy.

Three routes were identified back to Dhofar: by sea from Kuwait or Iraq through the Persian Gulf to the coast of Dhofar; by air from Kuwait to Yemen and then by land or sea to Dhofar; and the land route from Kuwait through Saudi Arabia and the vast desert of Rub' al Khali "The Empty Quarter" to Dhofar. Upon the arrival of the rebels, the conference would then be held in one of the caves in the mountains of Dhofar (Interview rebel leader, 26th January 2016, RA4). Since the return journey was extremely perilous, the first group of rebels returned by sea armed with weapons, some of which were bought and some having been provided by Iraq. Their boat sailed from the port of

Basra in Iraq, but the rebels were arrested by the Iranian Navy and handed over to the British authorities (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 88), after which they were imprisoned in Muscat. The second group decided to return via Yemen, under the pretence of visiting relatives. They flew from Kuwait to Aden and then went by sea to Salalah during the months of April and May 1965 (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 87). The arrests had a profound impact on the emerging revolution, especially as several important personalities had been captured, including Ali bin Ahmed Al Ketaini Al Rawas, Said bin Masood Muraikh bait Said, Said bin Faraj Al Rawas and his brother Mohammed bin Faraj Al Rawas (Interview with current diplomat, 2nd August 2014, RA3) (for more details, see section 2.3.1.1). The detainees were subjected to various torture in the prisons of Muscat and Salalah for five years, until they were freed by a general pardon, issued by Sultan Qaboos, in 1970. The third group, which included members from the bin Nufl faction, the men of Imam Ghalib, and 20 rebels from other groups, came via the Empty Quarter of Saudi Arabia and reached Dhofar safely (Interview rebel leader, 26th January 2016, RA4).

Though remote from the rest of Oman, the revolt in Dhofar suggested problems for Britain's national interests in the Sultanate as a whole. In April 1964, at the same time as the revolution began in the south, several fires occurred in the capital Muscat and Mutrah, destroying the homes of more than a hundred citizens and several facilities. It was theorised that sympathisers or front members in the south had deliberately started the fires to deliver a message to the Sultan and the British that the capital was not far from the hands of the revolution. It also effectively communicated to the north of Oman that the whole of the Sultanate was under threat (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 44-45).

British intelligence was watching the movements of the rebels abroad long before the outbreak of the revolution. A secret telegram from Bahrain to the Foreign Office dated 29th September 1964 reported that, "Training of Omani rebels is going on in Syria and Iraq and possibly elsewhere" (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 19). British analysis of potential outcomes at the time stated that,

This indicates the trouble which may be expected from small parties of rebels infiltrating back into Oman after they have completed their training. It is also likely that increased attempts will be made to smuggle arms by sea and land into the Sultanate' (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 19).

This intelligence may have enabled them to capture some of the returning groups.

Relations with regional countries Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and Egypt however facilitated communication between the rebel groups, as well as supporting them to start the revolution. Another important factor that contributed to the spread of the outbreak of the revolution was that bin Nufl who sparked the revolution was a well-known tribal leader “Sheikh” who enjoyed the support of his tribe and respect from the other tribes in Dhofar. In spite of British intelligence therefore the revolution rapidly spread.

2.4.1: The First Founding Conference in the Mountains of Dhofar

The first Congress was held on 1st June 1965, in a large cave in the mountains bordering what is known as the great valley. This was considered to signal the official start of the Dhofar Liberation Front, which was officially formed on 26th December 1964. During this conference, a joint command was elected, which contained twelve men (Al Amri, 2012, p. 84). It should be noted that despite the arrests of a number of key members of the revolution in April and May 1965, the conference was held as previously decided. This reflects the commitment and determination of the rebels to undertake the revolution at any cost. The conference was attended by representatives of the three organisations, as well as by a number of Dhofari rebels who belonged to the movement of Mussalem bin Nufl al Kithira. The Declaration of Armed Struggle document is provided in Appendix 5. The aims and commitments of the declaration can be summarised as follows: First, the organisations sought to end third party agreements in order to join the new front (Dhofar Liberation Front). Second, they continued with the armed struggle as the only means to overthrow Sultan Said’s regime. Third, the establishment of a national and constitutional Islamic rule. Fourth, the rebels are fighting only under the Dhofar Liberation Front’s umbrella. Fifth, a statement of the Armed Struggle Declaration to be adopted starting from 9th June 1965 to mark the death of Said bin Ghanim bin Salman Al Mashali Al Kathiri, first victim in Dhofar War. Finally, twelve members to be elected from Dhofar’s rebels. The document of the revolutionaries’ also mentioned the establishment of Islamic rule in Dhofar and the election of Mussalem bin Nufl, leader of the Dhofar Charitable Association, as the leader DLF of the Islamic-oriented leadership of the revolutionaries.

The Congress led to one national and constitutional government, with the terminology used in the convention being "regime in Oman not regime in Dhofar, indicating that the rebels were not exclusively pursuing independence for Dhofar". It is notable also that an assurance had also been

given that Islamic law would be the source of laws in the new regime in an attempt to please the Dhofari Charity Association. The convention was also drafted based on the approach advocated by the Arab Nationalist Movement in a step to please the nationalists. A questions arise here. For example, given that the revolution called for the Liberation of Dhofar, why did the conferences agree to establish constitutional, national governance in Oman, rather than focusing on Dhofar?

One of the former rebels indicated that these two questions were historical fallacies promoted by British diplomacy in an attempt politically and regionally to undermine the revolution. These myths would also create a good reason for the Sultan to eliminate the rebels under the cover of protecting his land (Rebel leader, 26th January 2016, RA4). It is also noticeable that the decision to mark 9th June as the date of official declaration of the armed struggle demonstrates clear appreciation and loyalty to the first victim of the revolution, providing a great stimulus to the other rebels to sacrifice themselves for its goals. Subsequently, the convention revolutionaries started to publicise their revolution, introducing it to the Dhofari people and the surrounding regions. The declaration was accompanied by a range of military operations carried out by the rebels against the forces of the Sultan. It seems to be clear that the initial aim of the revolution was to remove the rule of the Sultan from Dhofar only. However, with the gains that the rebels made on the ground, their aspirations grew to include the “liberation” of Oman, and with increasing victories, eventually the “liberation” of the entire Arabian Gulf.

2.4.2: The reaction of the Sultan and the status of his Armed Forces

The reaction of the Sultan towards the beginning of the rebellions was purely military, as mentioned by British documents (UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965) (Sultan Said’s reaction to the beginning of the rebellions is outlined in Appendix 6). This document also illustrates the concern of the British government about the outbreak of the revolution, which they feared could develop into a serious guerrilla war. These predictions predominantly related to the civilian problems facing the Sultan as a result of the revolution, with the military challenges being outlined in another document (UKNA, BC1015/13, 1965) (see appendix 7 for more details).

A memorandum discussed the position of the Sultanate and the Sultan’s force at the beginning of the rebellion:

...pointing to the weaknesses in the Sultan's administration and the dangers in the Sultan's isolation and his failure to associate his subjects in any way with his rule there seems to be little prospect of the Sultan changing his policy on the S.A.F. in the direction of a national army... We can use the shortage of seconded and contract officers to point to the need for him to make more use of local material for junior officers in his plans for expansion (UKNA, BC 1015/13, 1965).

The failure of the Sultan to associate his subjects with his rule in any way was and the relationships between the Sultan and other countries, tribal leaders, and even his own family, render his position difficult and unstable.

2.4.3: The Sultan relationships with neighbouring countries

The Sultan's unstable relationships with several of the neighbouring countries, especially Saudi Arabia, increased the internal difficulties of his governance. Importantly, Saudi Arabia was near to Oman, and shared a common borders with Dhofar in the west. King Faisal, the King of Saudi Arabia at that time, had a very negative impression of Sultan Said, as noted by a British report outlining the policy of Sultan Said:

Produced a really bitter tirade from Feisal against Sultan Said who he castigated as a detestable and tyrannical usurper who had no right to any place but Muscat and who should really go home where he belonged - India. This monstrous fraud was keeping rightful owners out of the land to which they belonged and which belonged to them... Feisal wished us to do something about the problem otherwise security and stability which he and we wished to see preserved would be in jeopardy. His last words to me when I took my leave were "do not forget what I told you about the Omanis" (UKNA, BS 1922/31, 1965).

Sultan Faisal described the rightful place for Sultan Said as India, perhaps because Sultan Said because this was the only other country with which Said had established a relationship. Sultan Said had also studied in India, and his father Timor, had taken one of his wives from India. However, it is important to note that Said's own mother was Omani from the royal family and generally referred to the attempt to minimise the hostility and ridicule that King Faisal expressed towards of Sultan Said (Interview Al Falahi, 31st March 2018). It seems that the enmity that the Saudis bore for the Sultan led them to support the revolutionaries during the first phase of the rebellion. Nevertheless, the support that the British provided to Sultan Said enraged King Faisal: "It is doubtful whether anything we say in defence of the Sultan's regime will make the slightest impression on Feisal" as stated in a telegram, From Jedda, to Foreign Office. (UKNA, BS 1922/31, 1965).

As a result of the poor relations that the Sultan had with Saudi Arabia, weapons were smuggled into Oman. This was particularly common for the revolutionaries across the Saudi borders with Dhofar, with one document written by D.J. McCarthy at the Arabian Department in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating:

Officer commanding R.A.F Salalah has today reported discovery by Sultan's armed forces, about thirty miles away, of a large cache of arms and ammunition believed to have been brought in overland recently from Salwa (inside the Saudi Arabian frontier with Qatar) by dissidents (UKNA, BC1016/34/B, 1965).

There is some evidence that Saudi Arabia increased support for the revolutionaries. McCarthy added that the British had obtained clear evidence in Muscat of the extent of Saudi support for the Dhofari dissidents. Moreover, he stated that the King's strong personal dislike for the Sultan meant that Saudi support was not limited to the training or arming of fighters. Their movements were also secured inside Saudi Arabia: "Mussalem bin Nufl's No. 2 in Dhofar had, under interrogation in Muscat, said not only that his convoy had come from Al Hasa but that it had had a Saudi escort" (UKNA, BC1016/34/B, 1965). The revolutionaries progressed by, benefitting extensively from Saudi support: "within the last week, Dhofar rebels have shown distinct signs of increased activity indicating both re-supply of arms and improved organisation" (UKNA, FCO 8/572, FR: BC1/4, 1968). As a consequence of this support, British policy from 1966 focused on cutting supply lines by blocking the land road to Saudi Arabia, McCarthy stated (Halliday, 2008, p. 260).

It is clear that the relations between the Dhofar groups and other countries in the region had a significant role in the course of events on the ground. This factor was not in favour of the Sultan, because of his hostility to the other countries of the region. In contrast, the good relations that the rebels enjoyed with neighbouring states helped to give their revolution great momentum. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Sultan Said was the one who decided not to communicate with his neighbours, despite the efforts of the British side to influence him in this regard. Whether this approach was ultimately correct, this position indicated that Sultan Said was the absolute decision maker of his foreign policy.

2.4.4: Britain involvement in the War

British diplomacy was afraid of potential international condemnation for its intervention, especially after the Suez War in 1954. M.S. Weir from Arabian Department stated that:

The Sultan intended to keep a section of the S.A.F permanently in Dhofar. He... undertakes general patrolling with his own forces without the assistance of our troops for this purpose. However, in view of the embarrassment that can be involved in the use of British troops to support a ruler... we should be very cautious about publicising our involvement (UKNA, BC1016/33 (B), 1965).

Ladwig (2008, pp. 106-108) explains that the British decided to remove their army from Aden and the Gulf between 1961-1969, with the intention to withdraw all British troops from the regions east of Suez by 1969. This decision was undertaken by the Labour government led by Harold Wilson in 1966” (Fielding, 2003, p. 230). Peterson (2011, pp. 2,77) argues that Wilson’s socialist government had ideological reasons for seeking to terminate all obligations and end the British Empire abroad, although the economic situation of the UK in this era is likely to have accelerated the withdrawal process. Other scholars, such as Worrall (2014, pp. 25,33), believe that economic factors were instrumental in the decision to withdraw, although the Palestinian issue and the loss of Aden were also important considerations. The decisive and influential decision to withdraw the British military was made with the realisation that Britain was economically incapable of holding onto its colonies. This was supported by the ideology of the ruling Labour Party, which required that the focus be on resolving the internal problems of the UK and improving the level of services offered to British citizens, rather than on retaining distant colonies. This decision was reinforced by the sterling crisis of November 1967, which significantly damaged the British economy. The consequence was that British diplomats had no intention of involving their troops in the Dhofar revolution.

Given the events in Palestine and Suez, Sultan Said was concerned about controlling British involvement. However, Sultan Said refused to allow British troops to withdraw from the RAF Air Base in Salalah to Masirah. As per the terms of the agreement between the two countries in 1958, he instead insisted that the troops either stay in both Salalah and Masirah, or withdraw from both. Therefore, in order to keep its troops in Masirah (see figure 11), the British defended Salalah base from rebel attacks. This event brought British troops directly into the line of fire and also demonstrates the independence of the Sultan from British influence. The British RAF base in Salalah was very important to the British Government and so it prioritised defending the base from the rebels, who had reached the surrounding hills (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 32). The British recognised that, should the base be attacked, there was a clear risk of destruction, casualties and loss of lives (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 33). The safety of the air base in Salalah and the British troops serving there

was a major priority of the British government. A telegram entitled “Situation in Dhofar”, sent from Bahrain to the Foreign Office, stated:

...renewed dissident activity may be imminent, warning of possible attack on the R.A.F airfield and camp. The Sultan has authorized the dispatch of one platoon of the parachute battalion. He has already agreed to the use of British army units in this role. The platoon sent to Salalah at the end of May... was withdrawn to Bahrain a few weeks ago and there has been no reinforcement of R.A.F defence since (UKNA, BS 1922/31, 1965).

The Sultan also committed to military progress by increasing the size of his forces in the province to 1000 men. Additionally, Dhofaris were excluded from his army after the failure of multiple coup attempts. Instead, he selected his army from loyal northern Omani tribes and supplemented their numbers with Pakistani soldiers (Baluchi). He then embarked upon an economic siege of the mountainous areas that was the home of the revolutionaries (Halliday, 2008, p. 260), which revealed his control of his military and was a sign of his capacity to take independent decisions and actions.

During the first period of the Dhofar war, the Sultan was in close communication with the British, but rejected any British pressure, because he was confident that they would not allow the rebels to be victorious. This was, in large part, because of the support that the dissidents received from anti-western imperialist countries, their specific commitment to overthrow any ruler who collaborated with the British imperialists to control Dhofar and cause allowing the rebels to control Dhofar would deprive the British of their interests in Oman (Muqaibl, 2002, pp. 277-278).

Telegrams from Bahrain to the Foreign Office noted that the Sultan’s Dhofar Forces were not yet capable of defending the region or important strategic locations, such as the British Royal Air Force base in Salalah or the port (see figure 12). As a consequence, British forces were obliged to become fully involved in the war (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 97). Another document adds that the British RAF base at Masirah was considered essential to the British civilian and military aircraft,



Fig. 12: British and Omani soldiers during the war
(Source: Source: Royal Air Force of Oman Archives, RAFODW 34)

making the site of major importance:

The Political Resident has recommended that since the protection of the RAF at Salalah is, a direct British interest and since it is in our general interest to get the SAF involved in Dhofar, we should not ask the Sultan to bear the cost of the operation. The Department agree (UKNA, BC 1051, 1965).

As a consequence of this, British forces began to engage in direct confrontation with the rebels.

When the Omani military was unable to defend Salalah, Sultan Said successfully dragged the British into the war through expansion of its operations. Initially, after the Sultan rejected their move to evacuate their air base, the British forces defended the base, the seaport and the road links between the two. The seaport was essential to provide the base with necessary materials. This situation is clearly illustrated in a confidential letter sent to the British Consulate General from C.D Powell in the Foreign Office in Muscat on 20th February 1965. It stated:

troops which were sent to Salalah in 1964 are intended for the defence of R.A.F installations and patrolling was to be confined to the airfield, the jetty at Raisut and the broad linking the two. The Sultan suggested that it would be more sensible for patrolling to take into consideration other roads in the area which might be targets for rebel mine laying and this appears to have been respected (UKNA, BC 1102/9, 1965).

Another document, entitled "Trouble in Dhofar", states that the Sultan's local military division, the Dhofar Force, was independent from the SAF but that it was unable to defend Dhofar alone. Therefore, it was recognised as being essential for the British to transfer part of the SAF from Muscat to Dhofar to contribute to its defence. F.D.W. Brown, a British diplomat states that the "Sultan of Oman's Air Force has virtually no transport capacity, their move would have to be made by R.A.F. aircraft". In effect, the British became ready to defend the Sultan against the Dhofar rebels. "It is recommended therefore that, if the Sultan seeks our assistance over the plan outlined, we should help and seek to persuade the Ministry of Defence to waive or bear the cost. I attach a draft to the Ministry of Defence" (UKNA, BC 1098, 1964).

Sir Lionel Hayworth wrote an important article on this issue in *The Daily Telegraph*, clearly indicating the relevance of the Gulf region to British national interests and the utmost importance of Oman (1951, p. 14). The British government was concerned with providing military support to the Sultan to eliminate the revolution. The document refers to the presence of Omani rebels in the schools in Moscow and other countries opposed to the West:

Forty Omani children were at school in Moscow and there are others elsewhere. Indeed any Omani wanting advanced education had to seek it outside Oman, and usually finds it in countries hostile to the West (UKNA, BC 1051/20, 1965).

The British were also carefully watching Omani nationals who were studying abroad, especially in communist countries. This careful scrutiny was because the British feared the rise of propaganda in areas that was hostile to Western states, such as the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as this would threaten Britain's interests. They noted that,

at least seventeen Omanis were studying in Communist countries and a further nine in Cairo, pointing out the potential dangers of this to the Sultan. His reaction has been that if the Sultanate students are sent abroad, they will mix with Arab students and thereby become indoctrinated with Arab nationalist propaganda and that they would not be immune from this, even in London (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 513).

Sultan Said succeeded in dragging the British into the Dhofar War through his refusal of their request to withdraw their forces from Salalah air base, ensuring that they retained soldiers at Salalah and Masirah. The Sultan realised that the British government would ensure the defence of Oman at the lowest cost, because of the recognition that the Sultan was the guarantor of its long-term interests. This successful manipulation indicated his independence from the British government and illustrated the autonomy of the Sultan.

2.4.5: Sultan Said Assassination Attempt

The rebel operations evolved over the next two years, eventually enabling them to control large areas of Dhofar, except for the coastal towns. In an attempt to address the growing discontent, the Sultan allowed his army to recruit loyal Dhofaris. A total of 200 soldiers joined the Dhofar Force, however some secretly fought with the rebels. Recognising the threat to his person, Sultan Said withheld ammunition from his soldiers during his regular review of his forces. Despite this security precaution, ammunition was smuggled into a review in 1966, as part of an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Sultan (Interview with Ghawas, 23rd January 2014). In response to this attempt, the Sultan was isolated in his palace (Ordeman, 2016, p. 3). Two days after the attempted coup, the Sultan summoned Colin Maxwell, the commander of the SAF from Muscat to Salalah, to discuss the repercussions of the incident. Maxwell tried to persuade the Sultan to abolish the power of the Dhofar Force on the grounds that it could not be trusted. However, Sultan Said ignored the advice, believing that the Dhofar security force could be useful if the SAF staged any revolution

against him (UKNA, FO,371/185364, BC 1015/22, 1966). Again, this shows that the Sultan was responsible for making his own decisions and that his country was not subject to British pressure.

2.4.6: Sultan Said and his brother Tariq

Sultan Said followed an aggressive policy with his family, treating them the same as other citizens, which made his family dissatisfied. As a consequence, Tariq, the Sultan's most significant brother, exiled himself from Oman in protest against his older brother's stance. His younger brother, Faher, joined Tariq, and tried to convince the British to side with him in usurping Sultan Said. In a discussion with A.T. Lawb, in the British Political Agency in Abu Dhabi (UAE), Tariq promised to develop Oman and lift the restrictions on its people. The British position was that, Tariq should put out of his mind any thought that the British government would permit the overthrow of Sultan Said. The British side replied that they knew H.M.G. would protect the Sultan but it was impossible for it to protect him from an assassin's bullet (UKNA, FCO 8/568, FR: BC1/1, A, 1967).

Tariq harboured a deep hatred of his brother Said. Unbeknownst to most people in Oman, Sayyid Tariq even attempted to assassinate the Sultan, with sources indicating that Tariq "has made overtures to some Palestinians, there-about unknown, to recruit an assassination squad of two or three to kill the Sultan of Muscat during his forth coming visit to London" (UKNA, FCO 8/568, BC1/1, 1967). The main reason for the dissatisfaction of Sultan Said's brothers was his cruelty. Said's younger brother stated that Sayyid Tariq therefore communicated with Shell Oil Company to support him to overthrow his brother. A letter, "Sayyid Fahr", sent from the British Consul General in Muscat, D.C. Carden, to H.M. Political Agency in Dubai, stated that:

Tariq had sent a message to Shell with the intention to establish a new government in Muscat, but he needed money for this and he hoped that Shell would feel disposed to help. If they did, this would be of mutual and general benefit (UKNA, BC1/1, 1967).

In September 1967, Tariq announced a temporary constitution that incited people all over Oman to rebel against the rule of the Sultan and to replace Said with himself. The temporary constitution introduction stated:

In the name of God the merciful the companionate, Statement by Tariq bin Taymour, To all sheikhs, scholars, leading personalities, civil servants, soldiers

and Omani citizens. ...citizens... Consider it the duty... of us all to work for the liberation of our fatherland and to remove (the present state of) injustice from its people and lift our people up, guided (as we are) by the precepts of the holy law that God has imposed on us (A letter From A. D. Parsons, to British Political Agency, 1967).

In general, the constitution focused on the unity of Oman, explicitly noting that Dhofar is an integral part of Oman. In addition, it placed a heavy emphasis on the role of the Islamic religion and tribe in the country, stating that the autocratic government of the Sultan would be replaced by a democratic government. The constitution also stressed the importance of ensuring a strong, historical relationship with the United Kingdom. Sayyed Tariq clearly realised the importance of tribe and religion, as well as the relationship with Britain, as influential factors in the unity of Oman and winning the Dhofar War (for further information on the temporary national constitution distributed by Tariq, see Appendix 8). There was no organised institutional support for Tariq, with his support being limited to certain wealthy elites from the UAE and Turkey, the latter which could be partially attributed to the fact that he was married to a Turkish woman (interview, Sheikh Ahmed Al Falahi, 31 March 2018).

After requesting assistance from the British to overthrow his brother, Tariq reassured them that he would consider their interests and that his main aim was to enhance and develop the situation in Oman. In response, the British diplomats investigated Tariq's personality and his real intentions, looking at whether he was loved by the Omanis. This research was carried out indirectly, in interviews with Imamate leaders who lived as political refugees in Dammam in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Imam Ghalib and his defeat in Al Jabal Al Akhdar war (1957-1959) was discussed in chapter one, section 1.3. This consultation by the British suggests that they were also aware of the importance of religious and tribal leaders in Omani affairs. The Imamate leaders were hugely popular in Oman, since the Imam was selected consensually by the people. They expressed the following opinion about Sayyid Tariq,

All of us know who Tariq is and... known by the mountains of Oman and its valleys, in the houses and in the mosques, its children, its women and its sheikhs... Tariq has killed the innocent, violated, demolished houses, destroyed irrigation canals... to be king. Tariq is a war criminal (UKNA, BC1/1, 1967).

It is worth mentioning here that Tariq had commanded his brother's armies in the Al Jabal Al Akhdar war that overthrew the Imamate system, which is almost certainly why the Imams accused him of being a criminal. In general, Tariq's political machinations against his brother Sultan Said

represented the most significant dissent since 1967. An important question on this matter is whether Tariq succeeded in drawing people's attention to the rebellion in the north of Oman in order to overthrow his brother and put himself on the throne.

The failure of Tariq's efforts is evident for several reasons, most notably that the tribal leaders in northern Oman favoured the return of the Imam to administer the country, as well as the fact that the people in the south supported the revolution in Dhofar. Secondly, many people did not trust Tariq, because he had been so helpful to Sultan Said in the Al Jabal Al Akhdar War (1957-1959). In addition, the public impression was that Tariq was trying to gain power, rather than to reform the country. Tariq was also not able to receive support from any regional country to conduct his plan. However, the refusal by Sultan Said to accept the withdrawal of the British from the air force base in Salalah and the air base in Masirah forced them to take action. In defending the base and the port from rebel attacks, the British found themselves directly involved in the war. Numerous authors (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Fadel, 1995, pp. 220-221; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 212; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332) have argued that Oman was like a puppet in the hands of the British. Owtram (2004, p. 16) argues that British imperialism was responsible for the formation of the Sultanate of Oman in 1920 and was significant in the years since, including in the eventual exploitation of oil. In effect, Britain played a major role in shaping modern Oman. In addition, the assistance that the British provided to the Sultan during the 1957 Al Jabal Al Akhdar helped to unite Oman. However, the Sultan's manipulation of the British to ensure their involvement in the war indicates that Sultan Said had huge influence over British actions. Despite the relative weakness of Oman, he succeeded in involving one of the most powerful countries in the world as a direct party in the Dhofar conflict. During this phase of the revolution, British diplomacy did not seem to be inclined to change Sultan Said, even with the option to replace him with his closest relatives such as his brother Tariq. In general, Tariq fell because of his bad relations with tribal and religious leaders and the refusal of the British government or oil companies to intervene.

2.5: The British interests and the nature of the relationship with the Sultan Said

2.5.1: Oil in Oman

Oil was to become extremely significant in the future development of Oman. It played an important role in the Sultanate's efforts to diversify the Omani economy, enabling the promotion of the Omani government and private sector investment, as well as the construction of modern infrastructure (Kiyumi, 2011, p. 21). In effect, oil enabled the country to achieve modernisation and rapidly rise out of poverty.

After efforts by the British and Sultan Said, the first crude oil shipment was exported from Oman in July 1967. A British report covered the story of this achievement, which would change the fate of Oman and all Omanis (UKNA, FCO 8/600, FR: BC12/2, 1967). Nevertheless, Sultan Said did not seem to have a clear vision regarding the importance of starting the development of Oman after the receipt of oil revenues. A letter which was sent from J.S.R. Duncan, a British diplomat, to Major Chauncy, the British Consulate General in Muscat, stated that Sultan Said,

has developed no sense of urgency in planning for the advent of oil. You will remember the new administrative 'family tree'...it is now hacked about and under further consideration since Major Chauncy, UK consul general, Muscat, had said he thought it too ambitious(UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965).

This view confirmed the policy of the Sultan in refraining from spending the financial resources that he received from exporting oil, contrary to the wishes of his British partners. A report by William Luce, the British political resident in the Persian Gulf, provides a useful insight that locals were angry with the Sultan, because the discovery of oil in Dhofar had changed nothing in their lives. He stated that the Sultan held that "his family was useless, that there was nobody he could trust", adding that he was ruling Oman from Dhofar "through the radio telephone and it was really impracticable in any matter of urgency and complexity, such matters would inevitably multiply if oil production began" (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 3). Nonetheless, the Sultan contracted American exploration companies, such as Dhofar Cities Service Petroleum Corporation, Service of America, Richfield Oil, Reach Field, Consortium and J.W. Michom (Al Badi, 2011, p. 66; Clark, 2007, pp. 14-15). In 1964, the Shell Company discovered the first oil reserves in Oman that were available for exportation in commercial quantities. This was kept a secret between the company and the Sultan, even being hidden from the locals. However, the *Sunday Times* published the news in the first page of its issue on 26th July 1964 with the headline "Shell wins the biggest prize by discovering huge oil fields in the Arab Desert" (Al Badi, 2011, p. 74). With the approval of the Sultan, the Shell

Company built the infrastructure of the oil industry in Oman, which consisted of 279 pipelines and a port for direct export. Its cargo reached (54,800) barrels of crude oil the first crude oil commercial shipment left Oman on 27th July 1967 (Petroleum Development Oman, 1990, pp. 14-15). Al Badi (2011, p. 80) argues that oil exportation and exploration privilege contracts were more beneficial for the British oil companies than they were for the Omani government. According to a privilege contract, the government did not even have a right to control the price of oil, which significantly affected its ability to secure oil revenues. However, Sultan Said's permission for American companies to drill in Dhofar, despite traditional British influence in Oman, signifies that he was autonomously moving away from British influence to ensure self-rule for the Sultanate.

2.5.2: British economic interest

Despite established British interests in Oman and the surrounding area, the US eventually managed to exert its influence in the region. It achieved this goal by taking advantage of aid to Britain after the First and Second World War, which allowed it to call for an 'Open Door' policy that forced the UK to surrender to US demands in the Gulf States. This situation resulted in Britain not being able to fully control the sources of energy in the region, which subsequently became incredibly important in geopolitics. The two nations then divided the Gulf between themselves, with the US companies dominating the petroleum market in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and half of Kuwait (Al Kharusi, 1982, p. 206), and British companies controlling the oil of the remaining Gulf countries, including Oman. In observing the Sultan's oil contracts, British diplomats stated:

The new agreement between Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited and the Sultan was signed. First, the agreement gives the sultan as favourable conditions as those enjoyed by the OPEC countries. Second, the company relinquished much of their concession that is covered by the Sultanate territorial waters in the Gulf of Oman to grant the Sultan its concession to any other company. Thirdly, they will relinquish other parts in March 1970; fourth... rent due since May 1966 became payable... giving the Sultan... £400,000" (UKNA, IOR/R/15/6/424, 1967).

The British government clearly also indicated a preference that Oman should remain an exclusive market for British arms:

The objections to the US supplying arms to Muscat is that it has been and should remain a British market for military equipment, that it is heavily subsidised by the British, and that it should in any case standardize equipment whatever pattern (UKNA, BC1/2, 1967).

In negotiating with both British and the US over oil concessions, the Sultan showed that he was an autonomous decision maker and that his diplomacy sought to negotiate greater freedom from Britain, as well as ensuring the freedom to make political decisions away from external pressures.

British relations with the Omani rulers were largely informed by the importance of their interests in the region. This position is evident in a confidential letter that was sent to William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf at the British Residency in Bahrain on a change on British diplomatic status, which also emphasised Sultan Said's independence of policy and obstinacy:

Our present policy towards the sultanate is based partly on longstanding friendship with a succession of sultans but mainly on our wider interests in the Gulf area generally. The degree of our involvement in Sultanate affairs does not seem to me to be affected one way or the other by the form of British representation. Nor do I think that the Sultan would regard a change of ambassador as any kind of disagreement by H.M.G. from the Sultanate; if he did, he probably would not want the change. The suggested change is the danger that the already isolationist Sultan would relapse into even greater isolationism and the Sultanate would become increasingly introverted. I would be the last to claim that the political resident can do much to reduce the Sultan's isolationism, but at least he provides some contact with the outside world and on occasions can bring rather heavier guns to bear than can the consul general or ambassador (UKNA, BC 1052/6, 1965).

The relationship between the Sultan and the British was also clarified by T.F. Brenchley, the Head of the Arabian Directorate in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who stated that,

It is true that we have some position of influence in the Sultanate, but it is severely limited by the Sultan's extreme stubbornness and in a case like this he would certainly take offence at representations on what he would regard as an entirely domestic matter (UKNA, Letter from the Minister of State, Foreign Office, 1965).

British diplomats realised that delaying the development of the country created the risk of forming a counter-opinion among the population that could potentially affect the British, by embarrassing them through implication and making them partly responsible for the revolutionary situation in Oman. However, British diplomacy did not consider changing from a Consul to Ambassador. Officially, the British always treated Oman as an independent state. A British government documents stated, "even in our own service, only those officers who have actually dealt with Arabian peninsula affairs fully realise that the Sultanate is independent" (UKNA, BC 1052/6, 1965).

However, after the US stated their intention of opening an embassy in the Sultanate, the British position moved towards changing from a Consul to Ambassador. This decision was evidenced by a letter sent by E. M. Rose in the Foreign Office, to the British Residency in Bahrain, in which was stated that, “the American intention of seeking to open an embassy in Muscat clinches the question of our future level of representation, very desirable that we should broach the idea of an embassy to the Sultan before the Americans do so” (UKNA, BC 1052/6 (A), 1965). This comment clearly indicates that British diplomacy desired to maintain the privacy of the relationship between the UK and Oman, in an attempt to serve its far-reaching interests. The British also realised the importance of connecting the Sultan’s intelligence in Oman with the British intelligence centre in Bahrain to guarantee far-reaching interests of Britain. An additional confidential letter issued by Rose in the Foreign Office was sent to the British residency in Bahrain on 20th December 1965 and stated that:

As regard the importance and delicate subject of the intelligence organisation in the sultanate and its links with the intelligence centre in Bahrain. I think that among ourselves we should regard this as an aspect of politico-military co-ordination and aim to preserve the present arrangements for as long as possible (UKNA, BC 1052/6 (A), 1965).

The British government sought to obtain information about the Sultanate to help secure its long-term interests but it recognised the Sultan as being autonomous and independent in his policy and decision making. The problem for the British government was exactly this autonomy and independence.

2.5.3: Sultan Said and British influence

The Sultan spent most of the last decades of his government in Dhofar away from the capital of Muscat. Mansy (1996, p. 282) argues that the Sultan wished to avoid the surveillance of British diplomats and exercise autonomy. This position was apparently well known, as seen when the British asked the Emir of Kuwait, Subah Al Salim, to mediate between the Sultan and the Imamate. As outlined in a secret document from D.C. Carden, the British Consulate General in Muscat, to M.S. Weir, the British Consulate General in Bahrain, on 22nd December 1965, the Emir stated:

You should go on to say that we cannot understand why the Amir, or for that matter any other member of the U.N., should think that we are able to force the Sultan's hand. The Sultan is proud of his independence (UKNA, BC 1016/42(B), 1965).

One of the British reports moved beyond this position, stating that the Sultan's reliance on the British was overstated:

What is more, it is wrong to suggest that the Sultan is dependent on us more than we are dependent of him. Our good relations with the Sultan are important in preserving the overflying and landing facilities that we enjoy in his territories (UKNA, BC 1016/42(B), 1965).

According to a secret document sent from W. H. Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf, to E.M. Rose, in the Foreign Office, on 20th December 1965, the British government believed that Sultan Said had left Muscat to stay in Salalah because of financial problems: "The Sultan will certainly return when he has money... I doubt if he will return this winter" (UKNA, BC 1052/6 (A), 1965). This claim was supported by Sheikh Ahmed Al Harthi, chief of the Al Harthi tribe, one of the most important tribes in Oman. However, he also believes that the main reason for the Sultan staying in Salalah was to free himself and Oman from British pressure and influence, because their diplomats were based with the British Consulate General in Muscat. The Sultan put Thwini bin Shihab, one of his family members, in charge of Muscat, although he commanded him not to do anything before consulting him by telephone (Interview Ahmed Al Harthi, 4th October 2016). Sultan Said promised to return to Muscat at the right time, because the British diplomats wished to communicate more easily, but eventually changed his mind, stating that he would only return after receiving the revenues from oil exports as stated in a confidential brief, entitled "Record of the conversation between the political resident and the Sultan in Salalah" was published on 27th March 1965.

A secret British document, entitled *Disruptive Activities in the Persian Gulf*, 6th February 1969 from J.S. Longrigg, at the British Residency in Bahrain, to C.J. Treadwell, at the Consulate General in Abu Dhabi.

The political resident said that one thing which of course contributed to all this lack of purpose was the Sultan's remoteness in Salalah. He did hope that the Sultan was still planning to return in the winter. The Sultan said he thought he might now wait till he had money (UKNA, BC 1015/13, 1965).

The decision to move from Muscat to Dhofar shows that the Sultan wished to enjoy his independence and to distance himself from pressures of the British Consulate General in Muscat.

2.6: Chapter II Conclusion

In examining the first phase of the Dhofar War (1965-1967), numerous factors, including injustice, economic suffering, lack of education and poverty, led to the War. These problems were exacerbated by the experiences of Omani youth, who migrated to work in other Arab Gulf countries, which were relatively more prosperous than Oman after the discovery of oil (UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965). Furthermore, Sultan Said stimulated the rebellion by his extremely tough stance in dealing with his people, even going so far as to refer to them as “non-human” (Al Rayes, 2000; Abdul Redha, 1972, p. 58; Zaidi, 2000, p. 310; Al Khasibi, 1994, p. 157; Al Sa’adi, 1976, pp. 84-85).

Although the evidence does support the assertion that the Omani people suffered as a result of many of these policies, the Sultan had what he believed were good reasons for his policy decisions. Certainly, Sultan Said was able to repay Oman’s debts to the Indian government and traders in 1932, within one year of taking office, which he managed by adopting an austerity policy that focused on reducing the number of government employees and reducing development projects to a minimum. He promised not to borrow funds in order to secure independence of decision for the country from the pressure of payable debts, having learned from the mistakes of his predecessors. However, after his first visit to Britain in 1939, Sultan Said was convinced of the importance of entering into an alliance with the British for the long term national interest of his country. The Sultan spent the last decade of his rule in Dhofar in an effort to enjoy his autonomy (Ateeqi N. S., 2007, p. 107). Another important objective of Sultan Said was the move to isolate Oman from the propaganda of Nasserites and to reduce the influence of Saudi Arabia in Oman. Ultimately, this approach failed, because these influences ignited the spark of revolution. The revolution comprised three organisations: the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Dhofari Charity Association, and the Dhofari Soldiers Organisation. These bodies united as a result of ideological and political reasons, but a further important reason for their cooperation was the stipulation by Saudi Arabia and Egypt that the rebels would only receive the support needed if they worked together. Regional countries played a significant role in the revolution through the provision of aid to the rebels. Furthermore, the wave of anti-colonial and Arab nationalist sentiment created by Nasser supported the rebels in ideological terms.

Sultan Said correctly recognised the threat borne by these regional powers, despite the role that his actions may actually have had in creating result in the region.

During the first phase of the revolution (1965-1967), British politics focused on exploiting the economic opportunities, including the oil discoveries and the removal of any competitors. At that time, British diplomats closely monitored the progress of the revolution and the movements of the rebels outside Oman. They also made plans to derail the revolution diplomatically and militarily, in order to protect British interest with regards to the RAF base on Masirah Island. After the outbreak of the clashes in Dhofar in 1965, British diplomats immediately requested permission to leave the British RAF base in Dhofar, stating that it should be handed to the Sultan, and that they should be centralised in the base in Masirah Island away from Dhofar. The Sultan rejected this request, stating that the 1958 agreement between them stipulated that the British must either keep troops in both bases or to leave the country. By using this policy, as a fully sovereign ruler the Sultan managed to involve the British in the war, using his allies to bolster his forces to defend Dhofar against the externally supported revolutionaries.

Some historians (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Beasant, 2002, pp. 200-201; Fadel, 1995, p.212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332) accuse the Sultan of being puppet-like in the hands of western powers and argue that Oman was functioning as either a formal or an informal colony. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that this view is inaccurate. The Sultan left Muscat for Dhofar to maintain full autonomy, as well as obliging the British to enter the war, despite their earlier refusal in order to avoid international condemnation in the wake of the Suez War 1956 and Harold Wilson's Labour Government decided to withdraw all British troops from the areas to the east of Suez by 1969. Owtram (2004, p. 16) argues that British imperial influence had primary responsibility for the formation of the Sultanate of Oman from 1920 onwards, delineating the borders between Oman and Yemen, and providing essential military and civil support in 1958. They also helped in petroleum exploration and managed the petroleum companies, as well as urging Sultan Said to use oil revenues to develop Oman. All of these actions contributed to the creation of a new country in Oman, but Sultan Said was an autonomous if authoritarian leader, who used the British in order to better serve his country. British diplomacy perceived him to be an independent leader ruling an independent country, so they encouraged but could not oblige him to start developing his country immediately after receiving oil revenues. Moreover, the Sultan did not give any promises about his intended actions in this matter, perhaps wishing to postpone such radical and costly developments. The events of the first phase of the war (1965-1967) seem to suggest that the Omani government had more autonomy from the British

government than the literature argues, and that it was operating with a negotiated autonomy and independence, rather than as any form of colonialism.

Dhofar War 1965 – 1975

CHAPTER 3:

The Second Phase of the War (September 1968 – June 1970)

This chapter will discuss British diplomacy regarding the Dhofar war during its second phase, with particular reference to the Sultan's reaction towards this diplomacy to uncover the nature of the relationship between them. It will also discuss and analyse the events that transpired during this period in an attempt to determine the motives and the changes of diplomacy that coincided with the rebel successes. The reason for choosing 1968 as the beginning of the second phase of the war is the major ideological implications of the decisions that the leaders of the revolution made in the meeting at Wadi Hamrin, otherwise known as the second conference of the leaders of the Revolutionary Front. These decisions profoundly influenced the course of the revolution, accompanied by a dramatic change in British diplomacy in Oman. Most importantly, the decision was made at this time to withdraw British Forces from the regions located east of Suez Canal, including Oman by the end of 1971. This created a time pressure that had significant impact on British attitudes and strategies. The most important decision made at the Hamrin meeting was that the rebels would expand their ambitions to 'free' the Arab Gulf, rather than limiting its focus to Oman. On the international stage, the rebel enforcement of Chinese communist idea was also accompanied by extensive Chinese aid and support. This ideological shift also reflected a change in revolutionary leadership. In addition, Yemen's independence from British control in November 1967 was an important event that contributed significantly to support of the rebels at that time. Oman also began the commercial export of oil during this period, which was accompanied by the arrival of British oil companies and the growing desire of the Omani public to see improvement in their daily lives. These important changes all contributed to shift the focus of British diplomatic priorities in the region and especially their diplomacy regarding the Dhofar war.

3.1: Reasons for holding the Hamrin Conference 1968

The Hamrin Conference is considered to be the most important event for the rebels during the second phase (1968 - 1970). This second conference of the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) was held in September 1968, in Wadi Hamrin (see figure 13), which is located at the centre of the Dhofar Mountains. The rebel leaders invited the most prominent revolutionary leaders, including those in the Sultanate who were

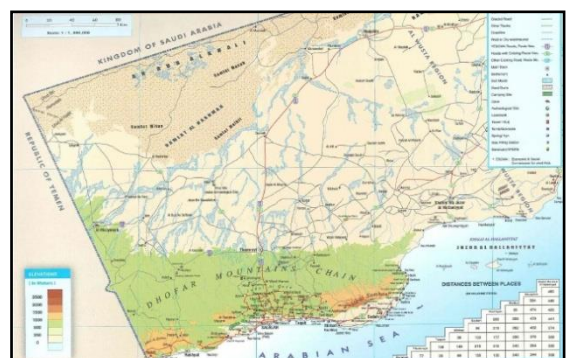


Fig. 13: Map showing Dhofar province
(Source: Oman National Survey Authority,
NSA DR 74)

leading military action and those abroad who were ensuring political and diplomatic support, such as Musalim bin Nafal and Mohammad Al Ghassani. What were the internal and external variables that motivated the revolution leaders to hold the conference? What were its most important decisions? What were the positive and negative effects that the conference had on the rebels? How did the diplomacy of the British and the Sultan change with regards to the revolution after this conference and the declaration of its decisions, objectives and results? What did these events signify for the autonomy of Sultan Said? The decision by the revolution leaders to hold the HC was motivated by a number of political and military variables (both internally and externally) during this period. Given that the conference caused a significant shift in the course of the revolution and British government attitudes, it is important to understand more about these influential factors.

3.1.1: External variables

The external variables are considered to be the key reasons that prompted the revolution leaders to call for a second conference of the Dhofar Liberation Front, the most important of which was the desire of the rebels to attract greater Chinese support.

Chinese Support

The significant need for the rebels to ensure sources of support and funding was the biggest incentive to consolidate the relationship with China. The rebel delegations that visited Cairo in early 1967 had support from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to contact the Chinese Embassy in Cairo, who they were able to convince of the advantage of strengthening relations between the rebels and Chinese officials (Barut, 1996, p. 401). As a consequence of this meeting, the rebel delegation received military aid from the Chinese government (ibid, p. 401), which arrived in Dhofar through Yemen, and promises of greater political, military and economic support in the future (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 475-476).

The Chinese support for the rebels was not limited to the provision of weapons and equipment, but also extended to spreading communist ideas and the provision of expertise. This has led Peterson to suggest that the ideology of some revolutionaries had begun to transform from a nationalist approach to that of Marxism (2007, p. 501). Meanwhile, the Chinese goal for this intervention was to break the western economic monopoly on the region, especially given the

economic boom that had occurred due to oil discoveries (Al Amri, 2012, p. 105). Al Harthi (2007) states that a rebel was killed in Dhofar in June 1968 while wearing a Chinese military uniform. The rebel died holding a book of Mao Zedong and carrying a Russian-made weapon. In September of the same year, a Chinese communist was reportedly seen working with the rebels in Dhofar (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 475-476). Another British confidential document indicated that a delegation of the rebels visited China in 1967, returning with promises of weapons and other aid worth ten thousand dollars (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 511-512, 527-529, 532-533). Al Rayes (2000) adds that the growing relations with China divided the rebels in Dhofar into two distinct factions: the first faction were the interior fighters, who welcomed and supported these relations, given their need for weapons to continue successful fighting the Sultan's forces. (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 94). This group generally comprised members of the Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement and the Dhofar Soldiers' Organisation. In contrast, the other faction opposed the idea of association with China, because of the contrast between National Islamic revolutionary ideology and that of the Chinese Communists. This opposition existed abroad, especially among the members of the Dhofar Charitable Association. When the two revolutionary leadership teams were unable to reach a compromise on a viable approach to deal with the influence of China, they decided to hold a general conference for the rebels to resolve the dispute regarding cooperation with China and the extent to which it should be allowed to intervene in the region (Interview Rebel leader, 2nd May 2016, RA9). China sought to gain a foothold in the Arab region, as well as to promote competition and oppose Britain and US policies through the use of communist ideas (Al Amri, 2012, p. 105).

The revolutionary triumph in Yemen

The success of the revolution in South Yemen and the corresponding evacuation of British troops was a key factor in the Hamrin Conference being held. A secret British document, entitled "Disruptive Activities in the Persian Gulf", was sent on 6th February 1969 from J. Longrigg, at the British Residency in Bahrain, to C.J. Treadwell, at the Consulate General in Abu Dhabi. This missive stated that the triumph of the Yemeni revolution against British troops on 30th November 1967 represented one of the most influential external influences over the revolutionary work in Dhofar (UKNA, LR/17/30/5-1). Yemen had a number of important motives for supporting the rebels of Dhofar, including opposing the unpopular Sultan of Oman and the Yemeni perception that the Dhofar region could become an extension for its territory (Al Thawr, 1985, p. 529). In effect,

should the Dhofari people be motivated to establish unity with South Yemen, then Yemen would be able to benefit from their natural resources (Thesiger, 1998, p. 69).

The rebels in Yemen expressed their sympathy and camaraderie towards the rebels in Dhofar from the beginning of the revolution. The role that Yemen played in supporting the Dhofari rebels increased after defeating the British forces and a decline in Egyptian involvement after their loss to Israel in 1967, while its independence also made Yemen a source of inspiration to the Dhofari rebels (Dansair, 2011, p. 1). They helped the rebels in Dhofar by facilitating their movement within Yemen and supporting them militarily and economically. After the triumph of the Yemeni revolution, the level of support and backing for the Dhofar Revolution increased, including official political, military and economic support from the new Yemeni government until the end of the

Fig. 14: Map showing Yemen and Dhofar (Source: Oman National Survey Authority, NSA YN 3)



Dhofar War in 1975. The republic was opposed to the ideology of Sultan Said. Yemeni military aid also helped the rebels to outstrip the official Omani military. In January 1968, there was evidence of an unexpected increase in the rebel activity and use of ammunition. The rebels received guns of larger calibre and range, which increased the conflict by enabling the rebels to hit the British Royal Air Force (RAF) base in Salalah, the capital of Dhofar. The DLF leadership was also able to open headquarters in Hawf, a Yemeni town near the border of Dhofar (see figure 14), which then served as a base for its communications equipment (Al Harthi M., 2007, pp. 370-371 .373-377).

Al Harthi (2007, pp. 440) notes the aggression of the South Yemenis and that the provision of Yemenis assistance to the rebels in Dhofar might have enabled the regime in Muscat to be overthrown, threatening the coast of other Arab Gulf countries. Yemen provided different kinds of

support for the rebels in Dhofar. Al Harthi (2007, pp. 441) adds that the Dhofar rebels were able to use the lands of South Yemen as a base to move their weapons and supplies and with the permission of Yemeni authorities to use their transportation network. As an example of this support, Yemen authorities transferred injured rebels to receive medical treatment in the hospital in Aden, the capital of South Yemen. This close relationship was illustrated by newspapers in the South Yemen Republic publishing the decision of the second conference to change the name of the front from “Dhofar Liberation Front” to the “People’s Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf” before any other local media. Ahmed Al Ghasani was assigned as the head of the movement office in Aden (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 440-441). Indeed, one rebel leader interviewed in this research added that without the courageous and generous support that Yemen provided to the rebels, they would not have achieved nearly half of what they were actually able to achieve. Another important factor in this support was the geography of the land: in viewing the border between the rebel areas and the borders to Saudi Arabia and Yemen, it is clear that the lands separating the areas of the revolution and the Saudi border were desert. Therefore, the convoys of the rebels were exposed to the SAF before reaching the Saudi border, whereas the border with Yemen was close and mountainous and covered with trees, making it a much safer route to supply support to the rebels (Interview with Front ex-leader, 9th December 2016, RA5).

Yemeni support for the Dhofar issue almost certainly came as a result of it securing its independence from British colonisation. Thus, Yemen offered support to nations that were fighting the same coloniser and to the leaders who supported these uprisings. This helped Yemen to gain acceptance by the liberation movements in the Arab world. However, this popularity came at the expense of Kuwait, who represented the most important link outside the Dhofar region. As a consequence, the influence of religiously conservative Dhofari rebels in Kuwait was reduced, while the leverage of pro-Communist Dhofar leaders, who had relations with the Yemeni rebels, was significantly increased. This competition between rebel representatives in Kuwait and Yemen resulted in the decision to hold a second conference.

Israel defeats Egypt 1967

Whereas Yemeni independence in 1967 influenced the revolution in Dhofar positively, there was another event in the same year that had a negative effect, and represented foreign instability that also necessitated the Hamrin Conference being held. This event was the Six-Day War in 1967, which was fought between Israel and the military forces of neighbouring Arab countries, especially

those of Egypt and Syria. This war had important negative repercussions for the Dhofar rebels, who received political, military and moral support from Egypt under President Nasser in position of liberation movements across the Arab world in the wake of its victory in the Suez War in 1956 (Haglawi, 2003, p. 307). The defeat of the Egypt and Syrian alliance by the Israeli air force deprived the rebellion of a significant ally in the figure of Nasser, whose support to non-liberated countries in the Arab region was affected by its need to recover from defeat (Halliday, 2008, p. 384). For this reason, Arab societies refer to the 1967 conflict as the war of setback. This war deprived the rebels of an important source of support, with military assistance stopping entirely and political and media support falling to minimal levels.

A British confidential document on disruptive activities in the Persian Gulf mentioned that two main events that dominated the unsettled situation in early 1969: the consequences of the Israel-Arab war in June 1967 and the announcement of the British withdrawal in January 1968 which would take place at the end of 1971. After this war, the British felt that the activity of the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) against British interests in the area had reached a low level. As a result of the June war, the Suez Canal was closed and Egypt lost financial standing because she depended largely on the Suez Canal for economic revenue. This could be the main factor for the relative calmness of the political Arab civil movements during 1968. There was a noticeable cessation in the activity of the Egyptian Intelligence (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 511-512, 527 - 529, 532-533). The British government continued to monitor Cairo's activity in supporting the Dhofar rebels, but they noticed that support decreased after the defeat of Egypt in the war against Israel (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 511-512, 527 - 529, 532-533). The Egyptians were forced to focus on liberating their territory that was now occupied by Israel, rather than continuing to support liberation movements in the Arab world, including the Dhofar rebels.

The defeat of the Egyptian forces led by the President Nasser in 1967 affected in particular the moderate right-wing rebels, as they had lost their greatest military, political and economic ally. As a consequence of this, left-wing Dhofar rebels turned to China to replace the support previously offered by Egypt. This shift was evident in the proceedings and decisions of the DLF in the second conference at Hamrin in 1968. The Arab setback in June 1967 was one of the important variables that affected the revolution in Dhofar, as it divided the Arab anti-Israeli and anti-imperialist forces into distinctly different camps, each believing that its ideas and approach would secure the liberation of the Arab lands occupied by Israel. The Dhofar rebels also split, with the defeat

strengthening the Arab nationalist Marxist trend within the DLF. Mohammad Al Ghassani was one of the most important figures of this group and he gained great importance during this period, largely because of his role in negotiations with China. Through his leadership, the ideas of Mao Zedong spread among the rebels in Dhofar. In contrast, the moderate Arab nationalist movement became weaker after the Israeli defeat of Egypt, which had been seen to create a compromise between Arabism and Islam. This trend was represented by members of the Dhofar Charitable Association, including Awadh Al Rawas, Mohammed Al Baramai, Musalim bin Nafal, and Yusuf bin Alawi.

The Maoist ideology was attractive to the Dhofar rebel leaders. This may have been because Chinese foreign policy during the 1960s had a revolutionary internationalist thrust, focussed on helping people to force:

...imperialism out of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As seen most clearly in China's staunch support for the Vietnamese war of liberation, African liberation movements, and the Palestinian liberation struggle (MLM Revolutionary Study Group in the US, 2007, p. 21).

Moreover, the Chinese supplied military aid to the PFLOAG, and to Marxist-Leninist forces in southern Yemen (ibid, p. 53). In contrast to the Soviet Union, China's military support was provided free of charge. In 1971, a leading Chinese party member told a delegation of members of the Revolutionary Union from the US:

We give all military aid free, and we only give it to people resisting aggression and fighting imperialism. If they are resisting aggression and fighting imperialism, why charge them? If they are not resisting aggression and fighting imperialism, why give it to them? (ibid, p. 25).

The defeat of Egypt and Syria by Israel in 1967 led to a reorientation of Dhofari rebels to Yemen and the People's Republic of China in support of their revolution.

3.1.2: Internal variables

In parallel with the external variables, a number of internal variables also contributed to the decision to hold the Hamrin Conference. The first was the fact that the revolution leaders embraced two profoundly different intellectual trends: one can be called the moderate right-wing stream, which was represented by the members of DCA before the establishment of the United Front; and

the other can be called the Marxist trend, as represented by Arab nationalists and some of the leaders of DSO (see section 2.3.1). This emergence of two leadership streams was a serious development in the revolution. As the disharmony and competition grew, the dispute escalated in severity, quickly overshadowing some of the decisions taken by each faction. The rebel leaders decided to hold a conference in an attempt to unify the very different perspectives of each group. Additionally, the limited communication between the leaders of the revolution inside and outside led to duplication in leadership, with the lack of effective communication over great distances preventing the groups from liaising effectively. An example of this can be seen in the degeneration of the relationship with the Imam, which ended because of this difference between the Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement and the Dhofar Charitable Association (see section 2.3.5 for more details).

The leaders of the rebels also realised that communication was poor between the leaders of the revolution inside and outside Oman, as the link was weak between the Liaison Committee in Kuwait and the Front branch in both the UAE and Qatar, as well as between the Front offices in Iraq and Egypt and the field leaders of the rebels fighting the forces of Sultan. Holding the second conference in the mountains of Dhofar can therefore be perceived as an attempt to solve this problem of limited communication between the revolution leaders who conducted diplomatic work outside Oman and their counterparts who were leading the military action inside the country. The decision to hold the conference was also driven by the emergent need for new military tactics and weapons suitable for the new phase of armed action. Guerrilla warfare was no longer sufficient to achieve victory on the ground, even after the successful use of the tactic in gaining control of most of the Dhofar Mountains (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 102-104). As a result, the conference was held in the Dhofar Mountains and was attended by 100 of the most influential figures in the political and military revolution (National Struggle Documents, 1974, p. 12).

3.2: The Second Conference (Hamrin) in 1968

In response to the aforementioned internal and external variables, the second conference was held in Hamrin in the central mountains of Dhofar from 1st – 20th September 1968 (National Struggle Documents, 1974, p. 12). A total of 100 delegates attended the conference. These individuals represented the active, political, economic and social sides of the areas controlled by the

rebels, and also included representatives from the Front's organisation abroad. The meeting was also attended by two Chinese delegates who were visiting the area to assess the status of the revolution (Bahbahani, 1984, p. 179).

It was important to resolve the duplication of the leadership of the amalgamated organisations, which led to the selection of a new leadership of 25 members and a revision in ideological orientation. This group consisted of five committees, each comprising five members, to take responsibility for military, political, and economic matters, as well as relations with local and international powers. Mohammed Al Ghassani was the head of the Executive Committee which was considered the central leadership of the Front. Al Ghassani was chosen as the most influential in an alliance rapprochement with China, as well as it was one of the most important leaders in Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement (Interview Imamate leader, 19th July 2013, RA6). He overshadowed the other dignitaries of the Front at the meeting. Al Ghassani supported communist ideology, leading the negotiations with China and spreading the ideology of Mao Zedong among the rebels. Mohammed Al Yafei was the head of the organising committee, while the military committee was led by Ali Al Hafeez. The political committee was led by Salim Al Ghassani and Salem Al Harizi was head of the economic committee (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 49). It is noticeable that these new leaders, including Mohammed al Ghassani, did not wield any tribal influence. This was in stark contrast to the leaders of the Dhofar Charitable Association. It marked the beginning of the overthrow of the role of the tribes in influence on the revolutionaries. Arguably, this shift occurred as a consequence of the influence of the communists on the rebels, as tribal leaders were seen as feudal in communist terms. In addition, due to the aforementioned developments in the Gulf, the Arab Nationalist trend was also reduced (Interview Imamate leader, 19th July 2013, RA6).

The leaders of the Dhofar Charitable Association were the most prominent members eliminated from

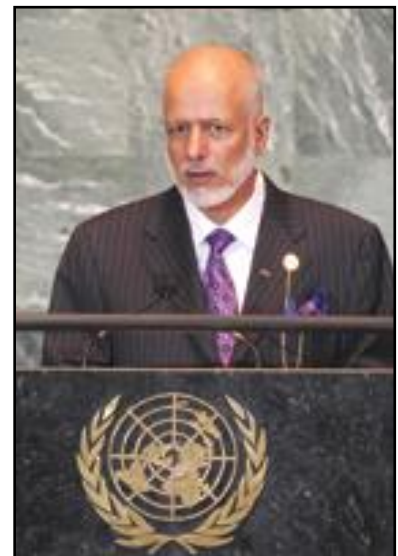


Fig. 15: Yousuf bin Alawi, the Sultanate of Oman's current Foreign Minister (right) and Musalim bin Nafal, who had fired the first bullet in the revolution (left), were ousted along second conference, 2000. (Source: Ministry of Media, Oman, M435UN and S254D)

the leadership during this conference. The list of those ousted includes a number of influential figures, including: Sheikh Musalim bin Nafal (figure 15), who had fired the first bullet in the revolution; Awadh al Rawas and Musalim Al Buramai, who were responsible for the Front's communications abroad; Said Jae'idi, who had been a member of the Front Command and the Commander of the Liberation Army; and Yousuf bin Alawi, the current Foreign Minister of the Sultanate of Oman (see figure 15), who had been the representative of the Front in Egypt. Having led the revolution during its first phase (1965-67), these members later became an effective opposition wing in the Front.

The most important resolution of the Conference

Despite the divergence of views between those attending the Hamrin Conference and the opposition of the original revolution leaders, the decisions of the conference members were enforced, the new leaders insisting the decisions were binding and irreversible. The statement was issued by the General Command of the Front on 10th November 1968. The main points were as follows:

First, commitment to organise revolutionary violence as the only route to defeat imperialism, reactionaries, and bourgeois feudalism. Second, change the name of the DL to the "Peoples Front for Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf" PFLOAG, thereby linking the struggle of the people of Dhofar to that of the masses in the Gulf. Third, the conference strongly condemned Muscat and the Imamate of Oman, as well as all the traditional and political forces in the Gulf. Fourth, the conference strongly endorsed the struggle of the Palestinians and the struggles of all peoples fighting against imperialism and feudal regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Fifth, the conference strongly denounced the racial regime in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and condemned racism and discrimination in America. Sixth, the conference changed the name from the Liberation Army to the Popular Liberation Army. Finally, the Military Committee appointed field commanders for all sectors, with periodic changes of leadership as the committee considered appropriate. Military field commanders were to receive their directives from the political commissar at a given camp or military area, who would be appointed by the Military Committee after consultation with the remaining committee leadership (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 528-533).

It is clear from the populist revolutionary discourse of the statement, particularly in its focus on the struggles of the other peoples against imperialism and the expansion of the revolution to include the entire Arabian Gulf, that the new leaders were strongly influenced by the tenets of Maoist communism. In addition, the revolution became more anti-UK and anti-US. A secret British report stated that, on 4th December 1968, Radio Moscow broadcast the blessings of the Soviet Union for

the resolutions. The report also noted the presence of the Chinese at the conference. It also noted the PFLOAG had an office in Cairo that not only organised publicity for the group but also acted as a conduit for aid from the Soviet Union and China (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 528-533).

The second conference contributed significantly to the reduction of the influence of the Arab Nationalists who were located in Kuwait. It also signalled the beginning of the end for the liaison committee located there. In addition, the power of the Dhofar Charitable Association was also drastically reduced. In effect, this conference marks the point at which the younger communist generation overcame the old nationalist guard. It is clear that the conference resolutions served to drastically modify the strategic path of the revolution, as well as to widen its circle of opponents. Importantly, the role of the group was no longer simply the overthrow of Sultan Said and ensuring freedom for Dhofar. Instead, they sought the destruction of world imperialism, with Britain at its head, and the destruction of feudalism and capitalism. The whole of the Arab Gulf was now to be liberated from those rulers that were collaborating with western powers, particularly Britain and the US. Hence, the goal of some decisions of the conference was to arrange and organise the military to its ability to more combat the Sultan's forces effectively and the British troops that supported him. The change in the ideology of the rebels is also evident in the differences between socialism and the dominant Islamic principles of most of the rebel; and because of the relative backwardness and high level of illiteracy that prevailed in Dhofar at that time. The conference condemned the Imam Ghalib who was also attempting to overthrow Sultan Said. This estrangement between the Imam and the Front constituted a backward step given that the Imam had provided invaluable support to the rebels at the start of the rebellion. The same view point attacked the traditional political forces "tribal system" that had prevailed for centuries in Dhofar. This antagonism was to have serious consequences for the revolution, as the tribal system was the most important source of financial and human resources for the rebels in Dhofar.

3.3: The positive and negative repercussions of communism

Communism is a social, political and economic system based on collective production and the removal of social structure. The principle of communism is that all individuals are equal, with no person being better than another and all individuals working to the full extent of their own ability. Communism seeks to give substance to everything in life. It refuses to abide by the religious

and social rules governing society, instead focusing on the role of matter in the production of society. Marx developed the foundations of communism, with an idea of an equitable society that spread rapidly to many countries around the world, the most important being the Soviet Union and China (Moussa, 2012, p.10). The first real occurrence of communism dates back to 1917 and the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

The change in the ideology of the revolutionaries from Arab nationalism and Islam to one predicated on Maoist communism, blended with nationalism had major positive and negative repercussions on the history of the Dhofar rebellion and directly impacted British diplomatic efforts to contain the rebellion after the change of direction that occurred after the conference. Analysis of the conference decisions, demonstrates that the conference had several positive roles in the evolution of the revolutionary work in organisational, political, economic, military and social spheres.

3.3.1: Positive repercussions

Organisational development of the revolution

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a leadership of 12 revolutionary members was elected at the beginning of the armed struggle and tasks were distributed to them. In addition to this, Dhofar had been divided into three military sectors: in the east, the centre, and the west. Each sector was led by one of the twelve leaders, who belonged to one of the tribes in that area. The forces that these commanders led joined the Liberation Army as either regular forces or secret organisations (Interview Rebel leader, 15th June 2016, RA5). After the conference, this organisational aspect evolved dramatically, as PFLOAG came to resemble a transitional government that consisted of a presidential council with many functionaries. Importantly, all of the new leaders became communist. As part of the new rebel organisation, the Presidential Council of the Front consisted of the heads of the executive, organisational, military, political and economic committees. The leadership of PFLOAG was chaired by Mohammad Al Yafei at its inception. A new military sector was added, the, with Saeed bin Gonah appointed as the commander of this Passage sector and Rames Ja'aboub as his deputy. This change was an important military organisational development that focused on the road linking Dhofar with the rest of Oman. The leadership approved the practice of appointing political commissars who were specialised in clarifying decisions in terms of Marxist

concepts (Interview Front ex-leader, 9th December 2016, RA5). One rebel leader interviewee explained that these commissars were distributed between units. Their work was organised so that there would be a general commissar in each unit, who would be assisted by a group of commissars in the sub-units. The unit consisted of 20-60 elements. The leadership of PFLOAG rearranged its organisational branches abroad and chose new leaders of the branches in line with the new approach. The Front also opened a representative office in Aden, which became responsible for the Liaison Committee. The office coordinated with the embassies of friendly countries, as well as receiving donations sent from regulatory branches abroad (Interview Ali Ghawas, 16th June 2016).

At the organisational level, it is evident that the leadership of the Front expanded and unite. Military forces were also re-organised. As a consequence, the military districts were the Eastern Region, the Central Region, the Passage Area, and the Western Region (Dhiab, 1984, p. 167). These changes were intended to organise the rebels from both military and ideological perspectives, meaning that the military commander of the region was no longer the only decision-maker in the area. Instead, the political commissars were given the final word on all decisions, in order to ensure that communist principles were properly applied in all operations. The political commissars more experienced in the communist world than their colleagues, indicating the determination of the leaders of the revolution to root new communist principles among all the rebels.

Military Superiority of the Rebel Organisation

One of the most important accomplishments of the revolution, from its inception until mid-1971, was the military superiority of the Dhofar rebels over the forces of Sultan Said bin Taimur. If the Dhofar Rebellion led Sultan Said to stay at his Palace in Salalah and to be further isolated from the public, the operations carried out by the rebels after the Hamrin Conference paralysed the capabilities of his forces, preventing them from working in the mountains and besieging them in the coastal city and towns (figure 16). This culminated in 1969, when rebels managed to cut off the only transportation route between Muscat and Salalah, which they named the “Red Line”

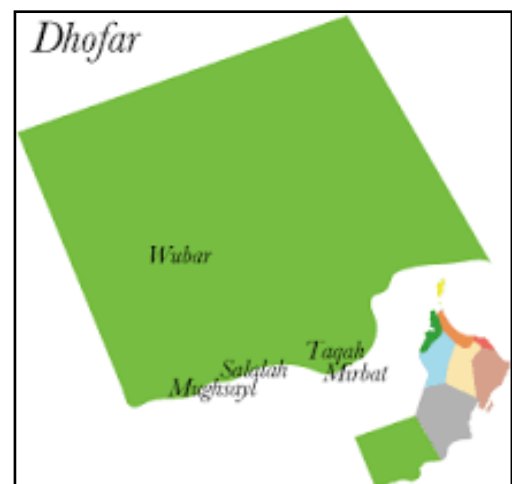


Fig. 16: Dhofar towns
(Source: Oman National Survey Authority, NSA DR 43)

(Fayyad, 1975, p. 150). This success became possible after the rebels developed new military tactics, which were a consequence of the Hamrin Conference. Mandalawi explains that Chinese aid, including wireless communication, had strengthened rebel superiority (2001, p. 69). This gave the PFLOAG the ability to control most of the areas in Dhofar, leaving the SAF with only the coastal towns, except Salalah, Taqah, Mirbat, and Sadah. However, the forces of the Sultan retained air superiority with the assistance of the British Air Force, which was crucial in preventing the rebels from occupying cities and towns or appearing in open lands. This also restricted their control in the mountainous areas. The rebels had high morale and a mastery of the terrain (figure 17).

The rebel military superiority continued as the rebels used the monsoon (Khareef) season to their advantage. In the autumn, rebels attacked all the various military bases of the government forces by attacking under the cover of clouds and across the grass and bushes. During this period, the rebels managed to occupy the



Fig. 17: Rebels 'military superiority after the Second conference, 1960's (Source: Royal Air Force of Oman Archives, RAFODR 103)

western town of Dhalkut from the beginning of 1969. Popular Liberation Army troops moved to Rakhyut and occupied it on 23rd September 1969, arresting Hamed bin Said, Wali, Governor of Rakhyut, and a number of his men. They executed the Wali after his trial on charges of treason and cooperation with Britain, while the other men were released (Dhiab, 1984, p. 100). This resulted in PLA troops tightening control over the mountains and towns of the western region of Dhofar, leading to the use of the term (liberated territories). The rebels then headed for the eastern region of Dhofar to add to their liberated areas (Muqaibl, 2002, p. 52). At this point, the PLA troops managed to seize the coastal town of Sadah in March 1970, after which the rest of the Sultan troops withdrew to the Salalah and Mirbat, which were surrounded by barbed wire (Interview Imamate leader, 19th July 2013, RA6). The military situation continued to develop in favour of the PLA forces, which controlled the Dhofar Mountains from the furthest point in the east to its western borders. The Sultan's forces were under pressure from the PLA, and when Sultan Qaboos assumed power after the removal of his father on 23rd July 1970, the military situation was in favour of the rebels. This development represented the success of Maoist military tactics of guerrilla warfare and liberated

which had been used successfully in China and other communist countries. These skills and strategies played a major role in rebel field victories.

Political development

Since the beginning of the revolution and the Hamrin Conference, the policies of the revolution revolved around attracting Dhofaris with the offer of a better lifestyle after the fall of Sultan Said. This approach was heavily reliant on influential figures in Dhofar's social and tribal structure. In contrast, after the Hamrin Conference there was a significant change in approach to traditions and tribal customs. It was no longer important for a member of the leadership team to be from one of the socially influential tribes. Instead, leaders needed to have adopted the new open policy on the whole of the Arabian Gulf, and to support communist ideas, reflecting the growing importance of that party at this stage. As a result, a PFLOAG statement called upon all "revolutionary factions in the Arabian Gulf to bear historical responsibility for the armed revolution and the conference decisions". It has also stressed the need to meet the national forces in an open arena and its commitment to organised revolutionary violence, "which distinguished it from other reformist trends that believed in the possibility of developing the current tribal systems and achieving accomplishments under the reformist horizon" (National Struggle Documents, 1974, p. 8). The second conference held in Hamrin was therefore a clear victory over the nationalist and Arab perspective that prevailed between the Dhofar rebels before the conference. It also challenged the Islamic values of the local people. The left controlled the decisions of the conference and, in this way, assumed leadership of the revolution. A new stage of the revolutionary work in Dhofar began with the new leadership. The rebel ideology closely resembled that of Chinese communism. The decisions of Hamrin Conference also moved the revolution from the local and regional frame to a global scale, with the PFLOAG becoming an integral part of the world socialist revolutionary movement and offering them access to a wealth of experience from these systems in other countries.

Media Development

The initial media activity of the rebels was a radio from Cairo. The radio allocated a half-hour weekly programme for the Dhofar Revolution, which was presented by Yousaf bin Alawi, the representative of the DLF in Cairo and the current Minister of Foreign Affairs in Oman. This operated from 1965 to the middle of 1968. After the Hamrin Conference, the media aspect of the revolution evolved significantly, especially with the development of political relations with

revolutionary organisations in Yemen and Palestine. The media institutions of the Dhofar rebels were established in Yemen, with the assistance of Palestinian expertise. The PFLOAG radio was one of the most successful low level media channels at the local level, due to the low cultural level of many Dhofaris, most of whom were illiterate unless they had been educated in other countries in the Arab Gulf. After Hamrin Conference, in 1968, the leadership also worked to establish a radio station for the revolution based in the city of Mukalla, Yemen, which is situated near the Oman border. The station broadcast programmes for Dhofaris for two hours a day. In addition the Front had a daily radio programme broadcast from the radio of the Democratic Republic of Yemen (Fayyad, 1975, p. 166). Moreover, after the conference, the Front also issued several magazines, the most important of which was “*9th June Magazine*”, a monthly journal (Suna'Allah, 2000, p. 211). The magazine was issued in Aden by the Central Information Committee of the Front and bears the name of the day upon which the declaration of the armed struggle in Dhofar began. It was supervised by the Front office representatives in Aden, although the majority of the magazine editors were Palestinian volunteers, who lacked media expertise. The Front also published a magazine entitled *Voice of People* from Aden in 1969. Initially, the publication was written by hand and developed into a weekly newsletter, with the assistance of Palestinian technical staff. During this phase, the Front started to produce a number of films and songs, eg. (The Hour Liberation Knocked; The song of Liberation Hour is ringing colonisation; Dhofar Front Days; Leftists in Dhofar). These films were presented in various film festivals and aroused great interest. In light of the media developments, the Information Office for the Front was entrusted with the task of following up media activities, such as sending media delegations to different regions, meeting the visiting media delegations, and arranging their visit programmes to the revolutionary institutions and controlled areas (Fayyad, 1975, p. 167). These films make it clear that the morale and determination of the rebels were very high. Indeed, they were ready to sacrifice in order to achieve their goal, which was not only end the rule of Sultan Said, but also the “liberation” of the entire Arabian Gulf from their rulers, who they described as “servant of global imperialism” (National Struggle Documents, 1974, pp. 25-27).

Social transformations

After the Hamrin Conference in 1968, the new revolutionary leaders launched a social and economic programme to help spread socialist revolution among the people. The first step undertaken by the Front to encourage political and organisational growth of the rebels was the

formation of a revolution camp in Hawf, a city in South Yemen near the Dhofar border, which was the main training camp for the revolutionaries led by Abdul Aziz Al Qadhi (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 118; Interview Imamate leader, 19th July 2013, RA6). The most important the decision of the Popular Front leadership and outcome of the training camp was to abolish the social discrimination that was experienced by many Dhofaris. This policy sought to remove tribal intolerance, removing masters and slaves, and making all equal before the law (National Struggle Documents, 1974). However, there was a downside to this decision to combat social discrimination, which constituted a serious social shift in the tribal society of Dhofar. The regions of Oman had operated under an Islamic tribal system for more than 1200 years before the application of communist ideology. This change was limiting for the revolution because it resulted in tribal leaders losing their influence over the people of their regions. As a result of the liberation of women and equality of men in accordance with communist ideology, the rebels began to lose access to the popular incubator control and influence provided by tribal leaders. The liberation of women and their position fighting alongside men, including the ability of women to choose their partners without consulting their guardian, stirred hatred among the local population against the rebel leaders. The films in the previous section (Media Development) show the Dhofari women fighting beside the men, which became common not only in Dhofar, but across all of the Arabian Peninsula. This item was problematic for many tribal men and therefore limited the appeal of the revolution.

The educational role of the Front

A Kuwaiti political newspaper dated 16th July 1971 shows that, after its establishment in Hawf in January 1969, the rebel camp became also a major social and educational achievement of



Fig. 18: Right: Huda with another Dhofari fighter women in the field, 1968,. Left: There was an educational role of the Front after the Second Conference, 1968 (Source: Royal Air Force Archives, RAFODR 86)

the rebellion. Despite the fact that the camp initially provided basic military training to Liberation Army members and the popular militia, it evolved into an important centre for literacy (see figure 18). (Adayyen, 1971, p. 3). The newspaper *Adayyen*, 17th July 1971, explains that the camp had been named the School of the People, before being renamed the Lenin School on 1st April 1970. It was run by a Bahraini woman named Huda (real name Lila Fakhrow) (see figure 18) who held a master's degree in statistics from the University of Beirut (*Al Wasat newspaper*, 'Rebellion in Oman', 8th Feb 1971, p. 1). The school accommodated a large number of Dhofari children, teaching approximately 400 students between the ages of six and sixteen by mid-1971 (Adayyen, 1971, p. 3). The school was considered to be an important educational social achievement during the phase that followed the conference (Halliday, 2008, p. 278).

The women's role in the revolution

Significant changes also occurred in the life of Dhofari women during this phase (1968-1970). These developments enabled them to contribute in supporting the rebels from the beginning of the declaration of armed struggle in 1965. During the first phase of the revolution (1965-1967), the role of women had been limited to logistical support. This role evolved after the shift in the work programme and ideology of the Front brought about by the Hamrin Conference, which allowed women to fight alongside men (see figure 19). The Front enacted laws specifically for women, which were applied in virtually all areas that were controlled by the rebels. A Kuwaiti political newspaper (2nd August 1971) highlighted another positive social repercussion of the revolution at that time, which was the decision of the Front to reduce a woman's dowry to 12 riyals (approximately 20 pounds). This decision was considered positive and important, as it contributed to the simplification of marriage procedures and, as such, benefitted a significant proportion of the population.



Fig. 19: Women played a bigger role in the revolution after the Second Conference, 1968
(Source: Royal Air Force Archives, RAFODR 13)

In September 1970, the General Command of the Front issued a decision to allow men and women to choose their partners freely and without any pressure or interference from any third party (Halliday, 2008, p. 384). In addition, the Front banned polygamy and unequal divorce, as well as

allowing women to be educated and trained with the men. The Front also allowed women to use weapons and fight on the front lines of the PLA. The most famous of the women fighters in the rebellion, Fatma Al Amri, was held up as an example, until she passed away in north Hasik area in 1973. The Front prohibited the use of the prohibited word *hareem* (women), instead using the word *rafiqah* (partner) to address women (DLF, 1974, p. 24). These decisions, contributed significantly to the transformation and



Fig. 20: Dhofari girl is grinding seeds to make bread for the rebels (Source: Royal Air Force Archives, RAFODR 53)

development of the social life of the Dhofari community. The Front took upon itself the liberation of women, empowering them to learn, fight and contribute to the new society (see figure 20). However, the decision to liberate women had a negative impact for the rebels within the tribal community of Dhofar.

Economic transformations

The economic policies of the revolution focused on animal resources and agricultural capacity in Dhofar. In order to achieve its aims, the PFLOAG formed awareness committees to educate citizens about how best to manage their animal resources. Agricultural committees were formed to encourage them to work in farming and to be self-reliant on providing food. The Front also cancelled the tribal borders, which were customary in Dhofar, thereby enabling free access to grazing for all people. The PLA forces even helped the citizens to prepare the land for agriculture and harvesting (Fayyad, 1975, p. 162). New and previously unknown forms of agricultural equipment and supplies from the Democratic Republic of Yemen entered the areas that the rebels controlled, awaking the desire for change in the Dhofari people. This resulted in the PFLOAG, receiving broad popularity among the masses, due to the sudden feeling of hope that they would be able to improve from their miserable living conditions (Hala, 1970, pp. 10-15).

Overall, it is evident that the second conference of the revolutionaries (Hamrin Conference) had positive effects on the revolution, including the organisation of the work being undertaken, the

development of education, media and society, and the improvement of gender relations and economic development.

3.3.2: Negative repercussions

Although the decisions that resulted from the Hamrin Conference reflected positively on many aspects of the revolution and Dhofari life, as outlined above, the declarations also had several negative long-term social effects. The level of defections among rebel groups was perhaps the most important of these. The defections occurred as a result of the abolishment of the tribal system, the liberation of women and the adoption of socialist ideology, resulting in the negation of the role that Islam played in public life. The decision to change the name of the Front was also generally negative from a regional perspective, as Gulf Arab counties now considered the Front to be an enemy posing a direct threat to their (western-supported) governmental systems. The adoption of an Execution and Confiscation law in the areas controlled by the Front also harmed perceptions of the rebellion, as did the removal of the prevailing and centuries-old customs and traditions in Dhofar community.

During the first phase of the revolution (1965-1967), which was spearheaded by DLF, the revolutionary work more closely resembled tribal alliances, typical of Dhofar society, than an organised revolution. The DLF was the umbrella that gathered Dhofaris for the first time in contemporary history to achieve the common goal of undertaking a unified military action against a common enemy: Sultan Said. This unrivalled unity achieved its desired objectives by securing control of vast tracts of land in a short period, as well as gaining widespread sympathy in Dhofar, with even soldiers loyal to the Sultan expressing a degree of affinity for the revolutionary movement. However, the decisions of the Hamrin Conference led to the abandonment of this approach, resulting in defections and total estrangement between groups of rebels: the right-wing, which led the DLF, and the left-wing, which led the PFLOAG. As a result, the initial revolutionary leaders formed an opposition abroad against the new approach, which they called Sultan Qaboos to join (Dhofar Liberation Front)(Dhiab, 1984, p. 95). This opposition group joined Sultan Qaboos bin Said after he assumed government on 23rd July 1970, contributing significantly to the fight against their former comrades.

The negative repercussions of the adoption of socialist ideology were also extensive. Many authors (e.g. Al Amri, 2012, p. 116; Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 44) argue that Dhofar was not a fertile ground for communism, as neither the Islamic teachings of by the indigenous people nor the intellectual level of the general public were able to accept this new way of thinking. Dhofar had no class struggle that tallied with Marxist concepts: there was neither a working class nor a feudal society, at least in its political sense. In effect, the Dhofari tribal structure was a graveyard for any idea that came from abroad. Marxist ideas were alien to Omani society, as they conflicted with its deep rooted traditions and religion (Hashmi, 2013, pp. 90-91). In general, communism was therefore broadly inappropriate for this stage of revolutionary work in Dhofar, because the general thinking of the population across the Arabian Gulf was unable to accommodate to the ideas that were central to this approach.

3.4: The Change of Relations with Regional Organisations after the Second Conference in 1968

3.4.1: Imamate, UAE, Yemen, Egypt and Iraq

The political relations between the PFLOAG and the regional countries and organisations after the Hamrin Conference witnessed a huge change. At the Gulf regional level, the decisions of the Hamrin Conference led the relationship between the Popular Front and the Imamate of Oman to become argumentative, marred by severe condemnation. This was exacerbated by their strong condemnation of all the traditional political forces in the region and even the accusation that Imamate was affecting the public cause with pseudo-revolutionary slogans (see appendix 9: Hamrin Conference decisions). In broad terms, the communist ideology of the revolutionaries influenced relations with the Imamate, turning the relationship from friendliness to hostility, because of the profound differences between communism and Islamic thought. In fact, these two ideologies are almost oppositeto one another, given that the imamateis centered on the application of Islamic Sharia (Islamic law)with the rule according to the traditions of Ibadi doctrine. For example, after they became communists, the revolutionaries prevented people from religious practices, such as prayer, fasting and charity to the poor (*zakat*). In addition, communism liberated women and encouraged them to abandon obedience to their parents. In Islam, women have to obey their guardians and are prevented from marriage without the consent of guardians. Another reason for the growing hostility between the Imamate and the new communist revolution leaders was that the

Imam was in exile in Saudi Arabia. The leaders of the revolution condemned Saudi Arabia and accused it of being an instrument in the hands of American imperialism (Interview Imamate leader, 19th July 2013, RA6). As a consequence of this, it should have been expected that the relations between the rebels and the Imam would deteriorate.

In the same context, those attending the Hamrin Conference condemned the Unity of the UAE and described it as fake. This was a clear hostility expressed towards the traditional, succession systems in the Arabian Gulf, at the same time as being an open invitation to the non-traditional Gulf opposition (left-wing) to cooperate with the Dhofar rebels to fight against those regulations that they described as reactionary and bourgeois. At the level of the Arab Gulf countries, the agenda of the policy of the revolutionaries had moved away from governments of the region, instead focusing on anti-government groups. This policy attracted many opposition figures in the Arabian Gulf but proved insufficient to overcome the governments of the region (Fayyad, 1975, pp. 106-107).

The relations between the Front and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen became closer at all levels. After the independence of Yemen from Britain in 1967, it allocated significant resources to support the Dhofar rebels. Because of this, the Front representation office in Al Mualla in Aden soon became the first and most important political office, managing the Front's diplomatic and media affairs. The Yemen Embassy in Kuwait was also used as a liaison with the organisation members of the Gulf region. Yemen contributed more than two-thirds of the annual budget of the Front (Al Rayes, 2000, pp. 114-115). The support that Yemen offered to the rebels resulted in a notable increase in the rebel military activity and use of ammunition. In addition, the DLF leadership was also able to open headquarters in Hawf, a Yemeni town near the border of Dhofar (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 370-371, 373-377).

The relations with Egypt and Iraq were characterised by relative apathy in the period that followed the Hamrin Conference. Egypt's preoccupation with the Israeli occupation of Arab lands after its defeat of 1967 significantly contributed to its disinterest in maintaining its relationship with the Front. This was amplified by the reservations expressed by Egyptians toward the changes that had occurred in the revolutionary work in Dhofar, with many of the figures that were popular in Egyptian official circles having been excluded from the Front leadership. A British document indicated that Cairo Radio was broadcasting a daily programme to support the rebels, entitled "half an hour from Dhofar", but this programme stopped in July 1968 (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 529-530).

The external representation office in Iraq was closed and Front office in Cairo was neglected as a result of the reticence of the Egyptian government to deal with the Front delegation headed by Mohammed Al Yafei and with the membership of Saeed Al Kathiri, Rajab Abedraboh, Ahmed Al Omari, and Salem Al A'Waed. The delegation had gone to Cairo to inform the Egyptian government about the new changes in the revolutionary work being undertaken in Dhofar, as well as to outline its leadership and work methods. However this delegation failed to obtain the blessing of the Egyptian government and so the representative office there was neglected. The delegation had travelled earlier to Kuwait at the beginning of October 1968 to inform the Front members of the Hamrin Conference decisions and the new regulations of the Popular Front leadership which resulted from the Second Conference, but had also failed to convince the Dhofari opposition in Kuwait of these decisions and the reasons behind them. Therefore, the relationship between rebels and the Egyptian government was officially broken (Al Rayes, 2000, pp. 98-99).

It seems likely that the Egyptian government also rejected the new communist leadership of the rebels because of the non-alignment movement policy that Egypt had helped to found. Abdel Nasser stressed Egypt's commitment to the movement by hosting the second conference of the movement in Cairo in 1964. The goal of this movement was to spread the ideology of Arab nationalism to other Arab countries and for the rebels to acquire weapons from the Egyptian army. The nationalist ideology was considered to be a compromise between Islam and communism, as unlike communism it respected religious freedom (Hamroush, 1978, pp. 59-60)(Appendix 10 explains the support from other countries, which is less relevant).

3.4.2: China

The Front's relationship with China was the most important of the global relationships that had been developed since the beginning of the movement in 1967. This relationship evolved significantly over the following years and became close, due to multiple visits between the members of the Popular Front and Chinese officials. A delegation of the Front, headed by Salim Al Ghassani, head of the Political Committee, visited China in February 1970 (Bahbahani, 1984, p. 183). The delegation spent five weeks there, culminating in a meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) and with the Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Huang Yongsheng (1910–1983). The discussions focused on ways to enhance

relations between the rebels and China, as well as the desire of the rebels to obtain more aid from China (ibid, p. 183). During this period, the Chinese government made promises to the rebel delegation that it would provide them with military support (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 511-512, 527 – 529, 532-533). When Sultan Qaboos rose to power in mid-1970, the relations between the Front and China were at their highest level. During the Front delegation visit to China, one Chinese official said that the situation was excellent and that the development and victories of the armed struggle of Dhofar rebels would promote and develop the national liberation struggle of the entire Gulf region (Yitzhak Shich, 1979, p. 153).

After the rebels embraced the communist ideology, their relations with the regional countries declined. Indeed, Yemen was soon the only gateway to the revolutionaries, after Egypt and Saudi Arabia withdrew their support. However, despite the growing influence of the military actions undertaken by the rebels after the Hamrin Conference, Sultan Said insisted that he would not open any channels of communication with other countries in the region, clearly indicating his position and ability with regards to the sovereignty of his country.

3.5: The Sultans Diplomacy during this second period

In many ways, the diplomacy of Sultan Said in the second period of the revolution (1968-1970) seems to have been similar to the first period (1965-1967). His mistreatment of citizens in Dhofar continued and his relationship with the regional countries remained unstable. Sultan Said also continued to refuse to follow British advice, as one of his main priorities was to maintain the independence of his country and his own sovereign right to make decisions. The Sultan was keen to reserve his legitimate rights, discretion and independence (Ateeqi, 2007, p. 54). A confidential telegram, “Security-Muscat and Oman”, sent to T.F. Brenchley, the Head of the Arabian Directorate in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from E.F. Henderson, the British Political Agency in Doha (Qatar), illustrates that the Sultan’s policy had not changed since coming to power in Oman. The document mentions that the Sultan did not permit British interference in matters of internal security in his country. It also notes that the lack of communication between the Sultan and the public increased every year that he spent in his remote retreat (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 143-144, 146) in Salalah in Dhofar and away from the capital, Muscat. As the war progressed, even though

the rebels controlled most of the mountains surrounding Salalah, the Sultan stayed in his palace in Salalah asserting his authority over the region.

After starting oil exports and achieving some economic prosperity, British diplomats however sought to suggest to the Sultan the importance of developing Dhofar, as this would gain the respect of the people and quell the revolution. In this context, British documents mention that the development in Oman did not meet people's expectations and was known to be much lower than other countries in the region:

Given the possibility that there might in the future be an increased opportunity for trouble to be created in Oman from outside. HMG felt that the speed of development in Oman did not match with the growing expectations of the people, many for whom had experience of what was happening in surrounding states, and that tension and possible threats to stability could result (UKNA, NBM10/2, 1970).

The Sultan however firmly believed that the British would not leave him to fight the rebels alone, because a rebel victory would adversely affect their long-lasting economic interests (Interview Moss, 9th Nov 2016). The British had helped the Sultan to win the Jebel Al Akhdar War in Al Dakhiya in 1959, which enabled both parties to benefit from the oil located under the Imamate controlled regions (see Chapter One). Therefore, the Sultan was equally sure that the British would help him to end the Dhofar War, especially after the adoption of communism by the rebels and the interference by the Chinese. In addition, the Sultan was uninterested in strengthening his relationships with the surrounding countries, especially KSA, and his relationships with them generally remained unstable and acrimonious. The Sultan was determined to maintain his discretion and the independence of Oman, declining to implement any of the British suggestions unless he was personally convinced that it was the right course. This resulted in his failure to develop the region and therefore remove a primary driver of the revolution. Recognising the relevance of stability and security to their future plans, British politicians started considering a replacement for Sultan Said. The emergence of this British policy will be discussed in detail below.

3.6: British Diplomacy

3.6.1: Ensuring oil flow

During this period, the level of oil exportation from Oman increased exponentially, rising from 57,000 barrels a day in August 1967 to 241,000 by December of the same year, rising to

382,000 barrels a day by 1969. Therefore, the oil industry became the top priority of the British government for multiple reasons. The first was the security matters represented in protecting oil pipelines and facilities from any damage. The Dhofar revolution caused serious security worries for British oil companies, due to the increased likelihood that the nascent oil industry in Oman would be damaged. A British confidential telegram sent on 19th July 1966, from E.F. Henderson, the British Political Agency in Doha (Qatar) to T.F. Brenchley, the Head of the Arabian directorate in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussed the fears that the regional supporters of the Dhofari rebels, especially the Iraqis and Egyptians, might cause damage to the oil industry.

Assuming that the oil company through cooperation with the government would take enough precautions to ensure the safety of the pumping stations which are connected to the pipes and the gas stations which are located in fields and even in ports, the oil industry in Oman was still the least secure industry in the Middle East and the Sultan's relationships with the rest of the Arab world was the worst among the rulers' (UKNA, BC 103125/1, 1966).

In fact, the Sultan had many opponents and his security enforcement did not meet the required standards. This situation was therefore highly important for British interests in the region, not only to ensure operation of their oil companies, but also to guarantee the economic development and security of the country, thereby helping to stabilise Oman before the agreed British withdrawal from the Gulf at the end of 1971. Hence,

Miles (1920) has argued that the economic factor was the most important factor behind all the major struggles in Oman as the borders between countries were set by oil companies in a scheme to share authorities. The economic factor was also the top of British priorities (Miles, 1920, pp. 201-203). Al Harthi (2007, p. 376) also confirms the importance of the economic aspect in the British policies, especially the stability of the region in the long-term, considering the threats and damages that could be caused to the facilities of the Petroleum Development Oman Company, of which Shell Company owned 85% stock (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 376).

3.6.2: Encouraging the Sultan to communicate with his people and start developing Dhofar

The British government therefore seized the opportunity to reconnect the Sultan with his people and end his isolation when Oman started to export large shipments of oil in August 1967. They aimed to gain the respect of the people by informing them of promising plans to begin

development, thinking that this would contribute significantly to ending the revolution in Dhofar. A British confidential telegram, Oil Shipments from Muscat(27July 1967), stated the necessity of the Sultan achieving some of the outcomes that his people expected as a result of the new oil revenues, because postponing these developments would anger the people and weaken the Sultan's position. As the Sultan did not have a radio station or other media, he agreed to be interviewed by an Arabic speaking employee of the BBC regarding his development plans. The interview was set to coincide with the first oil shipments in 1967, in order to ensure that the Sultan's words would have a strong impact on his people and encourage the Sultan to be closer to his people by announcing his development plans (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 257-259).

Sultan Said delivered a rare speech to his people in January 1968. During this speech, he reviewed the poor financial situation of the Sultanate when he took power in 1932, his achievements in organising an effective modern army, the victory in the Green Mountain War (1957-1959), and his ability to obtain British subsidies from 1958 to 1967, the year of oil exportation. He added that he had signed agreements for oil exploration that were similar to the agreements signed by other oil countries. He explained that the development process would be phased, with government offices being established first, followed by housing for the workers of companies that would undertake projects, after which he would provide schools, hospitals and roads, according to the needs of each city. The Sultan added that a number of projects had already begun in the areas of water, electricity and the construction of a shipping port, all in the capital Muscat, in addition to a project to issue a national currency (Appendix 11: Sultan Said Speech, January 1968).

An important British report, "The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman Steering Brief for Review", concluded that Sultan Said could not win in Dhofar if the military operations did not coincide with civil aid and regional developments. It stated:

The Sultan's military effort in Dhofar will not be successful without a measure of civilian development. Likewise, there cannot be civilian development without some reform of administration (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

Moreover, in "Civilian development in Dhofar", the brief added:

Civilian development in Dhofar in support of the military effort there is as essential as the military effort itself. It is generally agreed (though not necessarily by the Sultan) that the war in Dhofar cannot be won and possibly not even contained by military measures alone (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

The same report pointed out that British government paid great attention to the country's development because it would lead to more stability:

The Secretary of State indicated in his letter, the Sultan and H.M.G. share common interests, that development in the Sultanate are therefore of considerable concern to H.M.G. which is preoccupation with the new danger which have arisen to threaten stability in the Sultanate (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

When the Sultan refused to start the development programme after the beginning of oil exports, British diplomats tried to tempt him with the offer that they would reinforce the level of military cooperation and increase British aid to Oman once he had started the projects.

The negotiators could then sit into a discussion of the four main topics in question i.e. the military situation, civilian development in Dhofar, civilian development in Oman and reform of administration. The Sultan should be persuaded to agree to the measures we consider necessary and to ascertain precisely what will be necessary in the way of British assistance (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

Providing the discussion has gone well and that the Sultan has clearly indicated that he was prepared to implement some of the measures recommended in the civilian field, those diplomats had the discretion to offer him some or all of the assistance. In an attempt to convince the Sultan to start development, the British diplomats suggested changing their representation from a Consulate General to an Embassy. They stated that,

The British diplomats have discretion, again if the discussions go well, to offer to change British representation from a Consulate General to an Embassy (with an Ambassador of Grade 3 rank) if they consider that the Sultan would respond favourably to this.

The summary mentions that if the Sultan's refusal continued, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, would be asked to meet him and exert efforts to convince him. Alternatively,

that time and in advance of the Ministerial visit further decisions will have to be taken by Ministers on what H.M.G.'s relationship with the Sultan will be if the latter continues to refuse to give satisfactory undertakings (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

From the summary, it is clear that during this period (1968-1970), the British government insisted on attempting to convince the Sultan to start the development programmes in Oman, especially in Dhofar, as soon as possible. It also becomes clear that Halliday (2008, p. 331) is incorrect to argue that the British invested the Sultan full authority as long as their interests were protected. Regardless of whether the decisions of the Sultan were correct, he insisted on the implementation of only what he deemed to be appropriate. This indicated that he designed his policies autonomously

of foreign pressure, suggesting that the government of the Sultan had more independently from the British government than much of the literature argues (see section 1.3 for more details).

3.6.3: British diplomacy's fear of apolitical vacuum in Oman as a result of the death or assassination of the Sultan

Despite the failure of an assassination attempt on Sultan Said in 1966, it confirmed the isolation of the Sultan from his people (see section 2.4.5 for more details). As a result, British diplomats recognised the possibility of a future assassination attempt on the Sultan being successful, leading them to develop scenarios for the potential aftermath in case this should occur. Britain discussed the risks that British national interests would face in Oman if any assassination attempt succeeded during the second period of the revolution (1968-1970). The reasons for this approach are the aforementioned repercussions of the Hamrin Conference, the major military development of the rebels, Yemeni independence, the adoption of communist thought by the rebellion and Sultan Said's refusal to develop Dhofar, despite its economic revival due to oil. Despite these factors being significant motivators for the rebellion, there had been no change made to the infrastructure or any measures taken to meet the needs of the people despite access to new and lucrative revenue streams (Al Busaidi, 1965, pp. 3-5).

A top secret telegram was sent to the British Political Agent in Bahrain, Sir Stewart Crawford on 14th January 1969. Issued by D. Carden, the British Consulate General, it was entitled "The Death of the Sultan" and stated that if Oman should be ruled by a new government capable of maintaining the unity of the country, it would be possible to resolve disputes with the Arab countries, win the civil war in Dhofar, and prevent foreign intervention (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 536-537). These four aspects were likely British diplomatic priorities at that stage. When Sultan Said did not respond to repeated British demands to start the development of Dhofar, the British government sought to inform him, with an implicit threat, that he should take their diplomatic proposals seriously:

The situation in Dhofar is that it can be held indeed improved, provided the necessary measures are taken by the Sultan and his administration. The trouble has been that the Sultan's complex and difficult character has moved far too slowly in approving the military measures recommended to him, he is reluctant to authorise a speeding up of development projects in the civilian field in the Sultanate in general, and Dhofar in particular. This is generally agreed. The situation in Dhofar

cannot be permanently improved unless the Sultan makes his rule more attractive to the Dhofaris and shows them that he has an interest in their welfare. We have decided that we should review the whole situation with the Sultan (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

In the same context, a British document stated that a political review of British policy to Sultan Said should be conducted after his refusal to start the development or to comply with their suggestions. For this reason, the British considered securing the appointment of a Chief Secretary to ensure that decisions were made more smoothly, stating that “the Sultan urgently requires an experienced Chief Secretary to whom he would have to give the necessary power to supervise development on a much wider scale” (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970). Stewart Crawford, the British Residency in Bahrain, explains the three aspects that the British sought to develop in the Sultan’s Government for this reason:

We want the Sultan to install a more modern administration under a Chief Secretary, we want to encourage the Sultan to employ more Omanis and to give his people more freedom... we want to get the Sultan to delegate responsibility for development, in Dhofar (UKNA, NBM10/2, 1970).

Eventually, however, the British government lost hope in the Sultan’s possible cooperation and willingness to start the Dhofar development proposals. In the Sultanate of Oman Steering Brief, “The Sultanate Muscat and Oman”, Crawford states that,

A more modern code is required. There are many other small reforms necessary to move the Sultanate towards the twentieth century. It is unrealistic to think however that the Sultan will move very far or very fast (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

Sultan Said, however, stuck to his decision, as indicated in a secret British document:

The Sultan has over the past months received clear and consistent military advice from the Commander of his Armed Forces, from his new Defence Secretary ... from the Commander British Forces Gulf. There is no reason, given the seriousness of the present deteriorating situation, why he should not take the necessary decisions on their merits. It should be the first aim of the British diplomats to ensure that he does. Failing this the Sultan must be asked why he feels unable to act when he has received the necessary advice and when he has the financial means to do what is required (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

The implications of Sultan Said’s death were secretly discussed with his son, Sultan Qaboos, in 1969. The meeting was held to ensure that there would be no political gap that enabled the rebels to seize control of Dhofar, or the entirety of Oman, in the event of the Sultan’s death for any reason. His assassination or even sudden death would leave a serious power vacuum in Oman. This issue

was also discussed in another secret telegram, “Mr. Qaboos and the death of the Sultan”, from D.C. Carden at the British Consulate General in Muscat on 30th June 1969 to Sir Stewart Crawford, the British Political Agent in Bahrain (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 539-540). This message stated that the British had advised Sultan Qaboos, in the case of the assassination of his father, to travel to Muscat immediately and consult prominent Omani figures about the procedures that should be adopted. After gaining control of the tribes, he should ensure the support of the Sultan's Armed Forces and not release the tribal figures who had been imprisoned by his father. Once the situation in North Oman was stable, he should take the necessary measures to calm the situation in Dhofar. It was also made clear that the Oman Oil company would recognise the new Sultan if he came to the throne (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 539-540). It should be noted here that British diplomatic arrangements to replace Sultan Said, which began during this period, are deemed by Omani and Arab historians as stemming primarily from Britain's pursuit of its own economic and security interests in the region (Almari, 2012, pp. 151-152; Trabulsky, 2004, pp. 177-178). This seems to be true, as the British government sought to arrange the situation in the region before final military withdrawal. Ultimately, they wanted to ensure sufficient diplomatic influence to protect their long term national interests.

Such documents related to the Sultan Said's relationship with the British, make it clear that he was not as has had been described by many Arab and western writers a puppet in the hands of the coloniser (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Beasant, 2002, pp. 200-201; Fadel, 1995, p.212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332). Instead, it seems evident that Sultan Said was keen to maintain the independence of Oman to make the decisions that he deemed appropriate, whether or not they were contrary to the wishes of the British government. Most significant was his decision to refuse to commence regional development, despite the availability of the necessary financial resources. The concern of the British government about the possibility of his sudden death and the resultant problems that it would cause for Oman illustrated that they recognised the primacy of his authority and power in the Sultanate.

3.6.4: Sultan's Diplomacy with regard to Military Affairs

During this phase, with support of the British, the Sultan nonetheless sent several units against the strongholds of the rebels in the mountains. These units were led by British officers and supported by soldiers from north Oman, as well as Baluchi soldiers from Pakistan (see figure 21). These raids were victories for the rebels and a loss for the forces of the Sultan, largely thanks to the high morale of the revolutionaries and the inability of the Sultan to deal with guerrilla warfare (Jeapes, 1996, p. 11). The rebels also benefitted from support from abroad, especially from South Yemen. The success of Yemen in liberating their country from British 'colonisation' provided considerable moral support to the revolutionaries in Dhofar, who were also able to receive aid through Yemen. Since 1968, the Dhofar Mountains and desert were controlled by the rebels, while the Sultan only controlled Salalah and some major towns. The British responded by trying to adopt more effective operational tactics than those implemented during the first phase of the war (1965 - 1967) in an attempt to blockade the rebels, weaken them, and cut off their lines of supply, especially from South Yemen.



Fig. 21: The British troops were supporting the Sultan's Forces in Dhofar, 1969
(Source: Royal Air Force Archives, RAFODR 82).

3.6.5: Avoiding the involvement of British troops in the Dhofar War

After the Suez War in Egypt in 1956, the British government became more cautious about using British troops in internal wars. The damage to the prestige of Britain and the political credibility of its leaders led Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, to resign in January 1957 (Milner, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, the British government sought to prevent the involvement of British troops in the Dhofar war, as illustrated by a secret telegram addressed to the British Foreign Office, which was sent from DJ. McCarthy, in the Arabian Department in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to MS. Weir, the British Consulate General in Bahrain on 2nd October 1968. The contents of the message indicate that the form and manner of British military intervention in the Al Jabal Al Akhdar war in 1958 could not be allowed to happen again under any circumstances due to the embarrassment caused to the British government by the United Nations General Council adopting discussions on the issue of the Imamate of Oman (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 440-441). Qualified British officers who had mastered guerrilla warfare were, therefore provided to lead the Sultan's Armed Forces in the Dhofar War (Ladwig, 2008, p. 17). This has led many writers to claim that the Dhofar War was a secret war (Fiennes, 1974, p. 15; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Jeapes, 1996, p. 11; Ordeman, 2016, p. 2). Its secrecy was certainly a part of British efforts to avoid international condemnation for involvement in internal wars in Gulf States.

3.6.6: Ensuring British national interests before British withdrawal from east of Suez in 1971

A secret document entitled *RAF Salalah* was sent to the British Consulate General in Bahrain, M. S. Weir on 5th April 1968, and issued by British Political Agent in Bahrain, Sir Stewart Crawford. This document stated that the British government realised that keeping security and stability in Oman before their withdrawal from east Suez in 1971 had become a priority (1968-1970). For the British government, stability in the Sultanate was stated as an,

important factor to keep peace and development in the Gulf Emirates in the next few years that will witness a withdrawal from the Gulf. Her Majesty's Government will always be concerned about the stability in the Sultanate and the region in the long run (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 376).

A confidential British letter also outlined some of the features of Oman's geographical location and its importance to the British, such as the strategic importance of Masirah Island as an

air station for the RAF and the importance of the country as a site for a radio reinforcement station to enable the British Broadcasting Corporation to broadcast to South Asia (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 376).

These matters were further discussed in an important letter entitled "The Sultanate Muscat and Oman", from A.A. Land, the Secretary of State to the Secretary of State for Defence. The contents of the letter discussed the diplomatic arrangements after the withdrawal, the need to ensure the long-term interests of the UK in Oman, especially economically, and the threat that the Dhofar revolution could pose to British interests if no resolution was found before the withdrawal:

I am increasingly concerned about the situation in the Sultanate and in particular in Dhofar and consequent danger to British personnel, both military and civilian, in Salalah... In addition, we have a considerable interest in the maintenance of stability in the Sultanate both before and after our military withdrawal from the Persian Gulf. A serious deterioration in the situation in the Sultanate before 1971 could adversely affect the plans and model for our withdrawal. A spread of communist or extreme Arab nationalist influence thereafter could affect our extensive oil and commercial interest in the Gulf States (UKNA, FCO, 512/1202, 1970).

Likewise, a confidential telegram sent to Sir Stewart Crawford, British Political Agent in the Persian Gulf, from the British Residency, Bahrain on 12th January 1969, signed by DC. Carden included an annual review for the year 1968. The document mentioned that the most important event in 1968 was the decision to withdraw the British troops from the Gulf by the end of 1971. It emphasised that this decision might reduce the opportunities to sustain the security, tranquillity, and prosperity of the British interests in the Oman. The document also mentioned requests to establish facilities for British forces, the BBC radio station, and to review oil development programmes, while noting visible and invisible British exports in the form of weapons for the Sultan's Armed Forces, equipment for development projects, and transfers of British employees.

The factors that would have helped the Sultan to have control over the tribes determination was to use the country's resources to benefit the people, and in spending oil revenues in Dhofar development. However, there are factors which may have threaten the continuity of the Sultan's rule and our interests as well. These include the British withdrawal from the Gulf, the slow pace of implementing development projects, the Sultan's reluctance to establishing a new government agency which can transform oil revenues into benefiting the people, in addition to his unwillingness to change the restrictions imposed in Dhofar, like allowing Dhofaris to have a kind of independent management of their own affairs as well as the growing influence of communists in Dhofar. It is important for the success of his rule to grant authority to strong men and the inability of the Sultan to

trust other people and grant them the appropriate authority may have lead to the collapse of his rule.

This document outlines the consequences of overthrowing Said:

If the Sultan's rule was overthrown, the doors will be opened in front of the various wings to fight over power; some of which will be supported by external forces. This means the end of the prevailing peace in Oman currently. Chaos and instability of the country, which would have threatened British interests in the country to varying degrees (UKNA, DS 11/12, File 2/7, 1969).

The British government focused on imposing stability with minimal human, political and material costs, thus contributing to the British national interests on the economic and military sides particularly in preparation for after the withdrawal period as outlined in the 'RAF Salalah' document issued on 5th April 1968, which stipulated that the British policy had to deal with the Dhofar Rebels,

until the withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, and in the long-term if possible minimise the risk of injuries, loss of lives and destruction of the Royal Air Force in Salalah and minimise the risk of implicating British troops in military operations to defend the airstrip (Al Harthi, 2007, pp. 370-377).

In sum, this situation required covert British military intervention to assist Oman.

3.7: Chapter III Conclusion

The second conference of the revolution, otherwise known as the Hamrin Conference, was held in 1968. It constituted a major turning point in the Dhofar revolution, as the leaders of the left-wing Dhofar Branch of the Arab National Movement assumed control over decisions by replacing the more moderate group that controlled the leadership of the DLF, including the members of the Dhofar Charitable Association. The communist trend in the revolutionary movement in Dhofar can be said to have been a new ideological approach that was caused by the multiplicity of internal and external variables surrounding the revolutionary work. This new approach effectively took over control of the rebellion at the Hamrin Conference, the consequence of which is that the conference concluded with a new leadership and new decisions at all levels, including strategically, ideologically, politically and militarily.

The Hamrin Conference had both negative and positive effects on the rebels. The external problems are represented in the expansion or replacement of the rebel circle from the Gulf countries

and Egypt, which had been the most influential supporter of the rebels during the first phase. Additionally, the rebels made Britain their explicit enemy at this stage. The internal disadvantages included a rejection of the new communist way of thinking by many of the conservative nationalist rebels, including many who had been leaders during the first phase. The new leaders of the revolution declined to compromise, instead applying the new communist approach by force, leading to decisions about the execution law, the abolition of class and even women's liberation that were negatively received by the established Dhofar tribal society. The Front started losing popularity because the majority of the Dhofari people did not accept the new communist ideology, at least partly due to their deep-rooted tribal system, as well as the fact that Dhofari society is entirely Islamic. However, the rebels benefited from the decisions of Hamrin Conference through increased support provided from communist countries and organisations, especially the high levels of military, media and political support from China and Yemen. This provided the rebels with a major military and moral impetus that allowed them to develop the revolutionary areas in organisational, military, political, media, and educational terms. It enabled the rebels to defeat the Sultan forces and British advisers in most towns. Ultimately, however the rebels did not take care of the core values of Omani political relations with the adoption of communism. By fighting Islamic and tribal customs and traditions, even actions such as liberating women, the rebels lost the support of the tribes that were the most important pillars of their influence. They also lost Saudi and Egyptian support, leaving only Yemen as regional ally.

On the other side, the diplomacy of Sultan Said did not change much during this phase, as he maintained the independence of his decisions and continued to have poor relations with his people, particularly in Dhofar. The Sultan also made no effort to improve his relationship with other countries in the region or to develop his government.

The British government was however more flexible, having changed to maintain pace with the field gains acquired by the rebels after the Second Conference, as well as to react to the variables that arose during 1968, the most important of which was commercial oil export from Oman and its own withdrawal from the areas to the east of Suez. The British government sought to maintain British national interests in Oman in the long-term and to protect the nascent oil industry in Oman by securing its production and exporting sites, as well as trying to convince the Sultan to use oil revenues to achieve prosperity for his people in an effort to win the hearts and minds of Dhofaris in particular. They sought to ensure the consolidation of peace and stability in Oman,

recognising that this was significantly related to the stability of the entire region and therefore their own national interests after they withdrew from the region. The British government also attempted to avoid direct involvement in the Dhofar War, because of international criticism. Therefore, the UK intended to provide military experts and consultants to lead the Sultan's Forces in Dhofar. However, some British interests in Oman remained important from the beginning of the revolution, such as the strategic location of Masirah Island in the east of Oman, the promising oil market, and the location of the British radio station.

It is clear that British diplomacy and military intervention in Dhofar was intended to ensure that the war was won and to prevent foreign intervention in Oman, in so doing securing British interests with minimum human, political and material costs. Ironically Sultan Said's assertion of independence of foreign influence and pressure in terms of his domestic policy decision was to result in his loss of power through internal family coup d'état.

Dhofar War 1965 – 1975

CHAPTER 4:

The Third Phase of the Revolution (July 1970 – May 1972)

4.1: The Reasons for the Coup against Sultan Said

4.1.1: Sultan Said's policy and the Coup

Sultan Said's ongoing cruelty to his people and his decision to postpone the socio-economic development of Oman, despite the increased income from oil revenues, created widespread indignation that inflamed the conflict in Dhofar. He was also opposed by other members of the ruling family, one of whom was his brother Tariq. Peterson (2007) argues that Sultan Said failed in ruling Oman during that period, since because of the anxiety over his governance that had spread across all Oman and even affected his own family. Therefore, many of Al Busaidi's family members left Muscat and headed to other Arab and European countries. Sultan Said also faced a challenge from his brother Tariq, who left the country in November 1962 in disappointment at the Sultan's refusal to give him a significant position in government (p. 201). After four years, in a call to unseat the Sultan, Tariq communicated with other disaffected groups, one of which was the revolution leaders in Dhofar. He also established (the Omani Kingdom) constitution for the country that he hoped to establish after overthrowing the regime of his brother. The purpose of the constitution was to clarify his intentions for the shape of the regime in Oman after the overthrow of Sultan Said, in which he was clear that the Sultan would have an honorary post rather than reigned. In addition, citizens would enjoy greater freedom and privileges.

Qasem (2000, pp. 412-413) argues that another reason for the coup was the political isolation of Oman. Although Oman was linked by some covenants to other countries, especially Britain, the United States, France, and the Netherlands, Sultan Said was not ready to represent his country abroad, justifying this decision by the huge expense involved. Therefore, the only representation of Oman outside its borders occurred in India, where the Sultan established an Omani Consulate in 1953. The Sultan's refusal to utilise the discovery of oil for the benefit of his country also frustrated the British government, who had been hoping to use developments to spread stability in Oman, thereby suppressing the revolution in Dhofar by winning over the hearts and minds of the locals (Clements, 1980, p. 63). A British secret letter addressed to D. Hall, at the Defence Department and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, entitled "Assistance in the Sultanate of Oman", indicated that, "the Sultan's refusal, despite our own advice and the accretion of considerable oil revenues (approximately \$40 million a year), to embark on any significant programme of civil development in Dhofar" (UKNA, D/DS 6/7/155/13 (DS 6a), 1970) was a limitation in dealing with problems in Dhofar.

The refusal of Sultan Said to develop Oman or become more open to other countries in the region therefore left Oman dependent on the provision of British support to suppress the revolution. Sultan Said seemed sure that the British would not allow the rebels to dominate Dhofar, as this would make it excessively difficult for them to protect British oil interests in the area, should it fall into the hands of Dhofar communists. Simultaneously, the British government sought to avoid the involvement of its forces in the war during this critical period, in an attempt to prevent a repeat of the Al Jabal Al Akhdar War in 1957, when they had intervened in an internal war. Nevertheless, as outlined in a British Confidential Brief, "The Unknown War", from PJ. Dun, Arabian Department, to Colonel Adler, British troops had been compelled to fight with Sultan Said in an attempt to combine the oil areas held by the Imamate into the lands of the Sultanate.

The discovery some ten years ago that there might be oil in the Sultanate forced the British to take an interest in this feudal country and Said bin Taimur, the Sultan, was aided by British forces in overthrowing the unruly tribes of central Oman. The British then set about helping to train bin Taimur's own private army so that the Al Busaidi dynasty could maintain its precarious grip on the Sultanate (UKNA, NBM 1/1, 1971).

The intervention by the British still however provoked a degree of condemnation, as mentioned in a secret Foreign Office Steering Committee brief on international organisations, which was entitled "The Question of Oman": "We were freely accused of colonial interference in the affairs of Muscat, the Arab Delegations and five others brought forward a motion recognising the right of the people of Oman to self-determination and independence and calling for reference of the question to the committee of twenty-four" (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, FILE 2/7, A 459, 1968). However, the intention that the Labour government issued in January in 1968 to withdraw from the areas east of Suez, including the Arabian Gulf, by the end of 1971, put the British government under pressure and made them concerned about the failure to resolve the conflict in Dhofar.

4.1.2: British Diplomats Fearfulness of Course of Events

British concerns were also increased by the Sultan's failure to keep the military operations of the revolutionaries' in Dhofar under control, as this put British regional interests in huge danger. The revolutionists' attempts to overthrow Sultan Said continued to grow as they seized control of the Strait of Hormuz (see figure 22), the active road for international petroleum exportation. The escalation of political events in Oman in early 1970, especially the military operations of the rebels, caused the British government to search for a way to maintain their national interests in the area. They were afraid that the rebel leaders in Dhofar might take over the government, which would present very dangerous challenges for Britain

and its interests in Oman and across the Arabian Gulf as a whole. This change in rule would also threaten the Oman coast Emirates (United Arab Emirates) and petroleum supplies (Clements, 1980, p. 63). As mentioned in a secret letter sent to S.L. Egerton Esq, at the Arabian department, issued by the British embassy Muscat:



Fig. 22: Strait of Hormuz. Oman controls the deepest parts, but the area controlled by Iran is very rough (Source: National Survey Authority, NSA AP 13)

Active communism must be halted militarily as far as possible away from Northern Oman. Protection of our current and likely oil sources depends upon a continued presence in Dhofar by SAF. It is clear to me that the Sultanate cannot afford to lose the Dhofar plain... A collapse of stability in Oman could affect other parts of the Trucial coast and bring about the very conditions which it is our policy to prevent. It is therefore in the UK's interest to assist the present Sultan, to whose rule there is at present no satisfactory alternative, in maintaining stability and in promoting economic and political advancement. In Oman there is at this moment a direct and overt threat to stability – the rebellion in the province of Dhofar. The defeat or at least containment of this rebellion is fundamental to the security of the present regime. British military support to the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) in generally maintaining stability throughout the country and specifically in countering the rebellion is therefore justified (UKNA, NBM 10/5, 1971).

Such documentary evidence illustrates that prior to the coup, the British faced the legitimate and serious risk that Oman was gradually falling into rebels' hands. At the same time, this document indicates that the independence and sovereignty of the Sultan's decision was recognised as being far-reaching.

The situation in Dhofar will progressively deteriorate unless urgent steps are taken. In the rest of the sultanate... it is essential to press ahead with development activities now that they are sufficient revenue from oil royalties in Oman. All the evidence show that unless the sultan is given a serious jolt, he will always do too little, too late and in some fields be unwilling to move at all. The paradox is that his survival is almost wholly dependent on British support... in spite of this, he has shown himself largely unresponsive to British advice (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, File 2/7 (E115), 1970).

In an attempt to solve the growing problem in Dhofar, especially given the approach of the time at which their forces were set to withdraw from the area, the British government examined options that could turn the table on the rebels in their favour:

The possible Courses of Action were:

- (a) Immediately increase British military commitment to deal with the situation in Dhofar. Militarily, this would no doubt be possible. ... H.M.G. would also come under considerable criticism from the United Nations and from Arab nationalist regimes.
- (b) Withdraw British military support or threaten to withdraw... withdrawing the seconded officers... and ceasing to operate certain facilities at Salalah airfield. These measures, if carried out, would be likely to result in Dhofar falling to the rebels, with unpredictable consequences for Oman and possibly the Persian Gulf states... contrary to British interests.
- (c) Attempt to change the regime. We know that the Sultan's son, Sayyid Qaboos, committed to an existence of total inaction by the Sultan, is frustrated and restive and sometimes thinks of moving against his father (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, File 2/7 (E115), 1970).

Most importantly, paragraph (c) indicates that Sultan Qaboos was considering the intention to seize power from his father and the British government saw this as an option opportunity.

4.1.3: Dhofar Palace Coup

Peterson (2007, pp. 201-202) states that the British government prepared for the coup after opposition in the royal family centred around Qaboos, the son of Sultan Said, after his return to Oman. The coup was arranged carefully, as it was highly dependent on the cooperation of the new Sultan's allies in Dhofar, namely Brik bin Hamood Al Ghafri, the son of Dhofar's governor; Hamad Bin Hamood Al Busaidi, the Sultan's secretary; and an unnamed intelligence officer from the SAF in Dhofar. Secret communications between these allies had been conducted in Muscat through Oman Petroleum Company employees, who undertook arranged trips to Salalah to have discussions

with Sultan Said (ibid, pp. 201-202). On those occasions, these OPC employees also took the chance to hold talks with Qaboos. The British government also supported the change of Sultan Said's system to make political and military adjustments in an attempt to halt the deteriorating situation in Dhofar (ibid, p. 202). Agwani (1978, p. 71) also mentions that, in response to these dangerous developments, Britain intended to support attempts to replace the ruling system, which ultimately led to the coup on 23rd July 1970.

There was also cooperation between the Consul General in Muscat, David Trafford and the British Political Resident in the Arabian Gulf, Geoffrey Arthur. Some of the British allies of Said in Oman disagreed with the notion of the coup, such as Oman's Minister of Defence, P.R Waterfield. He was therefore replaced by Col. Dean H. Oldman, a former RAF commander (Peterson J. E., 2007, p. 202). In this way, a major obstacle to planning for the coup was removed and replaced by a person who could provide administrative continuity immediately after a successful coup. Many significant foreigners were not informed about the conspiracy, out of fear that their loyalty to Sultan Said would lead to its failure. These foreigners included: F.C.L. Chauncy the Sultan's special advisor; C.C. Maxwell, the deputy commander of the Sultan's Royal Air Force (SAF); and the British Bank Administrator in the Middle East (Peterson JE., 2007, p. 213). Peterson (2007) adds that those who perceived the necessity to remove Sultan Said were led by Captain Tim Landon, the chief intelligence officer in Oman. He had guaranteed Tariq's cooperation with Qaboos in a meeting held in Dubai in March 1970, enabling preparation for the coup, although it had been delayed several times. However, attacks by PFLOAG on cities like Izki in north Oman in June 1970 accelerated the progress of the coup. In particular, there were some dangerous complications involved in the revolution's extension to north Oman, since the petroleum pipelines (see figure 23) that passed through these cities were under risk (Peterson J. E., 2007, p. 202).

It has been argued that the coup was largely driven on the Omani side by the desire of an elite group of Omanis, led by Sultan Qaboos, with the support of his uncle Tariq (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 153-152; Bahbahani, 1984, p. 155; Jeapes, 1996, p. 27; Kechichian, 2013, p. 259; Muqaibl, 2002, p.

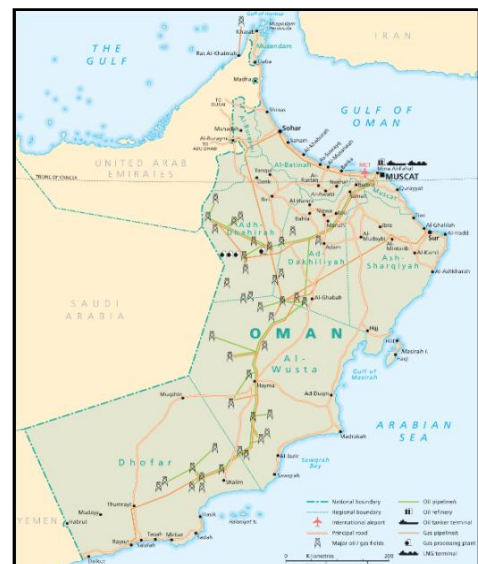


Fig. 23: Oil pipeline in Oman
(Source: Oman oil company library,
Oman oil, pipeline 27)

285). Others (Halliday, 2008, pp. 348-349; Petersen, 2011, pp. 201-202) and Trabulsy (2004, p. 177) however argue that the British government planned and set the date of the coup, simply using Sultan Qaboos and his uncle as tools. Unfortunately, there are no documents in the British National Archives giving details of the coup, although this may have been a deliberate ploy to not release information about this critical and delicate strategy. One Omani diplomat who held important posts in the 1970s however mentioned important details about the coup that could determine the extent of Britain's involvement in the event. He noted that the head of the team storming Sultan Said's Palace Brik bin Hamoud Al Ghafri, was the commander of the special guard of Sultan Said and a friend of Sultan Qaboos. He was accompanied by Hamad bin Hamoud AlBusaidi, the secretary of Sultan Said, and Tim Landen, an intelligence officer in the Sultan Air Force. Landen had been a colleague of Sultan Qaboos at Sandhurst and was a contract officer with Sultan Said. The fourth figure was Said bin Salem Al Wahibi, an officer in the SAF. The interviewed diplomat argued that "the coup would not have succeeded without the support of both Sultan Qaboos, who represented the internal opposition, and his uncle Tariq, who represented the external opposition". With this coordination, the loyalty of the commander of the armed forces was guaranteed. Although the commander of the SAF and Omani intelligence were British, they operated under the authority of Sultan Qaboos and according to his policies. This means that the British government did not directly intervene in the coup and it was therefore attributable to the evolution of events in Dhofar. The SAF perceived that it was in their best interest to change the Sultan to ensure necessary internal and external support for the operations against the rebels (Omani diplomat, 1st June 2017, RA7).

A British report, entitled "The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, H.M.G.'s Policy", sent to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Secret on 24th May 1970, indicated that the British government did not object because of a belief that Sultan Said would not change his policy despite it affecting British interests negatively.

Sayyid Tariq, the ruler's half- brother, was reported to have had some contacts in order to co-ordinate efforts to overthrow the Sultan and to replace him with his son Qaboos. Despite the encouraging developments mentioned... I cannot yet change the conclusion in my Annual Review for 1969 that the Sultan's performance remains unhelpful to our interests, nor my scepticism about his intention or capacity to do better (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, File 2/7 (E115), 1970).

On the day of the coup, the Sultan's palace guards had been bribed to be absent, allowing Brik bin Hamood to lead a group of guards through the palace gates to the Sultan's private department (see figure 24). There was an exchange of gunfire with the Sultan and his guards. The Sultan's carefulness had led him to put guns and weapons in every corner in the palace, even in his own rooms to enable him to be defended. Brik was shot and withdrew to the palace courtyard. There, he met a British officer who led the attacks inside the palace with a group of soldiers. The Sultan was forced to surrender and signed a resignation letter. He was transported from one of the air bases to Bahrain and his injuries treated, after which he was sent to one of London's private hospitals for several months. He settled in London until his death on 19th October 1972 (Clements, 1980, p. 63).



Fig. 24: Two military aircraft belonging to Sultan of Oman Air Force flown by British pilots in a mission to attack rebels. Behind, the Sultans palace (Al Hafa palace, where the coup occurred) (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 2396)

Sultan Qaboos bin Said had spent six years of his life between London and west Berlin, after graduating from Sandhurst Military Academy in 1966. When he returned to Muscat, his father sent him on a journey around the world for a year. After he returned, his father isolated him in his palace in Salalah (Liberty magazine, 1970, p. 6). Ail Al Harthi, one of the sheiks who witnessed the events, said that Sultan Said had decided to alienate his son because he suspected that there was a conspiracy for his son to replace him (Interview Ali Al Harthi, 2nd September 2012). An important British document supports the argument that the coup was carried out without the direct knowledge of the British government. The brief entitled "Former Sultan of Muscat and Oman", from P.T.E. England, to APS Secretary of State, on 25th August 1970, two months after the coup indicated that the coup was carried out without the direct knowledge of the British government. They were however concerned that the intervention of their secondment officers in the internal affairs of an independent country created the possibility that other countries would lose trust in the British officers working with them. In effect, they were concerned that the UK would be accused of intervening in the coups of other countries, potentially putting their officers and interests at risk. Therefore, the document stressed the importance of keeping the former Sultan in his exile in

London to avoid any lawsuit being brought against the British officers who collaborated with the new Sultan during the coup.

The coup could not have been successful without the help of the British officers serving on secondment with the Sultan's armed forces. A public argument about whether the action of the seconded officers went beyond the maintenance of law and order could never be conclusively settled and would provoke speculation which might damage not only our interests in Oman but also in other countries which employ British service men in their forces. It will therefore be important to extract the undertakings proposed by the Foreign and Commonwealth secretary and if these can be presented as being in the former Sultan's own interests so much the better. It should certainly be easier to keep an eye on the former Sultan's activities if he is allowed to remain in this country (UKNA, M.O. 5/49 (F 55) DS11/2/7/2, 1970).

The news of the coup was not announced until after the weekend. On 26th July, Sultan Qaboos bin Said issued a statement to Omani citizens and the whole world saying: "I have noticed the increased anxious and dissatisfaction with my father's inability to get things under control and now, my family and my Armed Forces have taken an oath of allegiance to me. The former Sultan has left the



Fig. 25: The moment of Sultan Qaboos' arrival to Muscat, 1970 (Source: RAO Archives, RAFOSQ 7021)

country and I promise that I will devote myself to form a new government as soon as possible" (Ministry of Information, 1995, p. 13). After the success of the coup, Sultan Qaboos sent a message on 27th July 1970 to the British government informing them that he had come to the throne and asked for their recognition (UKNA, NBM 2/2, 1970) (see appendix 12). Sultan Qaboos was recognised by the British government eight days after the coup, in a message from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and it was announced that, "the Department of External Affairs announced this morning

that recognition had been received from her Britannic Majesty's Government" (UKNA, NBM/4, 1970). After several days, Sultan Qaboos undertook his first visit to Muscat (see figure 25) and was received enthusiastically by its locals. Almost at the same time, Tariq bin Timor (see figure 26) was announced as Prime Minister.



Fig. 26: Left: Sultan Qaboos and his uncle Tariq, 1971. (Source: RAFO Archives). Right: Tariq receives a guest from the UAE, representing the openness of the Sultanate on the outside, 1971. (Source: RAO Archives, RAFO SQ 7134 and RAFOST 713)



The administration in Muscat had been modified and many key assistants to Sultan Said's system were removed by Qaboos, who asked them to leave Muscat. Senior Omani staff in Sultan Said's government resigned, including: Ahmad bin Ibrahim Al Busaidi; Shehab bin Faisal and Ismael bin Khalil Al Rusafi. On 8th August, Tariq declared the formation of the first ministries, assigning Saud bin Ail Al Khalili as the Minister of Education, Dr. Asem Al Jamali as the Health Minister, Bader bin Saud Al Busaidi as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mohammad bin Ahmad Al Busaidi as the Justice Minister. A short time later, Tariq departed to West Germany to make the necessary preparation for the arrival of his German wife and other family members in Muscat (1970, p. 161). Other Omani exiles were also invited to participate in the new government.

4.2: The new policy of Sultan Qaboos' Government

4.2.1: The Sultan's speeches

Upon coming to power in Oman on 23rd July 1970, Sultan Qaboos immediately gave a brief speech to outline his new policy approach (Sultan Qaboos website) (see appendix 13). His speech showed evidence of major differences in the approach to the internal and external policies of Oman. He addressed his people, saying:

I promise you to oblige myself to start as soon as possible to create a modern government, and my first goal is to abolish the unnecessary restrictions that burdened your lives. My people, I will proceed immediately to offer you a comfortable life with a bright future. Each one of you has to play his part to achieve this goal. We used to be a very famous and powerful country in the past and if we collaborate and unify our efforts, we will regain our glorious past and we will have

a prestigious place in the Arab World. I will make legal proceedings to gain recognition from neighbouring countries and I am looking forward to their support and warm co-operation and to deliberate the future of our region together. I am urging you to keep living as usual. I will be in Muscat in the next few days and I am going to inform you of my future plans. My people, I and my new government are aiming to achieve our common goal. Yesterday was complete darkness; however, with God's help tomorrow is going to be a new dawn on Oman and to its people (Ministry of Information, 1995, p. 13).

His policy for the next phase was clearly to modernise his government as quickly as possible, which involved the abolishment of rules and restrictions from his father's time and taking immediate action to please his people and to guarantee a prosperous future for them. He made their support a duty, as he sought to restore Oman to its rightful place in the Arab world and stressed that cooperation and unity were important factors in returning Oman to its glory and civilisation (Ministry of Information, 1995, p. 17).

A day after this speech, the new Sultan travelled to the capital, Muscat, where he was received warmly. He said in a brief speech, "unless there is cooperation between the government and the people, we will not be able to build our country with the speed required to free her from the backwardness she has endured for so long" (Ministry of Information, 1995, p. 17). Sultan Qaboos' longest and most significant speech during this period was given on 9th August 1970 via Oman's Radio from Muscat. The speech announced a series of actions and development plans. He stressed to his people that his government would be transparent, ensuring that the locals were aware of his plans and achievements. His uncle, Sayyid Tariq, was assigned as Prime Minister, with the command to take immediate actions to form his government. Qaboos also instructed the ministries to write to all citizens inside or outside of Oman, calling those abroad to return to help rebuild their country under the new government. He mentioned that qualified citizens should fill some positions, as well as employing experienced foreigners to train Omanis as quickly as possible to occupy these positions, in order to ensure the "country's government rule is by the Omanis for the Omanis" (Sultan Qaboos Speech, 1973). In this sense, it was an assertion of an independent Omani policy, which Sultan Said also had pressure in much more restrictive and oppressive forms.

In addition, this speech outlined the very important step, of changing the name of the country to "The Sultanate of Oman" instead of "Sultanate of Muscat and Oman" in an attempt to unify the country. Sultan Qaboos clarified that "there is no difference between the coast, internal and the southern province; all people are one having the same fate and future" (Ministry of

Information, 1995, p. 17). Qaboos stated the intention to undertake a range of legal changes, including modifying the shape and the form of the national flag, as well as announcing an amnesty to government opponents with a quote from the Quran “God has forgiven what has happened in the past”. He also committed to simplifying travel procedures and lifted unreasonable bans, as well as distributing land for locals to build better houses, and plans to develop his armed forces. His speech included announcements of many different development projects, including agricultural projects, digging wells for drinking water, transportation, health, education and roads projects, in addition to projects to develop the media sector. In an attempt to guarantee tribal support for the government, the Sultan acknowledged his support and appreciation of the tribal system and paid a salary to the sheiks of the tribes for them to govern the activities of their tribe members. This action was a stark contrast to the plans of the revolutionary leaders, who had stated their intention to destroy the tribal system after the second (Hamrin) Conference. The speeches of Sultan Qaboos from Dhofar and Muscat, where he focused on development while reissuing the tribal leaders with powers over their tribesmen, indicated that he had learned from his father's mistakes, as well as those made by the revolutionaries. The new approach in Dhofar was to ensure the loyalty of the tribal leaders, who had not been paid any attention by the former Sultan. His amnesty demonstrated that he recognised that tribal loyalty would be an important factor in winning the war.

4.2.2: Sultan Qaboos’ Internal Policy

Peterson (2007, pp. 205-207) argues that the change in the political leadership in Oman on 23rd July 1970 ended the domestic isolationist policy of the government of Oman. The ascension of Sultan Qaboos was an important milestone in the internal and external politics of the Sultanate. The new Sultan stressed the need to stabilise the situation inside Oman and to halt the armed revolution in Dhofar. He sought to remove the onerous restrictions imposed by his father, such as closing the doors of Muscat daily after three hours of sunrise, as well as lifting various trade restrictions, restoring personal freedoms, and granting permission for the return of Omanis working abroad (Ibid, pp. 205-206). Sultan Qaboos also paid special attention to education (Al Othman, 2013, p. 2) and the removal of unnecessary laws in order to develop national unity and a modern state, emphasising the importance of people fulfilling their duties towards their country (Al Blake, 2011, pp. 72-77).

The Sultan also took care of important service projects. During his first three years of his rule, he carried out a number of vital projects such as supplying the capital Muscat with water, establishing a modern power station, founding schools for boys and girls, and establishing hospitals and necessary government departments. In addition, he funded the construction of modern roads and the design of the main city of Muttrah Al Kubra “great Muttrah”, near the city of Muscat. The Sultan also implemented a number of development projects in Oman, establishing Raysut Port in the Dhofar Governorate, creating two experimental farms in Dhofar, and launching radio and television stations (Peterson, 2007, pp. 206-207). During the early years of his rule, the Sultan also built a modern administrative apparatus for foreign and economic affairs, transport, public services, media, labour, social affairs, land affairs, endowments, and Islamic affairs (Ibid; p. 207). Many Omani immigrants began to return to their country, in response to the call of the new Sultan, optimistic about the new rule.

A letter entitled “Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, Recognition of Qaboos”, was sent from J.M. Edes to the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Undersecretary, P. T. Hayman. This document indicated that the new Sultan had made the development of Dhofar a top priority:

Qaboos has already decided, among other things, that a major program of rehabilitation in Dhofar should be instituted as a matter of urgency. Once this program gets under way, it could do much to remove the discontent which the Dhofaris felt under the ex-Sultan's repressive regime and was in large part the cause of their rebellion ... In his minute submitted on 24th July, 1970, he expressed the hope that the new government could take action to get some Arab Rulers to come in Qaboos' support as quickly as possible (UKNA, NBM 2/2, 1970).

Another secret diplomatic note, “What about Oman”, from A. A. Land, Secretary of State for Defence, illustrates the tendency of British government to serve its interests for the long-term:

There is currently no pressure from the Sultan to alter the basis of our relationship (in some ways it has been strengthened since Qaboos’s accession) and our interest of diplomatic relations with other countries which were to be frustrated because of allegations of undue British influence in the sultanate and of British bases, the Sultanate authorities might seek a change in their present relationship with us (UKNA, NMB 3/548/2, No. 289/71, FILE 2/7, 1971).

The internal and external policies that Sultan Qaboos implemented, as well as procedures for winning the war in Dhofar, showed that he acted as an independent ruler and held the full sovereignty in his country. In effect, his accession and state transformation supported the diplomatic evidence that Oman had been, and remained, a fully sovereign state.

4.2.3: The Foreign Policy of Sultan Qaboos with the British Government

Oman's foreign policy during the early rule of Sultan Qaboos is recognised as being more open than his father's. Qaboos rejected Said's isolationist policy, instead attempting to strengthen and diversify foreign relations with the rest of the world. He had a special relationship with the United Kingdom, although it was weakened by his openness to many other countries after 1970 (Peterson J. E., 2007, p. 212). Nevertheless, the British realised that the Sultanate's openness to other countries was very important. In order to guarantee their longer interests in Oman. British policy was outlined in a secret letter entitled "HMG's policy towards the Sultanate of Oman":

- a. on the assumption that there is no early crisis, we should in the immediate future take full advantage of the unique advisory role and influence (exercised in the main on a personal basis by the political resident and consul general), which we still enjoy but will progressively lose as Oman develops relations with other countries;
- b. fill key posts with British appointees (the emphasis should be on key posts although there may be other civilian posts in which it would be useful to place Britain's subject to political consideration...);
- c. the main basis for a policy to safeguard our interests in the short, and probably medium terms, would seem to be as follows;
- d. encouraging Oman to join international organisations at the right pace, to establish relations with western and friendly Arab countries and to obtain expertise and assistance from such bodies (for example the IBRD and FAO) and states;
- e. maintaining British influence through British personnel, but keeping the British civilian... below the level which might lead to charges that the Sultanate was under British control (UKNA, B3118, D.S. 11/12, 1971).

The British government also encouraged Sultan Qaboos to send for Arab leaders to seek their recognition, as detailed in a letter sent from the British embassy in Muscat to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office: "I have been encouraging the Sultan to send further messages to the Arab world and the Shah" (UKNA, NBM 2/2, 1970). In early August 1970, Sultan Qaboos requested to join the Arab League. Although the request was delayed because the board of the League was already deliberating the case of the Imamate, the Sultanate was accepted on 6th October 1971 (Al Baharnah, 1973, p. 81). On 24th August 1970, Sultan Qaboos sent a cable to the Secretary General of the United Nations to request Oman's enrolment as a permanent member in the United Nations. This request was also postponed due to the Imamate case in their agenda. However, Oman was made a permanent member in the Assembly on 7th October 1971 (1973, p. 80), only a day after its

acceptance into the Arab League. A British document entitled “Oman: Annual Review” on 3rd January 1971, from the British ambassador in Muscat, to the British Minister of Foreign affairs detailed added that,

Many great achievements occurred in the government of the Sultanate in 1971, despite the internal problems faced by the internal government due to the war in Dhofar. The government initially focused on foreign affairs, with an Omani goodwill mission touring the Arab capitals in January and February 1971. As noted above, Oman accepted membership of the League of Arab States on 29th September 1971 and the United Nations on 7th October 1971. Subsequently, several countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United States and several Arab countries, agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Oman. Sultan Qaboos also sought and maintained good personal relations with other rulers, from Shah of Iran and the King of Jordan, who both offered him help (UKNA, NBM 4/1, 1972). In addition, the British government played an important role in encouraging the leaders of the region to recognise Sultan Qaboos, as mentioned by a secret letter from the Foreign Commonwealth Office to Bahrain on 6th April 1970:

We propose to telegram tomorrow to HM’s representatives in certain Arab capitals, explaining development to them in strict confidence and seeking their views on how best the Government to which they are accredited can also be encouraged to express support for Qaboos (UKNA, NBM 2/2, 1970).

Sultan Qaboos followed a policy of openness in his relations with Arab countries, beginning with an Omani delegation that visited several Arab states to request their support for his new regime in early 1971. This was followed by the Sultan’s visit to Saudi Arabia on 11th December 1971, during which he met King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz (1964-1975). During the meeting, the two parties reached an agreement about the traditional border dispute over Al Buraimi Oasis. In addition, the Sultan obtained Saudi support against the Dhofari revolutionaries, as well as in strengthening the development in Oman (Peterson, 2007, p. 20). This was outlined in a British document, “Oman: Annual Review” which was issued on 3rd January 1972, from the British ambassador in Muscat to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs. The document outlined the visit of the Sultan and his mission to convince the Saudis to sever support for the Imamate opposition, in addition to providing support to contribute to the war effort in Dhofar (UKNA, NBM 4/1, 1972).

In 1971, Sultan Qaboos also visited Iran (see figure 27), where he met Shah Mohammad Redha Pahlavi, the King of Iran (1941-1979). At this meeting, the Sultan asked for Iranian military help to support his force in Dhofar and British documents describe that, after this first meeting

between Sultan Qaboos and the Shah of Iran, the Shah offered to support the Sultan in the war in Dhofar:

The Shah had expressed a desire for close and cordial relations with Oman and had offered military assistance if the Sultan should need it. Army, Air Force and naval forces would be put at Qaboos' disposal for the Dhofar war if he requested them. His offer had clearly been made in earnest and the Sultan had thanked the Shah but had naturally entered into no commitment. The Sultan has accepted an offer to pay a state visit to Iran next year (UKNA, NBM 1/1, 1971).

Soon after, Qaboos met King Hussein of Jordan and, as a consequence of their meeting, Jordanian officers were assigned as military trainers for the Sultan's armed force. In December 1972, the Sultan visited Libya and met Col. Muammar Al Gaddafi. After telling him that the Omani state was fighting a Marxist threat, Al Gaddafi sent Libyan officers to explore the situation in Oman. Finally, in March 1973, Sultan Qaboos visited Sheik Zayed, the President of the United Arab Emirates, to seek assistance to confront the rebellion in Dhofar (Owen, 1970, p. 271). Sheik Zayed pledged to provide financial, military, and developmental support to the Sultan. According to a British document sent on 3rd January 1971 from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, entitled Oman Annual Review 1971, the attempts by the Sultan in the field of personal diplomacy were highly successful. He had not only made major gains in Saudi Arabia, but was also able to establish personal relations with the Shah, and King of Jordan (UKNA, NBM 4/1, 3rd January 1972). Sultan Qaboos seems to have believed that he could not rely on British forces as a major foreign support to win the war, especially given their impending withdrawal by the end of 1971. He also believed that he would not be able to win the war alone in the face of Chinese communist support of the revolutionaries. His development of help from regional countries, especially Iran, represented a major shift in strategy and further assertion of independence in foreign and domestic policy.



Fig. 27: Shah of Iran receives Sultan Qaboos in 1971 (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 1725)

4.2.4: The Sultan's procedures to resist the rebellion in Dhofar

Unlike his father, Sultan Qaboos nonetheless took the advice of British diplomats in military and other strategies to resist and defeat the rebellion in Dhofar. After assuming the reins of power, Sultan Qaboos implemented a new media strategy to confront the armed revolution in Dhofar. Mention of the Dhofar War was strongly evident in the Sultan's speeches from the time he came to power in 1970 until the end of the war in 1975. Unlike his father, Sultan Qaboos took full advantage of every media podium, utilising national and religious occasions, ministerial sessions, foreign visits, and

numerous meetings to clarify and defend his policies on the war. He also participated in numerous interviews with journalists from different Arab and the international press to win over hearts and minds in the region. It is particularly important to highlight Sultan Qaboos' informational speeches during the Dhofar War, because they clearly illustrated the Sultanate's new policies for dealing with the revolution after the coup (*Oman Newspaper*, 'Operation in Dhofar'. 25th November 1972, Issue 1 and 2, p. 2). In addition, the Sultan broadcast the narrative of the war using the new media that he had established after coming to power (see figure 28). Examining all the issues of *Oman Newspaper* during the years from 1970 to 1975, the speeches made by Sultan Qaboos' during this period clearly demonstrate that he had divided his procedures for eradicating the revolution into six themes (*Oman newspaper*, 1970-1975). These will be examined individually in the following sections.

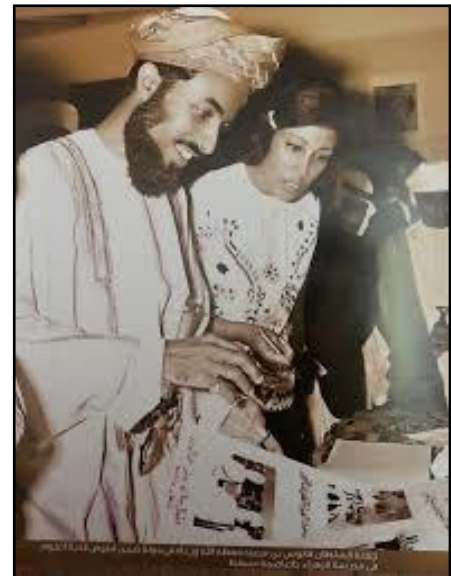


Fig. 28: Sultan Qaboos and his follow-up to press organisations (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 754)



Fig. 29: A government leaflet thrown by aircraft in rebel-held areas, with an Arabic inscription "God's hand is the crash of communism" (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 654)

4.2.4.1: **First**, the Sultan focused in his speeches on the holiness of the Dhofar War. He framed the conflict as an attempt by communism to destroy Islam, making the fight against it into

the defence of Islam. The government considered Islam as a pillar of the Sultanate. On this matter, the Sultan said “we are Muslim people, proud of our religion and faith, and we are putting our religion above everything”. The Sultan reinforced that all Muslim countries must become involved in the war and termed the fight against the revolutionaries as a holy war against “the enemies of Islam” (*Oman Newspaper*, ‘Sultan Qaboos’ Speech’, 22th November 1975, issue 160, p. 3) (see figure 29).

A secret British note about a meeting, published by Brigadier J. Graham, Commander of the Sultan of Oman’s Armed Forces, to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, explained that the new communist doctrine of the Dhofar Liberation Front was unsatisfying for committed Muslims, being unpopular with both the fighters and supporters of the rebels. Sultan Qaboos focused on this idea in his speech:

At about the same time as the coup, a Maoist group called PFLOAG (Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf) began to take control of the Dhofar rebellion. This has had advantages and disadvantages from the military standpoint; the main advantage has been that hard-core communists have alienated the Muslim believers (UKNA, DS 11/12, File 2/7/2, 1971).

In the same context, the Sultan praised Saudi Arabia’s Islamic policy with regards to the relationship between the two countries, adding that, “the Islamic policy that Saudi Arabia calls for, led by King Faisal, is the best policy to upgrade the Arab and Islamic nations’ place, since the Islamic principles are valid for every time and place” (*Oman Newspaper*, ‘Sultan Qaboos’ Speech’, 2nd December, issue 163, p. 3). This showed that Sultan Qaboos had considered the communist ideology, previously unfamiliar in Omani society, as an enemy that must be fought to maintain the continuation of 1400 years of Islam

It is also clear that Sultan Qaboos tried to gain Saudi Arabia’s favour, considering it as an influential regional power and thereby taking the position that Oman would be fighting “a common religious enemy” on behalf of Saudi Arabia. This approach was due to Oman’s need for Saudi support in meeting the high expenses of the war and applying the “winning the hearts and minds” approach, one of the great development programmes that he had proclaimed. In another declaration, the Sultan added that “we are standing firmly to confront destructive operations, atheism, and communist ideologies, in order to preserve the sanctity of our holy places” (*Oman Press*, 1973). The public notion that Sultan Qaboos raised through the media was that communism was a danger that threatened Oman, in addition to the culture and religion of other Muslim societies. Halliday

(1978) argues that the new government focused on Islam in an effort to encourage the revolutionaries to join governmental forces, since they brought some preachers from Al Azhar to argue with them, accusing them of being atheists and infidels (Halliday F., 1978, pp. 16-17). This policy elicited a direct reaction because Al Azhar, which is an Egyptian religious institution, is considered to be one of the most important Islamic institutions in the world. It follows the Sunni doctrine, which is also more predominant in Dhofar than any other area in Oman. This Islamic development and focus on Islam, enabled by the openness of the Sultan to neighbouring countries, are common factors through which he was able to achieve an anti-communist strategy and unity. The Sultan was self-ruling and that was moving away from British influence of his own volition.

4.2.4.2: The **second theme** focused on the military(see figure 30) since all of the speeches and interviews of Sultan Qaboos praised the governmental armed forces and mentioning its crucial role in fighting the rebellion, in an attempt to motivate them to continue their hard work in building a new Oman. In one of his speeches, the Sultan stated: “my faith in your abilities to achieve the ultimate triumph was and always will be strong because you are the descendants of great men who made the history and glory of



Fig. 30: Government forces during an operation against the rebels (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 1754).

this nation in the hardest circumstances” (Sultan Qaboos Speech, 1975, p. 1). He also called the governmental armed forces the “home shield and protectors”(ibid, p. 2). In another speech praising his armed forces and appreciating their efforts in the revolutionary war, he said “My heroes, I am so proud of you and also my loyal people who are standing here today to praise your fixed steps and your patience with all their feelings” (Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 1). It seems that the Sultan’s policy was based on advancing his intended changes to Oman by also putting the revolutionaries under military pressure. He warned those who supported the rebels in their fight, saying,

as for those who are deceived and sneaking behind borders, their voices are louder than their actions. We are heading forward building with one hand and fighting

with the other one. We keep giving a hand to good people, but those who want to cause harm will be punished (ibid, p. 2).

On another occasion, the Sultan stated that “many of the rebel leaders had surrendered to authority and we keep capturing them; at the same time we are building schools, hospitals, and roads in the liberated areas”(Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 1). Sultan Qaboos had a two strand strategy of counter-insurgency namely economic development and military strategy.

In this latter context, Al Nafisi (1976, p. 31) states that Sultan Qaboos planned to isolate the revolutionaries geographically by counter-attacking their military operations and forming a modern army capable of regaining the areas dominated by revolutionaries. The Sultan’s interest in forming strong armed forces to confront the rebels in Dhofar has been discussed by several historians (e.g. Buttenshaw, 2010; Dunsire, 2011; Fiennes, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Jeapes, 1996), who argue that the formation of strong armed forces, such as through diversification of their weapons, was one of the basic measures that Sultan Qaboos took to defeat the rebels after coming to power in 1970. In the same context, Sultan Qaboos requested the support of the British Special Forces in the Dhofar War according to a secret document which was sent from Bahrain to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1970. In this document, the British Political Agent in Bahrain, Sir Stewart Crawford “recommended immediate response to the Sultanate request for S.A.S. assistance in Dhofar” (UKNA, F 52/1, 1970). The British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, granted permission to sanction the participation of British Special Forces in the War on the condition that the Omanis pay the expenses incurred during their involvement (UKNA, FCS/70/56, 1970). Sultan Qaboos developed a composite strategy of using military sources from different countries (Britain, Iran and Saudi support).

The government official statistics published by the Omani Ministry of Commerce and Industry (*Oman Economy in Ten Years*, 1980, p. 20) show that oil prices rose sharply in 1974 due to the war between Arabs and Israel in October 1973. This was in large part to a decision led by Saudi Arabia to reduce oil supplies to foreign countries that supported Israel during the war, such as America and Britain. Many Arab countries followed Saudi Arabia’s decision to halt the export of oil to countries that supported Israel. Sultan Qaboos refused to be part of the oil embargo, justifying that he was in particular need of money because of his war against Dhofar’s rebels. This decision significantly increased governmental budget, despite oil production remaining the same. Higher international oil prices increased oil funds by 311% compared to 1973 (Oman economy in ten years,

1980, p. 20). This funding increase allowed the Omani government to invest in military and socio-economic development. The government invested significantly to defeat the rebels by confirming the “winning hearts and minds” programme on one side and military organisation against the rebels on the other side. Due to arms purchases and army recruiting undertaken to defeat the revolutionaries, governmental expenses in the defence sector increased from 2.3 million OMR in 1970 to 4.1 million in 1971, and 11 million in 1972, 13.1 million in 1973. Defence expenses then doubled in 1974 to 46.4 million OMR (ibid, p. 20). A British document entitled “*British policy towards Oman*” shows that the British were interested in training and developing the SAF, noting that it was important that “the Omanisation of the SAF is not too rapid, because this would certainly not be compatible with the security of the state and the regime” (UKNA, DS 11/12, B 8093, 1971). The refusal of Sultan Qaboos to enter into the oil boycott against Western countries and Israel, despite his good relations with the leader of this axis, Saudi Arabia, provides another example to show that Oman exerted full freedom of decision-making in their foreign policy, although it was presumably to British national interest to have Omani oil exports exempted from oil embargo.

4.2.4.3: **A third theme** in the eradication of the revolution concerned inclusive development programmes, which were started in Oman in general and in Dhofar specifically. Sultan Qaboos carried out numerous development programmes in Dhofar, which adversely affected the Dhofar Liberation Front in Oman, because the locals welcomed the official development. The people perceived the coup as a way to obtain social gains, guaranteeing a better future for themselves and their children (Worrall, 2014, p. 79). A secret document sent from D.G. Crawford in the British Embassy in Muscat to the British Consulate General in Bahrain, M. S. Weir, entitled “Situation in Oman”, on 17th August 1970 added that:

Sultan Qaboos toured the Sultanate. The policy of meeting the people increased his popularity. His tour achieved unprecedented success. During the tour, he agreed to start some projects. People gathered around Sultan Qaboos in large numbers as soon as they heard that he was talking to pedestrians and wandering the roads. A sense of confidence among Omani citizens that things have started to improve in the Sultanate has been reinforced by the removal of the restrictions imposed by the former Sultan, as well as the government projects and actions announced by Sultan Qaboos (UKNA, FCS/70/51)

The British encouraged Sultan Qaboos to begin the enhancement projects in Dhofar as a part of the programme to suppress the revolution. The British embassy sought to support the Sultan

because of the benefits of such a strategy, as mentioned in a secret report from Colonel H. R. D. Oldman, the Oman Defence Secretary:

I consider that the Sultan must be persuaded to adopt a less hard line politically with the rebel movement. No political carrot has yet been offered to the opposition, nor has any proper development plan for the Jebel (mountains) areas been considered by the Sultanate Government. No thought has been given to buying off the rebels for a combination of hard cash, a development programme and a more liberal political offer. I believe that our embassy could play an important part in such persuasion (UKNA, F.C.O, 8/14/14 A, Former Reference BC1/1 (NBM 1/1), 1971).

The “hearts and minds winning” policy was applied to persuade the rebels and revolutionaries in Dhofar and the local surrounding area to surrender. This was achieved by delivering an intellectual and emotional message to convince them that the causes of the revolution no longer existed, with the government cruelty and lack of housing, food, health, or education(see figure 31), having been addressed. Ja'boub(2010, pp. 248-249) argues that the publicity campaigns of the rebels collapsed before the Sultan’s highly successful programme. The Sultan clarified that the hearts and minds winning’s policy was to remove the causes of the rebellion from the rebels’ hands” by addressing and removing the main factors of the revolution. The Sultan announced that the development programmes had started to show results. He said,



Fig. 31: An image showing Sultan Qaboos' interest in developing the educational process(Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 321)

life in Oman has started changing for the better after a series of completed developmental projects which returned the spirit to Oman and reinforced its ability to keep up with developed countries. Social and economic developmental processes which move rapidly, are able to end any intentions of rebellion because there are no justifications for rebellion anymore (Sultan Qaboos, 1973, p. 1).

He compared the developmental situation in 1970 and 1974, claiming that,

Oman went through many changes during that period, because the government made huge efforts to do its duty to Omani citizens. Here, I am speaking as an Omani citizen not as a leader of the country because I feel satisfied with what have been achieved in the past few years and I see that there is no reason for any rebellion (Sultan Qaboos, 1974, p. 2).

Sultan Qaboos confirmed that the educational development policy was a particularly vital part of the inclusive development policy. In an interview with the *Oman Newspaper*, he proclaimed that,

by the help of God, we fought to lift up the closed door policy and we started the education by opening the doors of the Ministry of Education which we supported with the best potential of efforts to break down the chains of illiteracy (*Oman Newspaper*, 'Operation in Dhofar'. 25th November 1972, p. 2).

In a speech delivered by Sultan Qaboos in 1973, upon the occasion of opening the governmental ministries complex, he summarised these achievements by stating that the development efforts that had been made under his rule sought to make Oman a prestigious place and that "citizens deserve to live a decent life in their land under social justice" (1973, p. 1) (Appendix 14).

It is essential to return to an examination of the official statistics in order to deduce the success of the developmental operation in Oman started by Sultan Qaboos in 1970. It is obvious that the development plans resulted in the improvement of Oman's infrastructure. According to official statistics published by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, governmental investment in construction activity increased from 8.5 million

OMR in 1970 to 58 million OMR in 1974. Governmental investment in the transportation and communications fields also increased drastically, rising from 0.7 million OMR in 1970 to 12.3 million OMR in 1974. Similar, investment in the water (see figure 32) and electricity sectors rose from 0.1 million OMR to 2.2 million OMR during the first four years, while similar gains were seen in internal trade, which increased from 1.6 million OMR to 27.2 million OMR. Omani banks witnessed



Fig. 32: The process of drilling a well after the control of government forces on the areas in the hands of the rebels as part of the programme to win hearts and minds (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 543)

enormous changes, since investment rose through the first four years from 0.6 to 3.5 million OMR. Finally, many Omani immigrants returned and the desire to invest in Oman increased, the consequence of which was that earnings from residential rents increased from 1.5 million OMR in 1970 to 4.8 million OMR in 1974 (*Oman Economy in Ten years*, 1980, p. 20).

Due to the growth in the construction sector in Oman, the number of foreign workers employed in various projects increased from 120 in 1970 to 4180 in 1975 (*Oman Economy in Ten years*, 1980, p. 69). However, due to the closure of some important oil fields, oil production fell from 121.3 million tons in 1970 to 107.6 million tons in 1979 (ibid, p. 141). Despite that, governmental infrastructure projects were given top priority and continued to develop, as the statistics clearly illustrate. The government took out loans for the infrastructure projects and expenses of the war, which raised the national debt by prodigious levels, from 7.2 million OMR in 1972 to 168.2 million OMR in 1979 (ibid, p. 489). Before the overthrow of Sultan Said, the national debt had been zero. The government was also interested in diversifying the sources of income, since non-oil exports were 0.4 million in 1970, increasing to 4.7 million in 1979 (ibid, p. 585). The number of banks in Oman had increased from 3 in 1970 to 20 in 1980 (ibid, p. 346) (see Appendix 15: schedules illustrate the large difference in Oman's economy after Sultan Qaboos assumed rule over Oman).



Fig. 33: Two Dhofari residents in their traditional clothes on a mission for the government, 1970 (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 2432)

The comprehensive and living standards development programme adopted by Sultan Qaboos in Dhofar resulted in a huge rise in satisfaction among the Dhofaris, who had largely instigated the revolution to meet the particular needs being addressed. Once projects are began and started to serve larger segments of the society, the rebels no longer had a pretext to fight, as their main demand were starting to bemet.

4.2.4.4: A fourth theme was exemplified by governmental propaganda directed against the rebels with the help of British experts. The new government used propaganda and psychological warfare as a tool to weaken the spirits of the rebels, using publications that called upon them to surrender using both rewards and threats (Al Hada, p. 11). Halliday cites several methods of propaganda used by the government, such as using money as a way to weaken the rebels. In this approach, the government announced a £500 reward for those who provided information about the rebels' weapons stashes. The government also assigned the fugitives from the rebels' forces to spy

for the British and the Sultan's forces. In addition, it printed photographs of important rebels in private publications that were dropped into rebel areas. This tactic had a direct effect, since many fighters left to join the forces of the Sultan (Halliday, 1978, p. 15). Such governmental propaganda stated that Arab nationalism, which was represented by the character of Abdul Nasser and which was very close to the hearts of some rebels, had the support of Sultan Qaboos' government. Halliday (1978) provides examples of this, such as one of the military squads in the Sultan's force being named after Jamal Abdul Nasser. An official statement was also issued comparing the coup of 23rd July 1970 and the Egyptian revolution of 23rd July 1952 (Halliday, 1978, pp. 26-27). It was an attempt by the Omani new government to appease and attract rebels who respect President Nasser. Sultan Qaboos was particularly effective with the British help in his use of propaganda against rebel forces.

4.2.4.5: **The fifth theme** was based on an amnesty policy for the rebels. A short time after coming to power, Sultan Qaboos declared an official amnesty for all those armed rebels in Dhofar who surrendered themselves and their weapons to government authorities (Peterson, 2007, p. 20). Sultan Qaboos mentioned this policy in an interview with the *Oman Newspaper* and clarified that his aim was to win his people's hearts, even of those who fought against him. In addition, he stated that:

our attitude towards what is called the Oman and Arabian Gulf Liberation Front is the same attitude with which we started our new era. We have said before, God has forgiven what has happened in the past, return to your home and start building it. The darkness of yesterday will be transformed into light and we all are facing a historical responsibility towards our country and we must cooperate to build the modern country (*Oman Newspaper*, 'Chinese and Communist support for the rebels stopped', 15th September 1973, Issue 5, p. 5).

An amnesty was important for building Oman. Sultan Qaboos' vision of the amnesty policy was that all individuals are the sons of the country and their country needed to include them, rather than alienate them. In another statement, the Sultan stated that,

they are our sons after all and they are surely going to return one day to their home. We absolutely do not want to begin a war of annihilation against them, while we could do so; however, now, we try to win them to our side by convincing them to stop the suicidal fight that has no meaning (Sultan Qaboos, 1973, p. 4).

The Sultan reinforced his speech, adding that “tolerance is not a weakness and those who insisted on destroying and rebelling or trying to mess up with security, we will strike them strongly and they will suffer the consequences of their actions” (ibid, p. 4).

In an interview with one of the former rebels, Mohammad Ghawas, he indicated that the offer of amnesty for Dhofar’s rebels violently shocked the Liberation Front and its supporters, especially after groups of fighters began to surrender themselves to the Sultan’s forces. Ghawas also mentioned that government airplanes dropped publications at rebel locations. These publications were from the government to the rebels, promising to guarantee good treatment for the rebels, including protection and financial rewards that would increase if the rebel also surrendered his weapon (Interview Ghawas, 27thOctober 2016). Al Rayes (2000, p. 99) argues that before the amnesty, some of the rebel leaders had not been able to confess due to a fear of being oppressed. Qasem (2000, p. 416) agrees that the amnesty resolution gave Dhofari opponents of the policies of the rebel leaders the green light to withdraw support for the Front.

To demonstrate the dangerous impact of this law on the rebels, Kelly (1972) explains that some of the leaders from the eastern area in Dhofar, led by Mohammad Salim Al Mashani, sought separation from the Front through the Sultan’s amnesty decision on 12th September 1970. To implement this decision, these leaders arrested 40 rebels and many of the other rebel leaders who refused to join the Sultan’s forces. They occupied areas, money, and possessions of the Eastern Area’s Front, with the intention of handing over the detainees, the Eastern area, and what had been confiscated from money and possessions to the governmental authorities. The popular Front leaders took quick and firm reaction, blockading and arresting the traitors and removing them in a series of trials and executions. More than 300 rebels were executed in the period between October and December 1970, including all of those suspected of surrendering themselves to the governmental forces, with many of the remainder being forced to join the Lenin school for re-education (1972, p. 143).

A statement for the rebels mentioned these events, warning of any betrayal to government forces (DLF, 1974, p. 91). The consequences of the coup negatively affected the rebellion, with tribal leaders withdrawing their forces from the rebellion to join Sultan Qaboos. This was largely made possible because of the amnesty law and generous rewards offered to those who sided with the government. Defecting rebels were then organised into special teams to fight against their previous colleagues in the revolution, for which they were paid good salaries. The government also

used some of the previous rebels to spread propaganda in order to damage the trust between the popular Front leadership and the Dhofari tribesmen (Agwani, 1978, p. 71). The amnesty decision issued by the new government and general dissatisfaction with the revolution communist ideology encouraged significant rebels decided to surrender themselves to the government authorities. The most important of these was Sheik Musalim bin Nafal, whose shots had began the Dhofar War. Another to volunteer himself was Sheik Salim bin Sha'ban Al Aejaali, one of the important tribal leaders in the mountains. Those figures and others who returned to the government forces were considered invaluable sources of information, since they informed the government about the rebel locations, intentions, and plans, as well as their local, regional, and international relationships (Interview Ali Ghawas, 16th June 2016). The reaction of the rebel leaders towards the amnesty law was for the Popular Front to issue an amnesty to the Dhofaris who the government forces called to return to the armed struggle (DLF, National Struggle Documents, 1972, pp. 93-94). Overall, the amnesty policy was widely effective in gaining hearts and minds as a development policy. In this way, it was perhaps the most important non-military tactic utilised in the war. The revolutionaries were assured that the new Sultan could understand their demands and that he did not want anyone to be punished. The policy of amnesty was also welcomed by tribal leaders, as well as encouraging rebels to defect from the revolution to join the government forces. All of these steps were undertaken in the interest of Omani national unity.

4.2.4.6: A sixth theme for combating revolution was exemplified in Sultan Qaboos' resistance to the rebels by seeking the approval of the leaders of neighbouring countries and his success in making those leaders feel involved in the Dhofar War. This was primarily achieved by arguing that once Dhofar's rebels controlled Oman they would continue extending their struggle to other regional countries (Peterson J. E., 2007, p. 20). Sultan Qaboos called on the Gulf States to confront the common communist threat (*Communist Threat*, 1973). The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Qais Al Zawawi, also warned that the invaders from the south not only targeted Oman, but sought the occupation of the Gulf as a whole (*Danger of the Communist*, 1973).

The first chapter of this thesis mentioned that historians like Haglawi (2003) argue that the survival of the revolution was dependent on the assistance of the countries that supported them, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and China. Sultan Qaboos succeeded in convincing many of these countries of the dangers of the rebellion. Considering it as a common threat, they stopped

supporting the rebels, significantly increasing the challenges facing the revolutionaries. In addition, Sultan Qaboos called “all Arabian Gulf countries to confront the communist danger that threatens all Arabian Gulf areas not only Oman”(Sultan Qaboos, 1973, p. 1).He attempted to persuade them that Oman was only the beginning of the communist mission in the Gulf, arguing that if the rebels succeeded revolution would quickly spread to neighbouring countries. In this context, Sultan Qaboos proclaimed that “we are insisting on purifying our land from the communist abomination and its cunning agents” (Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 4). In support of this statement, the Sultan’s informational speech described the Dhofar War as being generally waged against all Arabs and Islamic nations.

The British government was relieved when they found that the Sultan shared their vision of how to defeat the rebels. In a confidential letter from it was Arthur at the Bahrain Residency to the Arabian Department in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that,

the Sultan needed very little prompting. His own political action in Dhofar is all that we could wish for, though he stops short of the idea of autonomy. His notion is rather to improve communications between Muscat and Salalah, and to bring Dhofaris into central Government (UKNA, NBM1/1, 1971).

The new openness of the Sultan to the regional states uenabled him to persuade them to contribute to the defeat of communism by jointly fighting the communist rebels who might influence the entire region. This approach, and the associated British commentary, indicates that Sultan Qaboos nor only maintained independence for Oman, but also exerted increasing autonomy for Oman from external influence by his clever regional strategies.

4.3: The Effect of Sultan Qaboos’ policy on the rebels and the rebels’ third conference (Ahleesh Conference) in 1971

4.3.1: The rebels’ reaction towards Sultan Qaboos’ assumption of power on 23rd July 1970

The rebels specified their attitude towards Sultan Qaboos’ government from the first moment of its formation. In a statement that was issued on 29th of July 1970 by the Front, they announced that these changes in rule had been planned by British policy. The Front described British

interference as “another face that imperialism has presented and it was not new or surprising”. Their official statement added that,

the events that occurred in the area before announcing this step was stating that the occupier and reactionaries had a huge desire to change Sultan Said. The occupier and their allies in the area had adopted for a long time a policy to prepare and modernize the countries of the area to make them able to stand against the masses’ revolutionary movement (NSD, 29 July 1970).

The Front claimed that the new government was a sign of the main goal that led the British government to contribute to the usurping of Sultan Said, namely to push forward the development process in Oman in an attempt to counteract the rebellion for British economic purposes. The Front issued a statement to confirm that they would “keep fighting until they win against all the occupation conspiracies in Oman” (NSD, 29 July 1970). The leadership of the rebellion did not show any willingness to negotiate with the new government, with the consequence that the military option remained their only real choice. An official declaration by the Popular Front confirmed that,

the occupier long-term plan for the area was to replace a leader by another according to the circumstances in the Arab world in that period, so they can exploit the area more and loot its riches to a maximum level... The armed struggle was not directed only against the Sultan, since it was directed against the British pressure in the area in the first place... They rejected Sultan Qaboos’ rule of Oman” (NSD, 29 July 1970, pp. 29-42).

In this way the Front asserted their primary aggression towards the British, who they accused of being protective and supportive of Omani leaders, regardless of the locals’ popular desires. After the ascension of Sultan Qaboos, the Front embarked on numerous military operations against the forces of the British and the Sultan, particularly in the form of ambushes and continued shelling of the British troops’ locations. According to the Popular Front’s references, 290 clashes occurred in the three months after the coup, in which 136 soldiers from the Sultan’s troops were killed and 21 of the rebels (DLF, 1974, pp. 143-144; Halliday, 1976, p. 272).

The Sultan’s forces were supported by the British and escalated military operations against the rebels in the west in an attempt to control the supply lines that came through Yemen and into that area. As a reaction to these operations by government forces, the rebels waged attacks in 1973, successfully controlling the coastal city of Murbat, close to Salalah, for approximately one day. This operation showed that the rebels still had a lead in the war, despite the change of government (*Avant-garde magazine*, 1972, pp. 16-17). Due to Britain’s insistence on routing the rebellion at any

cost before its withdrawal from the area by 1971, PFLOAG decided to unite with all of the political organisations in the area that followed the same ideologies. Intensive talks were begun with the Arab Labour Party in Syria, which had been founded in 1970. This party comprised members of the Ba'ath Arab socialist party from Syria and Iraq, as well as the Arab Nationalists Movement from Egypt. The talks and communications led to direct meetings being held between the leadership of the Front and the Arab Labour Party in November 1972. The meeting decided to form common regional leaderships and central committees, agreeing that the Popular Front would undertake armed struggle to liberate Oman and the occupied Arabian Gulf framework (26 Nov. 1972, pp. 110-119). In the same way that Sultan Qaboos had marshalled regional state support, the PFLOAG sought to unite left-wing groups in the Gulf States in opposition to the Omani government.

4.3.2: The Front's Third Conference (Ahleesh conference) in December 1971

The leadership of the rebels realised that they were in a difficult situation after the increase in foreign support for Sultan Qaboos, especially with intervention from Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iranian precursors. In addition, the Saudi, Omani and British worked militarily against the armed struggle (Yodfat and Abir, 1977, p. 102). In an attempt to confront the setbacks that followed the replacement of Sultan Said with Sultan Qaboos and the adoption of policies to divide and polarise the revolution members, the rebel leaders decided to hold the Third National Conference of PFLOAG. This conference took into consideration the developments and political events since the decision of the British government to withdraw its military from the area by end of 1971. The conference was held from 9st to 19th December 1971 in the Ahleesh region, west of Dhofar's mountains. The conference aimed to allow the rebel leaders to study their experience during the three years that followed the second conference and to confront the changes that accompanied the fall of Sultan Said. The conference issued a statement that insisted on the:

necessity to form a republican revolutionary party leading the armed struggle in all phases, guided by Marxism and working on expanding armed struggle and the necessity of hard work for the unity of revolutionary factions in Oman. The conference also approved the formation of popular councils in Front controlled areas (*Arab World Record*, July- December 1974, p. 105).

The most important decision of the conference was to change the name of the organisation from "the Popular Front for the Liberation Oman and the occupied Arabian Gulf" to "the Popular

Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf”. On the Arab level, the statement confirmed the necessity of strengthening relationships with all national movements and Arabian Gulf countries, then coordinating with them in order to change the general political circumstances of the region. The statement also stated the importance of strengthening politics and relationships with the National Front in Yemen. The statement went on to discuss the progressive forces in the Gulf and the Arab peninsula, and announced the absolute support of the Popular Front for the Palestinian revolution. It insisted on the necessity to maintain close ties with the Palestinian revolutionary forces and those of other armed revolutions in the Arabian Gulf. However, from a global perspective, the declaration indicated that the Front stood with national liberating movements in the third world against global imperialism and capitalism. (*National Struggle Documents*, 1974, pp. 25-27). The conference concluded with a request to “the national troops in Oman and the Arabian Gulf area to begin solidarity relationships between them and to create organisational forms that are able to face dangers”(PFLO, 1975, pp. 39-44). This statement was broadcast on the *Oman Voice* radio, an Arab station in Al Mukalla, which had been founded by the Yemeni government (Nyrop, 1977, p. 392) (see appendix 16: Ahleesh conference political statement).

It is clear here that, in contrast to the policies of the new Sultan to win the loyalty of tribal leaders in the fighting areas and increasing regional support for his government, the rebels appeared to be isolated. The main cause in this regard was that the rebel leaders had become inflexible with regards to their policies. It could be argued that the rebels were fighting to ensure a better life, rather than to gain power in Oman. However, with the arrival of Sultan Qaboos life appeared to be improving in the region, but the rebels did not change course or negotiate with the Sultan. In this lack of flexibility, the rebels were repeating the same mistake of their old enemy, Sultan Said, who had not been flexible in response to the rebels. Moreover, they did not show any attempt during the latter stages of the Dhofar War, at flexibility in relations to Islamic values or improved relations with tribal leaders. This inability to adapt undermined their strategy and made Sultan Qaboos’ alternative more attractive.

4.3.3: Attempted coup against Sultan Qaboos in 1971

The failed attack at Murbat on 19th July 1971 led to an increase in pressure on the rebel troops. This was, in large part, due to Sultan Qaboos’ reform policies that increasingly attracted important rebels to his cause. In addition, major regional forces joined the fight alongside the

Sultan's troops, especially Iran. Given that it was important to work on reducing the Omani military's pressure on the Front forces in Dhofar, the Front therefore, planned for a coup attempt, seeking to overthrow Sultan Qaboos on New Year's Eve, 31st December 1972 (Interview with the brother of a rebel on 20th June 2017, RA8; Al Rayes, 2000, p. 104). This was planned in Iraq in October 1972 by members of The Popular Front for Liberating Oman and the Arabian Gulf, as well as some members of the Political Office in Southern Yemen (Qasem, 2000, p. 161). The movement was headed by Zahir bin Ail Matar, a member of the central committee for PFLOAG. Each of the coup cells consisted of 4 groups: an executive committee, regulatory committee, economic commission, and the military commission.



Fig. 34: A map showing towns north of Oman) (Source: www.ezilon.com, January 12, 2016)

The committee members were planted in areas in north Oman, especially in Muscat, Rustaq, Bidbid, Sameal, Nizwa, and Al Jebel Al Khidar (see figure 34). The plan was for the organisation members to undertake armed rebellion operations in those areas simultaneously to coincide with assassination operations against the Sultan and his advisors. Attacks would expand to include governors, army officers, and important traders, followed by attacks against army camps. This was almost certainly an attempt to drag government armed forces from Dhofar to aid the government forces in northern Oman, which were expected to be insufficient to deal with the coup attempt. Ultimately, this would reduce the military pressure on the rebels in Dhofar. After this, the rebels planned to set ambushes for the troops that would come to suppress the rebellion. The rebels would then move back to caches in the mountains north of Oman, where they would wage a guerrilla war that would be the first of its kind in north Oman since Imam Ghalib bin Ali's revolution in Al Jebel Al Khidar in 1957. However, if the assassination attempt failed, the rebels would wait for a popular movement to overthrow Sultan Qaboos. The coup planners predicted that the Sultan would be driven out of the country after a few weeks in the event that the rebels were not able to assassinate him (Interview with the brother of a rebel who was captured and executed on 20th June 2017, RA9; Muqaibl, 2002, pp. 318-319). The plan was implemented by some of the Front's supporters, who organised a workers' strike in Muscat, on 1st September 1971, led by some of the Front's leaders in north Oman. The protests extended to Muttrah, a city next to Muscat, which justified the protests

based upon government distinctions between Omani and foreign worker pay. However, the issue was dealt with quickly by the security authorities in Oman (*Avant-garde magazine*, 1972, pp. 16-17, 98). Official security services arrested Ali Mohammad bin Talib Al Busaidi, one of the popular Front leaders in Muttrah in November 1972 during his attempts to organise the armed struggle in that area. He confessed to being a political guide for the Front and a member of the Lenin unit in Dhofar. As a result, the security service in the Sultanate were put on alert and were therefore able to put many of the Front's supporters under intensive supervision for six weeks. On 23rd December 1972, large groups of rebel sleeper cells were arrested in north Oman, comprising a total of ninety Popular Front members, eight of whom were women. Investigations with detainees led the government soldiers to stores of arms and ammunition, as well as many Chinese weapons caches in caves and seas along the coasts in north Oman. These had been planned for the coup against Sultan Qaboos (*Oman Newspaper*, 26th April 1975, p. 1; Al Amri, 2012, pp. 205). As a result of the coordination between the Sultanate and neighbouring countries, security forces in the UAE arrested several people one week later. These individuals were charged with distributing publications calling for the "revolutionary violence" in the Arabian Gulf (Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 58). This catastrophic failure affected the rebels negatively and by the end of the investigations, eleven of the detainees were sentenced to death.

When comparing this coup to the assassination attempt on Sultan Said in 1966, it is clear that the coup attempt in 1971 was revealed before it was carried out, unlike the assassination attempt of Sultan Said, which was not discovered. This indicates the growing role played by security forces in Oman and suggests the sympathy of the people with the new government. The Omani government also requested assistance from the government of the UAE to extradite the defendants, which was carried out and therefore illustrates the improvement of Omani relations with the countries of the region. All this demonstrates the increasing independence and growing regional influence of the new Omani government in securing the cooperation of other neighbouring countries in the war against the rebels.

4.4: Chapter IV Conclusion

The rebel leadership in Dhofar attacked the coup which put Sultan Qaboos in power. The rebels described this as an act of British imperialism and confirmed their intention to overthrow the

government of Sultan Qaboos, as well as to banish British influence from the region. The rebels enjoyed military superiority until July 1970, when Sultan Qaboos came to power. The new Sultan made many military and developmental revisions that profoundly shifted the balance in favour of government forces. In addition, the arrival of soldiers from other neighbouring countries in 1973 greatly enhanced the position of the Sultan's troops. Soldiers eventually also formed from the popular liberation army forces that answered Sultan Qaboos' call and joined his side under his amnesty policy. They formed "national teams" that included soldiers experienced in guerrilla war and who were aware of the nature of land and the rebels' methods. This regional support that increased the governmental forces played an essential role in strengthening Sultan Qaboos's military.

It is clear that these effective governmental measures caused the revolution leadership to carry out two important actions. Firstly, they called the third conference (the Ahleesh conference in 1971) to evaluate their progress after the second conference (Hamrin conference 1968) and to react to the changes wrought by the new Sultan Qaboos. The conference statement indicated a commitment to overthrowing the rule of the Sultan and to remove British influence in the region. The second action was the violence in north Oman, which was perpetrated to overthrow Sultan Qaboos' government in Muscat. This was intended to spark revolution in the north of Oman, to increase pressure on the Sultan, and to ease the pressure on their activities in Dhofar.

The coup attempt was planned by the rebels to take place on New Year's Eve, 31st December 1972 (Al Rayes, 2000, p. 161; Qasem, 2000, p. 104). However, the bold plan ended in catastrophic failure for the rebels, after one of the leaders was arrested. After he confessed, the information he provided led to the arrest of sleeper cells across Oman and UAE and the execution of many of their members. The northern revolution ended before it began, which was a harsh setback for the rebels in their fight against Sultan Qaboos. The failed coup attempt affected the spirits of the fighters in Dhofar and ultimately shifted the tide of war from offensive to defensive. Despite these gains, the rebels did not show any desire to negotiate with the new government, which had focused on amnesty and developmental policies that were successfully restoring the respect of tribal leaders although it was frequently achieved with the help of foreign support and military collaboration. All of these developments demonstrate Omani independence, especially in terms of its military policy.

Dhofar War 1965 – 1975

CHAPTER 5:

The Fourth Phase of the Revolution

(June 1972 - December 1975)

5.1 Foreign support for Sultan Qaboos' government in confronting rebels

Sultan Qaboos' policy of openness to the world led directly to the improvement and consolidation of his relationship with other countries in the Arab Gulf and beyond. This policy helped to limit and even completely halt foreign support for the rebels. Regarding British involvement, the main reason for secrecy was to avoid irritating the British parliament and people. According to a secret letter sent from the British embassy in Muscat to the Arabian department, L. Egerton, stated that:

although it is well know that British service personnel are loaned to the SAF, the extent of UK military involvement in Oman is not widely known. A significant loss of British lives or a significant increase in military support or expenditure might arouse parliamentary and public anxiety and criticism (UKNA, NBM 10/5, 1971).

This approach meant that it was necessary to limit the degree and visibility of British military involvement in the war. A secret letter from the British Embassy Muscat, to S. L. Egerton, Arabian Department, mentioned that "The provision of direct military assistance in operations would increasingly lay us open to adverse criticism. It should be decreased as the military situation allows"(UKNA, NBM 10/5, 1971). In order to fill the void that resulted from their inherently limited involvement and to defeat the rebels as soon as possible, the British government advised the Sultan to seek support from other countries, stating "Oman may have to be encouraged at the appropriate time to seek assistance from other sources, e.g. friendly Arab or (in certain circumstances) the United Nations"(UKNA, NBM 10/5, 1971). Such a direction was not consonant with informal British imperial control or influence.

5.1.1 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the second largest country in the region in terms of geography and influence after Iran, shares a border with Dhofar. After the outbreak of the revolution in Dhofar, Saudi Arabia supported the Dhofar Charitable Association due to its conservative Islamic tendency and it was also one of the organisations that contributed to the formation of the Dhofar Liberation Front. Saudi Arabia aimed to have influence over the revolution in Dhofar, guiding its



Fig. 35: Sultan Qaboos (right) visit King Faisal, (left), 1971(Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 1376)

progress to get rid of Sultan Said, based on his hatred of Saudi Arabia, a position that the Saudis reciprocated. Generous Saudi support for the rebels continued until 1968, when after the ideological change in the rebellion at the second conference Hamrin Conference, when the Front chose to follow Marxist-Leninism. This change negatively affected the relationship between the Front and Saudi Arabia, as the latter adheres closed to conservative Islamic teachings that were directly contrary to communism. King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz (1964-1975), the King of Saudi Arabia, was a staunch opponent of communism and refused any relationships or political representations with communist countries. He did not want any ideology that opposed Islamic teachings to exist in Saudi Arabia (Al Saud, *Moqatel website*, 2016). As a consequence, the KSA severed its relationship with the Front.

After Sultan Qaboos took over the rule of Oman, he made an important visit to Riyadh (see figure 35) in 1971. After resolving the border dispute between the countries. According to Peterson (2007), the new government of Oman granted Saudi Arabia some of the areas that it had been demanding, including the oasis of Al Buraimi. This oasis was granted in exchange for the provision of financial support to the Sultanate, as well as forbidding Imam Ghalib, who was still residing in its territory, to act against the Sultan's government. Saudi Arabia then gave these villages to the UAE, in exchange for other land (Peterson, 2007, p. 20). Sultan Qaboos was able to obtain promises from King Faisal, that he would provide the Sultanate with developmental and military support to confront the rebels in Dhofar. Fayyad (1975) adds that the support from Saudi Arabia was in line with the Saudi policy of standing against any revolutionary movement that aimed to overthrow the absolute monarchs of the Arabian Gulf. Therefore, Saudi Arabia put aside its differences with Britain, the UAE, and Iran to devote its efforts to face its most dangerous challenge, exemplified in the Dhofari communist rebellion (ibid, p. 213).

In an article in *Al Rayed Newspaper*, Qais Al Zawawi, Oman Minister of Foreign Affairs was reported as stating that the Saudi government agreed with Sultan Qaboos in December 1972, promising the delivery of



Fig. 36: Strike Master aircraft played important military role in attacking rebel locations (Source: Minister of Defence Archives, MOD Archives 432)

military and economic support for Oman from Saudi Arabia, which it provided by paying \$150 million to Oman in 1975 (*Al Rayed Newspaper*, 31st May 1975, p.8). Al Rayes (1973, p. 73) notes that Sultan Qaboos responded with a concession to cede the Al Buraimi Oasis to Saudi Arabia, thereby settling the main dispute between Sultan Said and Saudi Arabia. The treaty also indicated that the Sultan should support the Saudi international situation and that he should recognise Saudi leadership over the Arab world. Sultan Qaboos' government benefited from this support to strengthen its military and political position against the rebels. Furthermore, £60 million pounds of Saudi support were used to build roads, schools, hospitals and to augment the new Omani army. Al Rayes (1973, p. 73) adds that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provided shipments of other arms to Oman in January 1973, among which were numbers of British (Strike Master) jet planes (see figure 36). In addition, the KSA sent a permanent military mission to perform military coordination tasks between the two countries.

This financial aid provided by Saudi Arabia to Oman during difficult periods was reported by the *Al Anwar Al Beirutyah* magazine. During the financial crisis that Oman suffered after the purchase of British air missiles (Repair system) worth £200 million, Sultan Qaboos had to visit Saudi Arabia to request aid from King Faisal. In June 1975, the King pledged to provide support to confront this crisis after several foreign and Arab banks refused loans to Oman (*Al Anwar Al Beirutyah Journal*, 1975, p. 2).

Sultan Qaboos praised the financial and political assistance provided by Saudi Arabia in an interview for the Saudi news agency, *Oman Newspaper*, which quoted Sultan Qaboos as stating, "Saudi Arabia is our big sister in the area and King Faisal was very understanding of our policy and he was helpful to a huge extent" (Sultan Qaboos Speech, 1973). In another statement, Sultan Qaboos thanked King Faisal for the Saudi contribution in building Oman, as they had provided educational, health, agricultural, and informational support (Sultan Qaboos Speech, 1973). The Omani-Saudi relationship achieved multiple national goals for both countries. In addition to solving the border dispute with Oman, Saudi Arabia protected its eastern borders. It also stopped supporting the Front and instead provided a range of aid to the Sultanate that played an important role in ending the war. The developments that the government of Sultan Qaboos made in to its foreign relations showed that the Omani government was much more independent than much of the literature suggests. In this sense, it had a negotiated independence and sovereign autonomy, rather than was a direct or informal colony.

5.1.2: Jordanian military support for the government of Sultan Qaboos began in late 1971. On 24th June 1972, when the first Jordanian battalion, consisting of 400 soldiers and officers, reached Oman, Sultan Qaboos visited Jordan. His talks with King Hussein bin Talal resulted in the promise of more Jordanian forces to assist in the war to eliminate the armed rebellion in Dhofar (*Al Adad magazine*, 1975, p. 12). In a press interview with the *Al Hadaaf magazine* on 30th June, King Hussein pronounced that “there are Jordanian forces in Oman and added that they are intended to provide extra Jordanian military support to Oman to face any developments in the military situation with the rebels” (Dhofar Revelation, 19th July 1975). Sultan Qaboos also announced the presence of Jordanian troops in his country, asserting in a statement to the Lebanon *Al Nahar* newspaper that the Jordanian officers were present to train the Omani army in a consultation role that had them safely away from the fighting (*Al Nahar Newspaper*, ‘Dhofar War’, 21st March 1973, p. 9). The British government praised the support provided by Saudi Arabia and Jordan for the Sultan, especially given that “the Saudi and Jordanian military system was based on western military traditions” (*Al Nahar Newspaper*, ‘Dhofar War’, 21st March 1973, pp. 8-9).



Fig. 37: Hunter plane flying over Murbat fort in a combat mission, 1975
(Source: RAO Archives, RAFOHR 32)

Jordanian support proceeded in line with Iranian support for Oman in late 1973 as the amount of regional support for the Omani government increased over time. Three different battalions of Jordanian troops were present in Oman until 1st March 1975 (*Kuwaiti Al Taleyya* magazine, 517, March 1975, p 16). In the same year, a Jordanian soldier delegation visited Muscat led by Zaid bin Shaker, the Chief of Staff of the Jordanian Army (Fayyad, 1975, p. 275). During the visit, he met Sultan Qaboos and declared a gift of 31 fighter planes, (Hooker Hunter) (see figure 37), to help strike the meeting places of the rebels. After this deal, Jordanian officers stayed to train Omani soldiers (ibid, p. 22). The first batch of these airplanes was delivered on 27th February 1975. The Omani Secretary of Defence, Sayyid Faher bin Timor, supervised and stated that “the

planes have been received as a gift from a neighbourly Arab country and they are going to strengthen Omani air defence in facing the communist threat” (*Al Hadaaf magazine*, 1975).

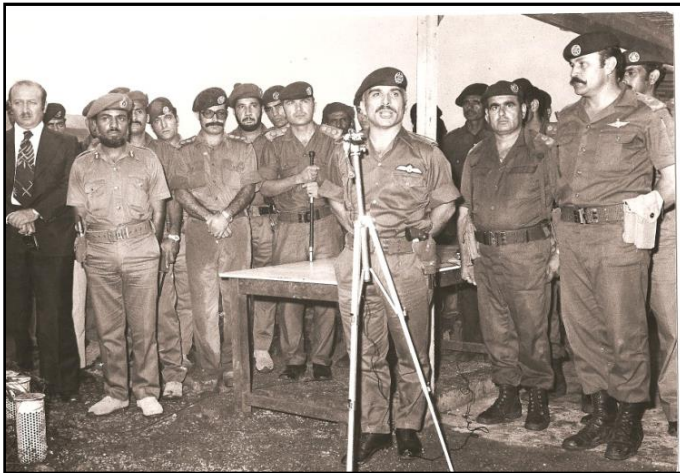


Fig. 38: King Hussein addresses a speech to some of his forces participating in Dhofar. Sultan Qaboos appears the second from the left, 1975 (Source: RAFO Archives, RAFOKH8)



Fig. 39: King Hussein (left) and his wife (right) Sultan Qaboos in the centre are following a military parade in Dhofar, 1975 (Source: RAFO Archives, RAFOKH5)

King Hussein made an official visit to Oman in 1975 and met with Sultan Qaboos (see figure 38 and 39). The support given by King Hussein to Oman was another example of support from Arab countries in the face of communism (Fayyad, 1975, p. 223). King Hussein visited his troops, who patrolled the road between Salalah and Thumrait. The Jordanian support for Oman was not however limited to the military and intelligence fields, but also educational, political and diplomatic aspects in different ministries (Ibid, p. 223). It has also been claimed that the Saudi government financially enabled Jordan to provide military support to confront Dhofar's rebels in Oman, since Jordan was not wealthy enough to fund military interventions abroad without financial support (Interview, Zahran, 20th May 2009). In sum, the Jordanian support of Oman's new government testified to Oman's new independent roll in the Gulf States.

5.1.3: British support

The British government was on alert after the rebels opened a new very dangerous Front in north Oman's cities, especially in Nizwa and Izki, which contained petroleum pipelines to the export port. This was stated in a document sent from E.F. Henderson, the British Political Agency in Doha (Qatar) to T.F. Brenchley, the Head of the Arabian directorate in the British Ministry of

Foreign Affairs(UKNA, BC 103125/1, 1966).Explosions in cities in north Oman near the oil pipelines threatened to undermine the British government efforts to use petroleum sources to maintain security and stability in Oman and to defeat the rebels in Dhofar. Because of this, British troops made a nautical and air attack at Raykhut from 15th to 21st January 1970, in an attempt to expel the rebels from the city. However, this operation failed with British losses in men and equipment, including a Hooker Hunter airplane. Halliday (1976, p. 268) notes that the British government confirmed its withdrawal in the face of rebels' attacks.

Before its planned withdrawal from the region, the British government perceived that it was important for the Sultanate to receive immediate support, as mentioned in a report published in early September 1971 "to start the crucial stage that the war in Dhofar was reaching, our aim should be to give as much immediate support to the Sultanate authorities as possible short of overt help" (UKNA, B1/56, D.S. 11/12, 1970). Another secret document, entitled "Chiefs of Staff committee Defence Operational Planning Staff, The Situation in Muscat and Oman", written by the Defence Operational Planning Staff, also stated the need to give this support and maintain British interests. It mentioned that Oman's stability was very important since it was connected with the British interests in the area and that,

...increasing instability in the Sultanate could jeopardize the stability of other states in the Gulf. This in turn could have far-reaching consequence and would no doubt affect the UK's extensive commercial interest there. Thus the UK cannot escape involvement (UKNA, AG 51, DOP Note 705/70, 1970).

The British government realised the importance of accelerating the elimination of the rebellion in Dhofar, noting that it had the potential of spreading instability across the region and adversely affect British interests. A secret letter from the British Embassy in Muscat to S.L. Egerton, in the Arabian Department, stressed the importance of keeping British government influence in Oman strong. Another document clarified the general policy of the British government Oman: "British influence is powerful in Oman affairs and it is in the UK's interest to maintain it" (UKNA, NBM 10/5, 1971).

As a consequence of all these diplomatic statements of British strategic interests in Oman, in October 1971, British troops began to conduct wider military operations in the eastern region than before. This was called the "Fahad" (Tiger) Operation. The Omani and British troops were supported by the British Special Air Service (SAS), who attacked the eastern region to dominate the rebel locations. At the same time, secured locations were established in the desert to prevent the arrival of arms and supplies to the eastern sector. The fight lasted for two months, with Omani and

British forces gaining control of some rebels' defensive sites by December 1971. The goal of the operation at this critical time, immediately prior to the withdrawal of British troops from eastern Suez, seems to have been the defeat of the rebel forces. However, despite these victories the balance of the war remained in favour of the rebels (Buttenshaw, 2010, p. 7; Halliday, 1976, p. 272). (For more details, see appendix 17 which has a Secret Intelligence Memorandum published by CIA Document services, 19th May 1972, No. 2034/72, sentence 22-27, entitled *The Mountain and the Plain: The Rebellion in Oman*).

After the Fahad (Tiger) Operation, SAF initiated new military operations in the west with full support of the British troops, in order to weaken the rebels from more than one side. This began with the commencement of the 'Simba' (Lion) operation (see figure 40) on 18th May 1972, which was intended to cut the supply network arriving from Yemen. The attack made intensive inroads into South Yemen, with 300 British soldiers being air dropped into the city of Habroot. On 24th May 1972, 200 more British forces air dropped into the Dhyoof area, 10 miles away from Hoof city



Fig. 40: SAF helicopters during Simba operation, 1975.
(Source: RAO Archives, RAFO BELL 0233)

(Halliday, 1976, pp. 272-274). Some of these soldiers attacked rebel locations in the mountains and others attacked the areas in the borders of Yemen. On 25th May 1972, the British RAF attacked Hoof, although it ultimately failed to sever the transportation networks between the Front and Yemen or to gain a foothold in the eastern area in Dhofar close to the Yemeni borders (Buttenshaw, 2010, p. 7).

After the failure of this operation, the British troops intended to conduct depletive military campaigns in the eastern and western areas in late May 1972, in an attempt to control the "Ho Chi Minh" road, a strategic path that linked the eastern and western areas through the Al Wusta "middle" governorate "the red line" (*Al Hadaf magazine*, 1973-1974, p. 19). In addition, in

cooperation with the forces of the Sultan, the British forces waged an attack in the eastern region on 23rd September 1972 supported by helicopters and fighter aircraft. This attack failed. In early December 1972, the British again took a defensive position, since they held the mountain centres that could not be supplied except by helicopters (Halliday, 1976, p. 275).

Sultan Qaboos diplomatically responded to these charges in press interviews that the British role in Oman had been limited, stating that “there is a limited number of British experts who work in Oman and they receive commands us and we could ask them to leave the country” (Sultan Qaboos, 1973, p. 4). This speech was directed to the Arab and Omani peoples and was intended to confirm the sovereignty of Oman, stating that the British were present at the request of the Omani government. The Sultan also answered the rebels’ accusations about the support of imperial power from Britain, noting instead that:

we are getting support from Saudi Arabia and Britain to perform Oman’s internal reform project... we do not find difficulties in dealing with the British because they are here to work as experts for us and we take advantage of their experiences in reforming the country and building the army (Sultan Qaboos, 1973, p. 1).

It is clear that Sultan Qaboos gave convincing arguments on the British presence in Oman, stating that the amicable relationship between the Omani and British governments was based on their historical friendship and dictated by common purpose. In this sense, they were sovereign countries that were respecting and supporting each other’s interests.

5.1.4: British diplomacy and interests in Oman

British diplomacy towards Oman during the phase after Sultan Qaboos took power was highlighted in an important secret document entitled British policy towards Oman, which was sent by C.G.H. Arnold on 24th May 1971. He stated:

Continuing stability and integrity of the sultanate of Oman can only be maintained by an efficient and non-politically motivated army... Oman does not have trained and suitable replacements immediately available. Any attempt to ‘rapidly’ Omanise the Sultan’s armed forces is fraught with dangers and could very well be counterproductive to HMG(UKNA, DS 8/3640, 1971).

Another British secret letter entitled ‘The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, H.M.G.’s Policy’, sent to Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 24th May 1970, added:

Her Majesty's government policy continues unchanged, to preserve stability in the Persian Gulf and safeguard British interest there it is necessary that the sultanate should remain an integrated unit under friendly control. British policy is to help to strengthen the authority of the Sultan and the security of the sultanate without further recourse to open intervention by the British troops. Although we consider it desirable that a reconciliation between the sultan and the rebels should be achieved, it is essential that this should not be obtained at the cost of weakening the Sultan's position or giving to his local opponents and their Arab backers an opening for further subversion (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, File 2/7 (E115), 1970).

Another secret letter, 'The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, H.M.G.'s Policy', sent from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 24th May 1970, mentioned that the following objectives must be clarified for international organisations in order to avoid condemnation of the British for their involvement in the conflict.

- a. To reiterate that under article 2(1) of its charter, the United Nations has no right to discuss the internal affairs of the Sultanate which is an independent state.
- b. To demonstrate that there is absolutely no evidence to support the allegations that the question of Oman is a colonial issue (and that hence the reference of it to the committee of 24 was improper).
- c. To counter statements by the rebels and their sympathizers (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, File 2/7 (E115), 1970).

This document also provides valuable insights into British interests in Oman during this critical period, immediately prior to the withdrawal of the British from the region and the objectives of British diplomacy in Oman:

- a. To prevent the Sultanate from disintegrating or falling under communist, extreme left-wing or Arab nationalist control with the result that stability in the Persian Gulf might be threatened particularly before British withdrawal or Britain's extensive commercial and oil interests might be threatened after withdrawal.
- b. To maintain the RAF staging facilities (essential for our existing far eastern commitments) and the BBC station in Masirah.
- c. To maintain the flow of high quality oil from petroleum development (Oman) Ltd. Operations (85% owned by Royal Dutch Shell).
- d. To maintain and increase British exports, both goods and services (UKNA, D.S. 11/12, File 2/7 (E115), 1970).

An important secret British report titled "HMG's Policy towards the Sultanate of Oman, British Interests in Oman" was sent from Foreign and Commonwealth Office to R. A. Lloyd Jones, MOD on 18th May 1971. This document clearly mentions the British bases in Oman:

- a. To maintain good relations with the present and any successor regime in the Sultanate.
- b. To maintain continued and unhindered support, and search for high-quality oil by petroleum development (Oman) Ltd.
- c. To maintain and increase British exports, both goods and services.
- d. To maintain RAF staging facilities and the BBC station at Masirah (UKNA, B2930 (D.S. 11/12, May 1971)).

Another secret (UK eyes only) British document, “*Future United Kingdom Defence Activity in Oman*”, also points to British interests in Oman. This message was sent from the British Embassy (Muscat), to S. L. Egerton, Arabian Department on 16th September 1971.

The objectives of British policy in the Gulf area as a whole, including the Sultanate of Oman are:

- a. The promotion of stability and peace
- b. The preservation of British and the limitation of communist influence
- c. The maintenance and expansion of UK trade and economic interests, including the uninterrupted flow of oil on reasonable terms (UKNA, NBM 10/5, 1971)

All of these documents indicate that British national interests in Oman and the Arabian Gulf, which were primarily embodied in economic and geo-strategic interests, were directly dependent on the stability, unity and integrity of the Sultanate of Oman. Therefore, Britain sought to help Oman to achieve stability and support the country in international forums, and preventing from either disintegrating or falling under communist, extreme left-wing or Arab nationalist influence.

5.1.5: American Support

Wahem (1982, p. 67) argues that after the Second World War, the US started to extend its influence towards the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula in an effort to guarantee its economic interests. However, its encounters with the British in different eras prevented the US from promoting its influence in the region earlier. Murad (1982, pp. 16-17) argues against this position, claiming that there was an agreement between the British and Americans to share influence in the area and that America had interests in petroleum, since the United States had monopolised an abundance of important petroleum privileges in Arabian Gulf countries from 1925 to 1938 and after the end of World War II. The American administration developed privileged relations with the Arab Gulf States, considering it as a pressure point that they could use against the western European countries that had become increasingly dependent on Arabian Gulf oil after the war.

The importance of the Arabian Gulf for America increased due to fears that the Soviet Union would control the region and thereby control the access of oil to the US and its allies in western European countries and Japan. Political instability in the Arabian Gulf countries was therefore of great concern to the US, who noted the arrival of communist revolutionaries in Oman and other countries, which they felt could affect future US interests in the region. Harold Brown, the US Secretary of Defense (1977-1981) warned that “support from South Yemen to the rebels in Oman threatens the Choke Point of the Arabian Gulf which would negatively affect oil access to the area”. This “Choke Point” is the strategic Strait of Hormuz in the Sultanate of Oman and through which 60% of the world’s oil exports pass. Therefore, the US let Britain deal with Oman, because it was convinced that British diplomacy would be able to suppress the rebellion in Dhofar and spread the peace and stability that they required in the Strait of Hormuz (Murad, 1982, pp. 16-17).

This American policy became clear after analysing Sultan Said’s visit to the US in 1939. It contrasts with the argument put forward by Wahem (1982), who claims that a fierce competition existed between America and Britain to share areas of influence. Instead, Britain and the US seem to have been harmoniously and flexibly dividing their areas of influence in the region. Nakhla (1982) adds that, in order to guarantee its interests in the area, the American government called for the support of local and regional common efforts to maintain stability without foreign interference. It also sought to ensure the peaceful solution of regional disputes and expansion of its financial and economic interests with the Arabian Gulf (ibid, p. 49). Jassim (1997, p. 396) agrees that American policy showed sympathy with the political and military procedures that Sultan Qaboos exerted to defeat the armed rebellion in Dhofar, with the government officially stating that “the Popular Front for Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf is a terrorist destructive movement” (Sultan Qaboos, 1971, p. 5). A report published in the American newspaper *Washington Post* on 21st January 1975 indicated that the American army had sent a team to observe the war in Dhofar several years before. The team advised the US government that since the conflict resembled the Vietnam War in 1960s, it would be better for the US not to interfere directly (Mangold, 1983, p. 85). As a consequence, the United States supported Sultan Qaboos indirectly through Iran, which was a strong ally of the US at that time. It also sold military equipment to Oman after 1971, with payments amounting to \$2,693,000 by 1975 (U. S. Congress Study of the Persian Gulf, 1980). The US intensified its efforts to implement its new policy in Oman specifically and the Arabian Gulf area generally by preparing Iran to perform the role of “the Gulf police officer”. This would enable the US to protect its interests in the area, especially their interest in oil by proxy (Murad, 1982, p. 18). This new policy

included reinforcing Iran militarily by agreeing to supply it with arms and sophisticated military equipment in accordance with American strategy since the US defeat in Vietnam in the 1960s. This strategy which was known as the Nixon Principle confirmed reducing US foreign responsibilities. The aim of this “Nixon Doctrine” was to reduce the participation of US forces in armed conflicts around the world and instead ensuring the achievement of geopolitical objectives through the strengthening of US allies rather than the direct involvement of US troops. Therefore, the US wanted to decrease American military expansion in the Gulf by making their allies stronger, which they achieve by facilitating access to arms and military equipment, whether through foreign support or sales. This approach protected the external interests of America at a lower financial and human cost (Murad, 1982, p. 18). Iran was chosen to play the role of the “Gulf police officer” for two main reasons: the Shah of Iran was sympathetic to American interests and the Iranian population had increased substantially, alongside rapid social and economic development, which gave Iran the ability to practice its sovereignty in the Arabian Gulf (Murad, 1982, p. 19). In fact, Iran had considered this role even before this date, since the Shah stated that Iran started thinking that it should obtain military power in the area since after 1959, “We realised that US cannot play the role of the international police forever... our responsibility is not national or local only, but we plays the role of defender of 60% of the world oil reserve” (Fayyad, 1975, p. 175). Therefore, in 1968, the Shah of Iran declared that Iranian troops would preserve the safety and stability of the Arabian Gulf after the withdrawal of the British and that the Pax Iranian would replace the Pax Britannica. The Shah claimed to be the real defender of the Arabian Gulf and therefore started to form a powerful, well equipped army to fill the political and military void left by the British (Nakhla, 1982, p. 38).

In this way, American policy became consistent with the ambitions of the Shah and his expanding policy in the Arabian Gulf. The Shah publicly announced that he would protect American interests and suppress any movement that targeted them in the area (*The Gulf and the Arabian peninsula documents*, 1975, pp. 379-389). It is therefore clear that the powerful Iranian military intervention in Oman against the rebels in Dhofar in December 1973 effectively expressed the Nixon Principle. It also illustrated Iran’s desire to expand its military, regional, and political role, undermining developing forces like Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which could threaten its policy in the area. This may have been caused, at least in part, by the US convincing Iran that it was the best country to play that role, as well as the provision of military and diplomatic support to that end, in addition to tacit permission for Iran to act.

5.1.6: Iranian support

5.1.6.1: The relationship between Iran and Arab countries

The Iranian presence in Oman however caused popular and official criticism from many Arab people and governments, who were, for historical and ideological reasons, even more sensitive to Iranian support than that of western countries. Islam is divided into different doctrines, with the Iranian following Shia, while Sunni is the state religion of all Arab nations, except Oman. Oman follows a doctrine called Ibadism, which is considered to be a middle ground between the two more widespread doctrines. The political differences between these beliefs primarily arise from the principle of electing the ruler, with an Ibadi preacher being called upon to choose a ruler from any tribe and as long as he is an adult Muslim. In contrast, the leaders in Shiite regimes are elected from the House of the Prophet Muhammad and those in the Sunni regime are elected by a Quraysh ruler (Interview of Al Harthy, 2nd January 1999). This has traditionally made Omanis more tolerant of the Iranians than other Arabs. Nevertheless, while Ibadism is the oldest and the most moderate doctrine of Islam, it is also the least followed (Ghobash, 1997; Landen, 1983).

Sectarian division between the Arab nations and Iran has meant that neither side wanted the other to form a regional power that would prevent the other from being dominant. Most Arabs perceived any Iranian intervention in Arab area as an expansion that must be resisted, resulting in many proxy wars even in recent years. Most Arab countries support one party in these countries while Iran supports their opposition. However, it should be noted that Iran at the time of the Dhofar War was a monarchy under the Shah's rule and allied to the West. In 1979, the Al Khomeini revolution established an Islamic theocratic republic after overthrowing the royal system of the Shah, changing Iranian relationships and making the country vehemently opposed to western powers, most especially the United States.

5.1.6.2: Reasons for the Iranian support

Dhabih and Berwyn (1980, pp. 65-66) indicate that one of the factors that motivated Iran to intervene militarily in Oman was the decision of the British government to withdraw from the Arabian Gulf by the end of 1971. The British withdrawal would leave a political and military vacuum, indicating a need for a party to continue the implementation of British policy by filling as proxy the military vacuum in the Arabian Gulf. The United States and Britain deemed Iran eligible

to play that role. Iranian involvement in Oman can be interpreted as a practical reflection of its desire to increase its regional role, as well as to cooperate with the global powers (Worrall, 2014, p. 30). Moreover, the success of the rebels in Dhofar raised the concern that insurgent groups would be gradually able to remove Gulf regimes. This would allow the Strait of Hormuz to be in the hands of hostile parties, threatening the interests of Gulf States by harming the international oil trade from which Iran benefited (ibid, p. 30).

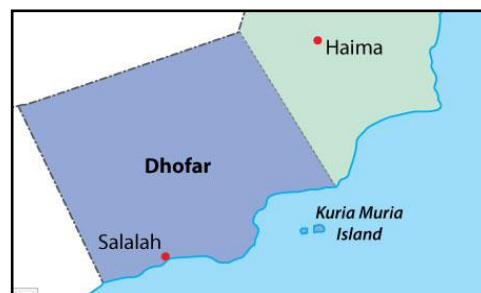
The Shah of Iran expressed on many occasions Iran's responsibility to protect the Strait of Hormuz from the rebels in Dhofar. According to *The Arab Revelation Journal*, the Shah stated that:

there is a possibility that some of the Gulf systems would be overthrown due to the actions of the rebels and vandals there. for example, the rebels in Dhofar, and try to imagine what we will face if the rebels succeeded in controlling the ruling regimes, since Muscat is located in front of the Strait of Hormuz. At first, several shots will be fired, then freely, artilleries and missiles will be lunched and I cannot be lenient with these destructive activities (1974, p. 13).

The Iranian government therefore strengthened its ties with the new government in Oman, through support in the political and military sectors. In July 1972, an Omani delegation led by the Sultan's advisor, Thuwaini bin Sehab, visited Iran. At this meeting, the two parties signed an agreement for Iranian military intervention in Oman to suppress the revolution in Dhofar (Ella Al Amam magazine, 1974, p. 18). Khaneer (1981, p. 33) indicates that Iranian officials had been requested by Oman to sign a treaty under which Iran would inspect the ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz on behalf of Oman, Britain and United States and that Oman had strongly agreed with this step. Assistant of the Secretary of State, Josef Sysco, said in an announcement "we trust in Iran's ability in spreading safety and stability in the Gulf area" (ibid, p. 33). In summary, Sultan Qaboos used regional powers in Oman's national interest. In particular, he secured the assistance of Iran to suppress the Dhofar revolution. Iran agreed to this request for a number of reasons, including the possible threat that the rebels posed to joint shipping routes between Oman and Iran. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Sultan Qaboos did not seem to care about Arab criticism of Iranian assistance, because he viewed Oman as being a sovereign state and judged that Iranian assistance like British assistance, was the optimal way to achieve his own sovereign aims and not a concession to Iranian control or dominance.

5.1.6.3: Iranian military support

The Iranian government agreed to the request by Sultan Qaboos to support his government troops in the Dhofar War with substantial Iranian troop deployment. Therefore, the Iranian fleet started to move towards the Dhofari coasts on November 1972, since the Omani authorities had temporarily given Iran the Al Hallaniyat



islands (Kuria Muria) (see figure 41) off the Dhofar coast, to use as a military base. These islands provided an Iranian airport from which aircraft could strike the rebels (NSD, National struggle documents 1965-1974, 1974, pp. 76-77). In addition, they wanted to keep the Iranians away from the media and avoid official commentary across the Arab world. The Iranian role in Dhofar worried other Arab countries, because of the aforementioned historical and doctrinal disputes.

Through the Dhofar War, the Iranian government therefore found a chance to expand its influence in the area by fighting the rebels. The Iranian forces increased over time, reaching 20,000 fighters, by far the biggest military contribution to the war. Fayyad (1975, pp. 178-180) mentions that Iran sent military support to Oman during the first half of 1973 as a first phase, then Iranian officials to supervise the support provided, and 20 helicopters (see figure 42) with pilots and soldiers to Salalah and the Al Hallaniyat islands.

The first Iranian military operation, called “Big Station”, started on 20th December 1973. According to Fayyad (1975, p. 181), this operation had strategic goals to defeat the rebels. They also threatened Yemen directly that she should reduce its military support for the rebels. With respect to these goals, the military goals were primarily concerned with ensuring control of Al Wusta (Middle) province and keeping open the road that links Salalah and Thumrait, Muscat. This road is called (the Red Line) which is considered as the only transportation line that links Salalah and other desert military centres. The Iranian troops moved in 1973 in two directions: north from Salalah to Al Wusta (Middle) province and south, from the desert to Dhofar’s mountains. Using helicopters, these troops were able to centre at a number of locations along the Red Line to reopen the road and to prevent the arrival of support to the eastern rebel controlled area of Dhofar, in effect dividing the governorate into two parts. After a month of continual fighting, Iranian troops were unable to reopen the road and some were surrounded by the rebels in Dhofar’s defensive locations (Halliday, 1976, pp. 284-285). The ordinary troops in this campaign were two Iranian brigades of the Special Forces and Infantry, supported by a British mountain battalion led by the British

military commander Bradley Smith as well as Omani forces. These were supported by three companies of the Omani desert battalion and the British RAF (Halliday, 1976, pp. 14-15).

5.1.6.4: Government Informational Policy to Allay Arab Criticism of Iranian Support

The Iranian and Omani governments sought to impose an informational overview of this campaign. Sultan Qaboos denied the existence of the Iranian military in Oman in an interview with one of the Lebanese magazines quoted by the *Oman Newspaper* in April 1973. He stated “there is no single Iranian soldier in Dhofar, however, there are some Jordanian officers who assumed training of different army sectors”(Oman Newspaper, ‘Communist threat’, 28th April, p. 1). The Sultan was telling the truth in his speech, since the Iranian troops only arrived in Oman on 30th November 1972. He did not deny his intention to allow Iran to support Oman in the near future, though he highlighted the role of the Jordanian forces by placing stress on the Arab role in the war and delighted those who opposed Iranian intervention. After the arrival of the Iranian forces, the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf hurried to castigate the Omani government for allowing the arrival of Iranians, which led Sultan Qaboos to announce formally and explain the Iranian presence at a press interview on April 1973 (ibid, p. 1).

The Sultan spoke to his Arab critics and outlined the reasons for him permitting Iranian military troops to intervene in Dhofar. After he first mentioned the Jordanian presence, which represented the Arab military role in the Dhofar War, he spoke candidly about the Iranian contribution to the Omani civil war. After Sultan Qaboos met the Shah of Iran and members of the ruling Tudeh Party in 1971, Iranian troops were deployed in support of the Sultan’s military campaign against the rebels, with the provision of thousands of fighters equipped with the latest American arms. These had been provided to Iran to reinforce its role as an aspiring regional power. The US interest in the region was the same as that of Britain, namely spreading peace and security for the betterment of long-term influence and consideration of the value of energy security through oil wealth. Iran acted as their proxy force. Ultimately, this support was placed in the national interest of Oman and the unity of the country. Sultan Qaboos stated:

there are also Iranian fighting forces and engineering forces to build a barrier to prevent the rebels from sneaking from the west. Iranian forces came to help Oman in some of the operations in the resistance areas and they have been given a special mission, cooperating with the Sultan’s armed forces to enable these forces to do other works in other places in the Front (Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 1).

In this speech, the Sultan attempted to win the trust of his people and the wider Arab community, reassuring them of Iranian goodwill. He asserted, on more than one occasion, that all the war's special affairs were under the control of the Omani government, which regulated the situation with clear policies. He assured the audience that foreign troops would return home after the rebels were defeated, proclaiming that, "all came to help us, and when this crisis ends and peace and safety spreads, the Iranian and Jordanian troops will return to their homelands"(Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 1). In addition, the Sultan declared that "we are using Iranian troops to suppress the armed rebellion in Dhofar because the Popular Front is in alliance with the Communist party in Iran and that there are more than 300 Iranian soldiers and Special Forces Brigade in Oman" (ibid, p. 1). The Shah also indicated that some of his forces were in Oman, explaining that "we provided the support that Sultan Qaboos had requested. Our infantry exhausted themselves with glory when they cleansed the only road that links Dhofar and Muscat which was under the rebels' control" (*The Arabian Rebellion*, 1973-1974, p. 18). After the general failure of the Iranian campaign, many clashes occurred between the rebels and Iranian forces. Fayyad (1975, p. 184) observes that, according to the military data of the Popular Front, the Iranian forces suffered 368 casualties from 20th December 1973 until 12th March 1974.

A number of important British documents also directly clarify the British diplomatic approach in Oman during that period in the fulfilment of long-term British interests in the region, especially from an economic perspective as mentioned in a secret report entitled "*HMG's Policy towards the Sultanate of Oman*", which was sent from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to R. A. Lloyd Jones, in the British Ministry of defence:

The continuing stability and integrity of the Sultanate of Oman is the first British interest... Our very close relations and indeed involvement with the present regime would make way difficult the achievement of good relations with certain types of successor regimes (UKNA, B2930 (D.S. 11/12), 1971).

Due to Sultan Qaboos's policy, which exploited the sovereign position of his nation, he managed to improve relations between Oman and the regional powers. In this way, he persuaded them to participate militarily or financially in the war. This marked a shift in events in favour of the government and corresponding losses for the rebels, who began to lose their positions militarily, financially and diplomatically. It would have been difficult for Sultan Qaboos to make these arrangements if he did not possess full sovereign control over Omani policy.

5.2: External support for the rebels (1970 -1975): Yemen

The fourth chapter discussed the policy adopted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Yemen (see figure 43) with regards to the revolution in Dhofar, after its independence from Britain in 1967. Yemen played an important role for the revolutionaries in Dhofar, providing physical, military and media support to the rebels as part of its patriotic and national objectives (The National Democratic Revolution in Yemen, 1972, p. 24). This was observed in a document entitled

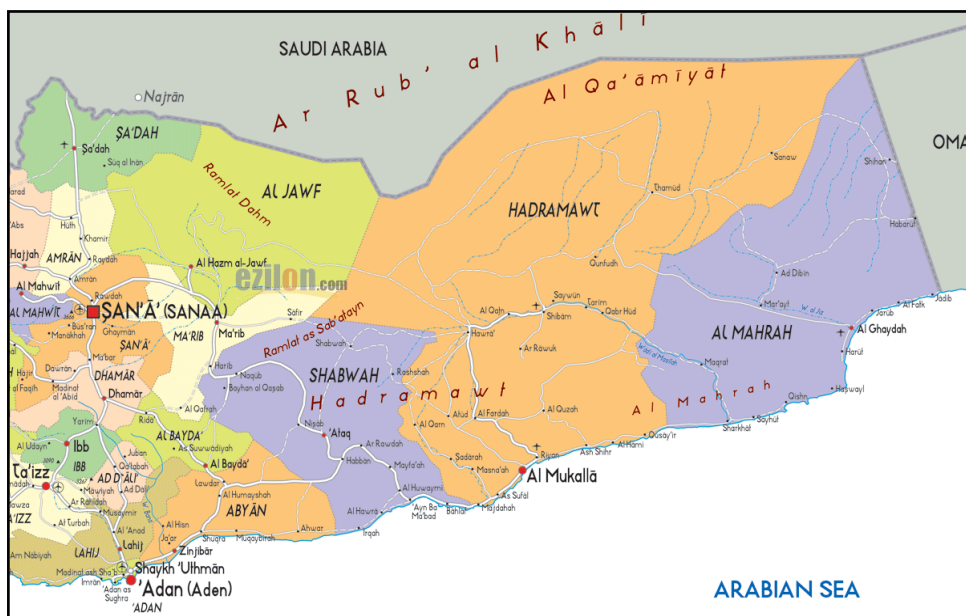


Fig. 43: A map showing Yemen towns)
www.ezilon.com, January 12, 2016)

'Oman: Annual Review' 3rd January 1971, which was sent from the British Ambassador in Muscat to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs. This report mentioned that Yemen had continued to send assistance to the rebels, even after the Sultanate had received recognition from the Arab League (UKNA, NBM 4/1, 1972).

South Yemen established bases for military and ideological training on its territory, in addition to offering comprehensive medical support and access to its various diplomatic channels. The Yemeni authorities also allowed a radio station to be established for the opposition, which broadcast daily from the Mukalla neighbourhood in the capital Aden. The rebels' media campaign relied heavily on this radio station and their offices in Yemen represented the backbone of external communications, as well as providing a meeting centre for movement supporters abroad. In addition, Yemen oversaw diplomatic communications with Arab and foreign countries which supported the revolution (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 9). Yemen prepared bases for daily military training for the rebels, in Hof, Hadeidah, Mukalla and Aden. Hof was one of the advanced ration centres for the rebels, in addition to being a centre for military training. Hadeidah contained the Huzayran

(June) school, which was responsible for the political education of the fighters, as well as training in heavy weapon use. Aden played a key role in the provision of medical services to the fighters and also offered military training (ibid, p. 9).

Rebel leaders were in constant contact with the political leadership in Yemen to coordinate with them on various political matters. During its periodic political conferences, the leadership of the Dhofar revolution expressed continued support for all the actions taken by Yemen (National Struggle Documents, 1974, p. 11). Al Nafisi (1976, p. 150) notes that Yemeni support for the rebels evolved to include the provision of military protection to rebel units near the Sultanate borders. Yemeni forces also provided protection to the rebel supply routes into Omani territory and Yemeni officers provided training in guerrilla warfare. However, this does not mean that Yemen played a direct role in the war against the Sultan's forces. Al Rayes (1974) explains that the Government of Yemen provided financial aid for the rebels of approximately 180 thousand Yemeni dinars annually. The Yemeni government also provided the rebels leaders with passports, while its embassy in Kuwait kept close contact with the rebels in the Arabian Gulf region. It also placed its diplomatic pouch at the service of rebel-mail, enabling it to be transferred to various Arab and foreign countries that supported the revolution (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 9). In essence, after securing its independence from British occupation, Yemen became the main gateway for the revolutionaries in Dhofar to the world. The political, financial, medical and logistical support that Yemen provided was generous and therefore extremely valuable to the revolutionaries.

Sultan Qaboos made media statements that accused Yemen of plotting against the Sultanate through their support of the rebels. Furthermore, he pressured other countries to help prevent Yemen giving support to the rebels, warning that the revolutionary plan was intended to spread to other countries in the Gulf. He stated that:

everyone knows that the southern state of Yemen embraces communist principles, and supports movements that claim to be made for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. The existence of such revolution backed by South Yemen, and other countries in the region, in addition to communist states, is conclusive evidence that there is a conspiracy. There is a scheme against the Arabian Peninsula, and the bridge, which was established in order to reflect upon their plans and their plots, became crystal clear, and is present in southern Yemen (Sultan Qaboos, 1974, p. 2).

In his speech, the Sultan Speech urged all Arab countries to consolidate their efforts in the struggle against communism. In particular, he urged the Arab League to undertake efforts to stop the war, and,

stop the penetration of communism, and eliminate its risks from the Arab nation. No one denies that Aden spread this danger, and its rulers declare their determination to export this danger to Oman and the Arab Gulf countries, in word and deed (ibid, p. 2).

The rebels' relations with the Democratic Republic of Yemen did not remain constant, facing apathy in late 1974, as the Yemeni government evaluated their involvement in response to pressure exerted by Arab countries. Sultan Qaboos welcomed the Arab efforts to improve the relationship and cooperation between the Sultanate and South Yemen, especially as this undermined the efforts of the rebels. He stated in a speech in 1974 that:

We have declared more than once that we welcome any kind of effort between us and our neighbour, southern Yemen, to stop embracing the rebels and providing them with support in all its forms...We have received in our country, the Arab League delegation. I have talked to the delegation and to Mr. Mahmoud Riadh, and placed all facts in front of them. I hope that the result of this endeavour is to reach a solution or persuade the Arab League, that sparing Arab blood is the most important... I have been waiting, since Oman became a member of the Arab League, for brothers to undertake to stop this bleeding (Sultan Qaboos, 1974, p. 1).

Mahmoud Riadh, referred to in this speech, was the Secretary-General of the Arab League at that time. It should be noted that the pressures exerted by the Omani government on southern Yemen and the isolation of the country from regional financial and political support ultimately led Yemen to review its relations with the rebels, as these pressures had started to make the relationship more detrimental than beneficial. Sultan Qaboos added pressure by opening his door to any mediations leading to the cessation of Yemeni support for the rebels.

Nakhla (1982, p. 35) also suggests a military explanation for the decline of Yemeni support, claiming that Yemen realised in 1973 that the Iranian forces, along with soldiers of the Omani, British and Jordanian forces, were advancing to resolve the war in favour of the Sultan. In response, the Kuwaiti mediation between the Sultanate and Yemen in 1973 began preparations for a resolution of the dispute between them over Yemen's support for the rebels. The government of Yemen began to reduce its political isolation with its neighbours from the Gulf States, in an effort to create an atmosphere of solidarity. Fayyad (1975, pp. 189-190) has come to another conclusion, arguing that the Iranian and British troops may have threatened the government of Yemen through the application of military pressure on its border adjacent to the Sultanate. This pressure would have been intended to ensure control of the western region facing the borders of Yemen, enabling them to be wrested from the rebels. In so doing, Oman would be given control over strategic areas

through which supplies passed to rebel forces, reducing Yemeni military aid that could reach the rebels and delivering a clear message to countries sympathetic to the rebels that Iranian, British and Omani government forces were in control (ibid, p. 189-190). It seems likely that Yemen realised that if the rebels continued to use their bases within Yemeni territory, the joint military forces of the Sultan could violate their sovereignty by entering into Yemen to destroy the military bases of the rebels. As a consequence, the rebels became trapped with no support from neighbouring countries.

In addition to the military factor mentioned by both Nakhla(1982, p. 35) and Fayyad(1974, pp. 189-190), which resulted in Yemen reducing its support for the rebels, Hensel (1982, pp. 199-200) argues that the economic factor played an important role in the change in Yemeni involvement in the conflict. He argues that the government of Yemen started to reconsider its policy towards the Arab Gulf states in November 1974, in an attempt to secure access to foreign capital and end its isolation since its independence in 1967. In response, Yemen received promises of economic aid from the other Gulf States, provided that they stopped supporting the Dhofar rebels, leading Yemeni contributions to the rebellion to decrease sharply. Fayyad (1975, p. 114) adds however that even though Yemen reduced the size of its military aid to the rebels, their official government statements remained supportive of the revolution. They also condemn Iran's military intervention in Oman. The closure of the Yemeni border was a severe blow to the rebels, as this denied them all foreign aid, such as from the Libyan Republic (see section 4.5.1) and the Soviet Union (see section 4.5.5). The arrival of the joint forces at the Yemeni border was therefore essential in stabilising and ensuring Omani sovereignty on the border, which had been outside the control of the Sultan's government since 1967.

5.2.1: External support for rebels: Libya

The contribution of Libya was characterized by instability, as the Libyan government took two contradictory stands on the Dhofar revolution. With the political changes in Libya after the September 1969 revolution, Muammar came to power in Libya. Gaddafi shared the same belief as Abdul Nasser, the President of Egypt, as he perceived that the solution for Arab peoples lies in faith and the application of Arab nationalism (Al Rayes, 1973, pp. 9-10). Libyan-Omani relations became closer after the Sultan's visit to Libya in December 1972, during which Gaddafi showed growing sympathy that motivated him to consider providing assistance regarding the revolution in

Dhofar. He also expressed his understanding of the presence of British officers in the Sultanate army. He expressed a desire to stand against communist ambitions in Oman, which Oman would not be able to resist without the support of a super power or British forces. The outcome of this meeting resulted in Gaddafi sending a delegation of Libyan soldiers on a fact-finding mission headed by Colonel Hamid BelQasem. The delegation arrived in Oman on 10th January 1973, where they visited Salalah, the centre of military operations command against the rebels. The delegation had discussions with the Sultan and senior officials the possibility of providing Libyan aid in various fields. After returning from Salalah, BelQasem stated that, “your cause against communist rebels in the Sultanate of Oman is fair. The Sultanate is considered the front line of the UAE and Arab countries in their struggle against communist belief in the Arab world” (Al Rayes, 1973, p. 9). The undersecretary to the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “Sultan Qaboos’ visit to Libya had achieved positive results. It was hoped that the visit of the Libyan delegation would contribute to the defeat of the communist terrorists in Dhofar” (Oman Newspaper, 1972, p. 1).

The Libyan government decided to mediate between the Sultanate of Oman and the Democratic Republic of Yemen, in an attempt to restore political relations between the two countries, and to end the military aid provided by the government of Yemen to the rebels in Dhofar. For this reason, a Libyan delegation visited Aden in 1973, during which they visited areas controlled by the rebels. Later the same year, in September 1973, the Libyan government invited a delegation from the PFLOAG to visit. The rebels received a positive response from the Libyan leaders with regards to the provision of military aid. A Libyan military aircraft arrived in Aden in November 1973, carrying weapons and military equipment for the revolutionaries. Another delegation from the front visited Libya in December 1973, leading to an office being opened for the Front early in 1974 (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 6). Al Rayes (1974, p. 6) notes that the cause of the change in the Libyan position can be traced to the decision of rebels to hide,

the face of the Marxist revolution by replacing pictures of Lenin and Guevara with pictures of the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, and they replaced Marxist books with the Holy Quran, in order to gain the sympathy of the Libyan government, and to persuade the Libyan delegation that they are fighting against the influence of the imperialist powers and the power of Iran cooperating with it (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 6).

Fayyad (1975, p. 133) suggests that the rapid and sudden change of the Libyan position can be more easily explained as a reaction to the arrival of Iranian forces in the war in 1973. This dissatisfaction is evident in a strongly worded message sent by Gaddafi to Sultan Qaboos, which plainly objected

to the intervention of Iranian forces. Thus, the nature of the Libyan anti-revolution position was completely reversed. The Libyan media started to publish news about the revolutionaries and their battles with Iranian forces, even urging Arab countries to provide unlimited military aid to the rebels (ibid, p. 122). Dhiab (1984, p. 164) also attributes the rapid change in Gaddafi's policy towards the Dhofar rebels to another factor, which is Sultan Qaboos' refusal of Gaddafi's opinion regarding annexing the UAE to the Sultanate. This theory is informed by Gaddafi already having told Sultan Qaboos that Libya was ready to unite UAE with Oman if Sultan Qaboos is hesitant about it. Examination of the Green Book (Libya's constitution) (Muammar Al Qaddafi, 1977, p. 13) demonstrates that the general reason for the sudden and rapid change in the Libyan position was influenced by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's faith in the Arab nationalism. Gaddafi considered himself to be the heir to Nasser in the leadership of Arab nationalism, which compelled him to reject any external intervention in an Arab problem, especially from Iran. Instead, he called for any problem and conflict in the Arab region to be solved internally between the countries of the Arab world. The encouragement Gaddafi offered to Sultan to annex the UAE is situated in the same context as Arab nationalism, namely in opposition to the establishment of any new entities in the Arab region in favour of the comprehensive unification of all Arab countries. The Libyan president decided to change his policy with regards to the Sultan, because Arab nationalists were extremely sensitive to the Iranian presence in the Arab world. Sultan Qaboos did not however respond to Gaddafi's demands for the removal of the foreign forces supporting him. This principle of not allowing intervention from any outside forces in Omani decisions or affairs demonstrates that the Sultan had retained primacy over Oman affairs.

5.2.2: Iraq

Relations between the rebels and Iraq were strengthened significantly in 1973, due to the military intervention of Iran in Oman, as a result of its perception of Iran as a common threat to both parties. The Iraqi government accused the Iranian government of conspiring against the national government in Iraq by raising the Kurdish matter and conducting military provocations along the border with Iraq, thereby preventing Iraq from forming as a regional power to rival the Iranian role (Fayyad, 1975, p. 123). The Iraqis provided financial support for the rebels during this period, donating 100-120 thousand Iraqi dinars annually (70,000 – 84,000GBP) (Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 153). Mohammed (1980, p. 292) adds that Iraq also provided weapon shipments to the rebels, as

well as opening training centres for the rebels on various types of weapons inside Iraq. Iraqi media organisations played an active role in news coverage of the rebels, publishing detailed news about the military operations that they carried out against the Sultan's forces and foreign forces in Oman (Ba'ath Party, 1975, p. 3). In 1972, the Iraqi government agreed to open an office of the Popular Front in Baghdad, in order to support the media position of the Front. The Iraqis bore all the financial expenses of the office, which was very active in media and political matters (Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 153). Iraq also embraced at the end of March 1974 the International Conference for Solidarity with the Struggle of the Arab people and the Arabian Peninsula. The conference was attended by the permanent Secretary of the Organisation of Afro-Asian and National Council for Peace and Solidarity and aimed to help Arab nations to remove imperial influence. In his opening speech, Na'eem Haddad, a member of the national leadership of the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party, stated that Arab nations should stand by the Arab revolution in the Arabian Gulf, adding that Iraq was willing to provide support for the Arab revolution to achieve its goals (Ba'ath Party, 1975, p. 3). A conference was held in Baghdad in March 1975, to seek an end to the Iranian "intervention" in Oman, under the title "Oman and the Arabian Gulf Week" with participation from Arab delegations, under the slogan "Defeating the Iranian invasion in Oman, and repelling Iranian attacks on Iraq is the duty of every honest nation" (Ba'ath Party, 1975, p. 3). The Baath Party Socialist National Leadership condemned the Iranian attacks on Iraq and Oman, and demanded that "all means were taken to condemn the colonial conspiracy against the Arab revolution in the Arabian Gulf" (Ba'ath Party, p. 3). Through its representative in Iraq, the PFLOAG praised the Iraqi government's political and financial support of its revolution in Dhofar. Iraqi support for the Dhofar rebels was a reaction to Iranian support for the government forces in Oman, in which Iraq attempted to use the rebellion as a proxy war against Iran, due to the involvement of Iranian forces in Dhofar. Iraqi assistance to the rebels entered across the Yemeni border, as blockades by the joint forces began. Oman seemed to become a location for Iraq-Iranian agendas of leadership in the Gulf States in 1970-75.

5.2.3: Syria and Egypt

The relationship that the rebels enjoyed with Syria was limited during this phase, with the Syrian media focused on the events in Oman, particularly after Iran's military intervention against the rebels. Detailed news was published about the military operations and information from the

revolutionaries on the Iranian assault (Fayyad, 1975, p. 126). Like Iraq, Syria was governed by the Ba'ath Socialist Party (Rayes, 2011, p. 2), an Arab nationalist group who opposed Iranian interference in the Arab world.

Meanwhile, relations between the rebels and Egypt went through two contradictory stages. The first was in the era of the late President Jamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970), where relations were very sophisticated, with extensive Egyptian support being provided for the rebels. Following the Egyptian defeat in 1967 by Israel, relations were curtailed to the establishment of special offices for the Front in Cairo, in addition to ongoing media support for the revolutionaries in the form of data and reports broadcast by the Egyptian media (Fayyad, 1975, p. 126). The second phase was represented by a wave of sudden political changes in the relationships between the Front and Egypt. This stage took place after the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat came to power, following Nasser's death in 1970, and was characterised by the deterioration in relations between Egypt and the revolution leaders. The Egyptian authorities closed the PFLOAG office in Cairo and asked the representatives of the revolution to leave the country. At the same time, the Egyptian government began to establish closer ties with the government of the Sultanate of Oman, following its recognition by the Arab League on 29th September 1971. The Egyptian media also turned against the rebels, broadcasting and publishing advertisements and news stories about the achievements of Sultan Qaboos in various fields (Fayyad, 1975, p. 127). Fayyad states that Egyptian policy towards the rebels changed because Egypt established close relations with both the government of the Sultanate and the Shah of Iran. The main reason for the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat stopping support for the rebels and evicting their representatives can be attributed to a national shift of Egypt away from revolutionary Arab nationalism. Indeed, the nationalist movement was abandoned in Egypt with the death of Abdel-Nasser, as evidenced by the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel in the Sadat era (*ibid*, p. 127). The defeat of Egypt in 1967 profoundly affected the revolutionaries. Egypt responded by attempting to minimise the profound repercussions of the outcomes of the war, which had deprived it of the ability to properly support Arab nationalist revolutions. The transformation of the revolutionaries to a communist stance also negatively affected the relationship with Egypt, because this ideology was perceived as a tool of Soviet and Chinese imperialist forces opposed to Arab nationalism.

5.2.4: Algeria and Palestinian

The rebels' relations with Algeria continued through the Front office in Algeria (Fayyad, 1975, pp. 125-126). Algerian media attention regarding the rebels increased during the first years of the 1970s. On 27th July 1972, the *Algerian People's Daily* called upon "sincere and honourable" forces in the Arab world to provide both material and moral assistance to the rebels, condemning foreign interference in Omani affairs. In addition, it demanded national unity for all political currents in the Gulf region, in an attempt to remove any conspiracies being hatched in the region (The Arab World Record, 1972, pp. 23-25). After 1973, the Algerian government followed a balanced policy in its relations with both the rebels and the Sultan (Fayyad, 1975, p. 126).

The relations between the revolution leadership and the Palestinian leaders were very good, with the rebel leaders in Dhofar taking a hostile stance against the schemes to end the Palestinian revolution. When the Rogers Project, which sought convergence of the Arabs with Israel, was initiated in July 1970 and accepted by both Egypt and Jordan, the General Command of the PFLOAG condemned this project, and announced its full support for the Palestinian command (Fayyad, 1975, p. 133). Later, there was an exchange of official visits between the leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf and the Democratic People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In August 1970, talks were held between the two delegations, headed by Saleh Raafat, as the representative of the Palestinian side, and the Dhofar Front, led by Mohammed Ahmed Al Ghassani, a member of the Executive Committee General of the Front command (National Struggle Documents, 1974, pp. 101 -104). The position of the Palestinian and Dhofari Fronts were supportive of the Dhohar revolution which was described as a "Popular Arab revolution", against Sultan Said and against Israel. This was demonstrated through the political statement of the PFLOAG, which stressed that the "unity of the Palestinian work, and the commitment to the strategy of a People's Long War, is the optimal reaction to the capitulatory solutions and conspiracies that face the Palestinian revolution" (National Struggle Documents, 1974, p. 24).

After the October 1973 war between the Arabs and Israel, the rebels clearly defined their position towards the US and any convention, which stressed the legitimacy of Israel's control of Arab lands. The statement of the PFLOAG stated that the:

wide US movement, and the accompanying proposals, if accepted, will lead to imposing a state of surrender for the Arab peoples, forfeiting the rights of the

Palestinian people to liberate the entire territory...The United States provides its base, Israel, with all military, political and economic needs, and the struggle against Israeli aggression, and Israeli racial entity, cannot be separated from the struggle against the US imperialist presence... Any convention with Israel cannot be a conference for peace, but it would be a conference for surrender, and the beginning of the implementation of all the imperialist projects to liquidate the Palestinian cause (National Struggle Documents, 1974, p. 51).

In a short period of time, the leadership of the Palestinian revolution surpassed verbal and rhetorical support by offering real action and diverse support for the rebels in the Dhofar. Nafisi (1976, p. 156) notes that the People's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine sought to provide military and technical assistance to the rebels in Dhofar, including weapons training and assistance to perform assassinations inside the Sultanate in 1972. Fayyad (1975, p. 139) adds that the Palestinian National Liberation Movement "Fatah" supported the Dhofar rebels in their war against the Iranian forces in 1974 by providing military advice on tactical issues. The Palestinian media also played an important role in transferring the events in Oman to the Arab people from the standpoint of the revolution. Palestinian organisations denounced external interference in Oman's internal affairs and Iranian interference in particular. On 18th March 1975, the military source of the Palestinian News Agency (WAFA) stated that "this intervention will lead to a real disaster, not on the Gulf Arab level, but on the Arab national level"(Fayyad, 1975, p. 1).

It should be noted that there was no significant official support for the revolutionaries at a level that was equivalent to the military support that the Omani government received from Iran or Jordan, or its financial support from Saudi Arabia after Oman became a member of the League of Arab States. That meant that the government of Sultan Qaboos was officially recognised as the sole representative of the Omani people. The Omani government utilised a policy of gaining recognition by the League of Arab States before requesting Iranian assistance in the war, in order to ensure that Iranian support would not be a reason to delay accession of Oman to the Arab League. This recognition by all 22 Arab countries was absolute proof of the sovereignty of Oman and the government of Sultan Qaboos as representative of the Omani people.

5.2.5: Rebel relations with foreign countries

China was one of the first foreign countries to establish direct relations with the revolutionary leadership. In early 1970, the relation between the rebels and China strengthened, culminating in an

exchange of visits between members of the PFLOAG and Chinese officials. In February 1970, a delegation from the Popular Front spent five weeks in China, where they held meetings with Chinese Premier of the State Council Zhou Enlai, in order to obtain military aid. After the Hamrin Conference in 1968, the Chinese applauded the new line championed by the Front, in which Chinese politicians confirmed that:

the situation is excellent for the development of victories of the armed struggle of the Dhofar people. The Chinese urged promotion of the development of the national liberation struggle of all the peoples of the Arab Gulf region” (Shichor, 1977, p. 153).

The Chinese government used the New China News Agency in Aden to publish press reports about the ongoing war in Oman (Shichor, 1977, p. 53). It also covered all military operations of the rebels directly from the battlefield. The revolution leaders praised the material and moral support provided by the Chinese (ibid, pp. 153-154), which continued in 1972 and 1973. The rebels received large quantities of weapons, in addition to supervision and assistance from Chinese experts in the rebel centres which were established in Yemen (Worrall, 2014, p. 80; Shichor, 1977, p. 53).

The *Oman Newspaper* reported China's support for the Dhofar rebels and denounced China's interference in Oman's internal affairs (*Oman Newspaper*, 'Facts about Marxism', 1973, p. 5). In addition, Sultan Qaboos denounced China's decision to provide aid for the rebels, considering it more dangerous than the support offered by the Soviets (*The Arab World Record*, Arab Gulf Countries, 1972, p. 45). However, 1972-1975 witnessed a clear deterioration in the relations between China and the rebels of Dhofar. Behbahani (1984, p. 164) argues that this occurred as a result of the changes that had occurred in China's foreign policy at the global level, which took place after the Cultural Revolution. Kraus (2012, pp. 10-13) explains that this took place between 1969 and 1976, culminating in the visit of President Nixon to China in 1972. Beijing and Washington worked to eliminate hostility and restructure the international politics of Asia by planting the seeds of decades of spectacular economic growth in China.

Such economic development was accompanied by China's growing interest in establishing sophisticated economic relations with the governments of the Arab Gulf countries that the political and military programme of the Front sought to overthrow (Bahbahani, 1984, p. 164). Kraus (2012, pp. 91-94) supports this theory, noting that the Chinese global strategy after the Chinese Cultural Revolution was defined by an attempt to earn “friends all over the world”. This was accompanied by the establishment of improved international relations in the internal affairs of states. Instead of

providing aid to the rebels, the Chinese started to develop peaceful relations with the independent countries of the Arabian Gulf, regardless of the nature of their regimes (Yodfat and Abir, 1977, pp. 70-74). This was accompanied by a reduction in the provision of Chinese aid to the rebels. In addition, China also recognised the independence of a number of Gulf Arab Emirates, which gained their independence in the early 1970s and subsequently formed the United Arab Emirates. The change in China's foreign policy toward the countries of the Arab Gulf led to the consolidation of relations with these countries, especially Iran, as China sought to establish optimal trade and economic relations. The Chinese government praised the policy of the Shah of Iran and completely stopped the provision of military aid to revolutionaries (*Al Nahar magazine*, 1974, p. 19). In June 1973, the Chinese Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei visited Iran and told the Iranian news that:

Iran's plan to start a broad arming programme is a natural, logical and intelligent plan, so that Iran could eliminate the insurgency and sabotage movements in the region, which forms a threat to its stability and prosperity (*The Arab World Record*, July and December 1974).

There is no doubt that the PFLOAG was on the list of movements indicated by this statement, suggesting a reversal of Chinese foreign policy toward the revolution in Dhofar.

At the time China was reducing its support for the Front, the aid provided by the Soviet Union became extremely important. Page (1971, p. 94) argues that the Front became gradually and increasingly more reliant on the Soviets after 1971. However, the Soviet Union was not enthusiastic about supporting the rebels before that date, because of their previously close ties with China. Hensel (1982, p. 189) highlights that the Soviet Union recognised the intense hostility between the rebels and Iran. As it did not want to strain its relations with the Shah, which had improved significantly from the 1960s, there was a corresponding delay in Soviet support to the rebels.

However, the Soviet Union had supported the revolution in Dhofar from the beginning and was still interested in its success. The Soviet media paid close attention to the activities of the rebels, particularly after 1967 when the People's Front adopted a Marxist Leninist approach. The Soviet press demonstrated its interest in the revolution through a number of articles that were published in Soviet newspapers in 1969 (*The Arab World Record*, Arab Gulf countries, July-December 1974). For instance, the Soviet media highlighted relations with the rebels on 25th October 1969, with Moscow radio reporting that Soviet civilians made their first visit to "Dhalkut" village, which was controlled by the rebels. In November 1969, a delegation from the Popular Front headed by Mohammed Al Ghassani, head of the Executive Committee of the revolution, and Issa

Ali, a Member of the Political Committee, were also reported visiting the Soviet Union. This visit took place at the invitation of the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia and Africa to discuss matters of interest to both sides (*The Arab World Record*, December 1969, p. 91). Nevertheless, the degree of support that the Soviets provided the rebels was extremely limited in comparison to Chinese support. At the beginning of September 1971, the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Organisation invited a delegation from the Front to visit Moscow. This was followed by the Soviet newspapers highlighting the activities of the rebels against the government of Sultan Qaboos, described as “powered by foreign countries” (Freedman, 1978, p. 67).

Yodfat and Abir (1977, p. 74) argue that the magnitude of Soviet support for the rebels had significantly increased by the end of 1971, with the Front relying heavily on Soviet aid, instead of Chinese aid. Nafisi (1976, p. 153) adds that, following the severance of relations between China and the Popular Front in 1973, the Soviets replaced China in financing the rebels militarily and overseeing their training. They also became the main supplier of weapons to the rebels. Mughisuddin (1977, p. 129) adds that the Soviets supervised the training of several rebel groups on fighting methods, in addition to spreading the principles and ideas of Marxism. According to Halliday (1976, p. 269), dozens of Soviet military consultants joined the rebels to provide military expertise in the use of weapons. In addition, the Soviet Navy played a key role in delivering weapons to the rebels through the ports of Yemen. It also provided military information to the rebels on the movements of government armed forces, by spying on their wireless signals. Sultan Qaboos accused the Soviet Union of supporting the rebels as he announced in March 1973 that communist ships approached the coast of his country some rebels at the beginning of the same year (Raafat, 1976, p. 61).

In addition to military training, the Soviet Union provided scholarships for students of the Popular Front. Delegations from the rebels paid periodic visits to Moscow for that purpose (Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 153). A current Omani diplomat mentioned that he studied in Soviet schools in the beginning of the seventies. Students from the Front were provided with all possible means of support and care (Interview with current diplomat, 2014, RA 3). However, it is less clear how the Soviet Union maintained its relations with the countries of the region, particularly Iran, while also managing to support the rebels. Hensel (1982, p. 197) suggests that the Soviet Union was critical of Iranian interference in Oman, but that they limited this criticism to Soviet media in the Arabic language, whereas the Soviet media distributed in Persian criticised the rebels. This shows that, like

China, the Soviet Union did not want to sabotage its relations with Iran because of a desire for access to Iranian gas. In effect, the Soviets were performing two different roles at the same time. In 1974, a general tepidness arose in the Soviet relations towards the revolution leadership, largely as a result of the serious attempts of the Soviet Union to develop and expand its relations with Arab oil producing countries, regardless of the nature of their regimes. At the same time, the Soviet Union tried to appear as the global leader of communism and liberation movements. This policy gave a bad impression about the contradictory position of the Soviet Union to the leaders of the revolution (Yodfat and Abir, 1977, p. 90) (For more details of Soviet support, see Appendix 17, Secret Intelligence Memorandum, U.S.A Directorate of Intelligence, No. 20 34/72, entitled “The Mountain and the Plain: The Rebellion in Oman”, 19th May 1972).

Foreign Assistance

The relations between Cuba and the rebels also grew stronger from the beginning of 1973, when two Cuban missions visited Hof in Yemen on the Omani borders. They crossed the border into Dhofar to explore the situation there, as well as to study military preparations for the rebels. In early August 1973, a delegation of the Popular Front travelled to the Cuban capital, Havana. During their week-long visit they were briefed about guerrilla training. Another Cuban delegation visited Hof in Yemen in the same year. The delegation included members of the military and Cuban Intelligence Agency in addition to some journalists. The visit lasted nearly two weeks, during which the delegation was able to visit some of the rebel sites in the western region of Dhofar (Al Nafisi, 1976, pp. 153-154). The role of Cuba was limited to training the rebels on guerrilla tactics and first-aid (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 9). Fighters were trained in the small camp of Aden, while the medical training was carried out in the (Habakon Martyr) hospital at Hof area. Cuba did not provide any financial and military aid, such as weapons or ordnance materials. Instead, the Cuban medical mission working with the rebels in March 1974 confirmed that it was a modest contribution provided by the Cuban government to support global national liberation movements (Fayyad, 1975, pp. 146-147). Newspaper reports on 6th April 1974 however claimed that 8,000 Cuban soldiers had arrived in Aden under a secret military agreement, some of whom would support the actions of the revolutionaries in Dhofar (Oman Newspaper, ‘Speech of the two Leaders’, 4th March 1974, p. 4).

The rebels also enjoyed good relations with the German Democratic Republic. In 1973, Germany sent two delegations to Aden. They visited Hof and held direct meetings with the Front representatives where they agreed to send military aid, particularly in the form of light arms like

hand grenades and anti-tank mines. They also provided a range of military expertise to some of the front members, in the field of penetrating government forces lines, intelligence operations, and methods to supply weapons and ordnance materials to the fighters. (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 154). Rebels also received limited military assistance from North Korea, such as light weapons, in addition to training some rebels on assassinations strategies (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 9). As part of the revolutionary programme to establish sophisticated relationships with all national liberation movements in the world, the Revolution Command also forged links with the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, culminating in a visit from a Vietnamese delegation to Hof and the western regions of Dhofar in September 1972. The Vietnamese delegation was headed by the Võ Hồng Phúc, a member of the Central Committee of the National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam. Amer Ali, a member of the Central Committee of the PFLOAG attended on behalf of the Front. The parties agreed to act quickly in order to forge closer ties between the two groups, as well as to exchange material and moral aid: “Both parties condemned the imperialist scheme hatched against them, in order to thwart their efforts towards liberation and independence” (*The Arab World Record*, Arab Gulf Countries, 1972, pp. 104-107).

The revolution leadership was able to establish relations with some international organisations, the most important of which was the World Peace Council. On 11st to 13th March 1974, there was a meeting in Aden between a delegation from the revolution leadership headed by Mohammed Abdullah, a member of the central leadership, and Romesh Chandra, the President of the World Peace Council. The statement issued after the talks stated that, “the World Peace Council condemned Iranian military intervention against the rebels, and also announced full solidarity with the people of Oman in their struggle against imperialism and reactionary”(DLF, *National Struggle Documents*, 1972, pp. 111-112). Fayyad (1975, p. 147) states that a seminar was also held in Baghdad in February 1975, in solidarity with the people of Oman, attended by the General Secretary of the World Peace Council. The seminar confirmed the support of the World Peace Council for the Revolution in Dhofar, and liberation movements in all Arabian Gulf. It also denounced the Iranian and Omani attacks, adding that these were backed by American imperialism. Pro-revolution committees were established in many countries. As a result of the expansion of international relations of the revolutionaries, the pro-Oman Revolution Conference was held in Paris at the end of December 1974. This gathering confirmed the significant role that these committees played in spreading awareness to the global public opinion about the revolution in Dhofar (Fayyad, 1975, p. 148).

It is clear that after the Hamrin Conference in 1968, the revolutionaries were able to open up globally, establishing diverse relations with a number of nations around the world. However, their relations with regional countries were more important, because of the geographical proximity. At this time, Yemen provided incalculable support for the rebels, in much the same way that Iran provided support of incomparable value to the government of Sultan Qaboos. Indeed, the value of relations with the neighbouring countries was a major factor influencing the course of the war in Dhofar. The recognition of the Sultan Qaboos government by the Arab League in 1971, followed by the acceptance of Oman as a member of the United Nations in the same year, radically altered the course of the conflict. Importantly, it showed the sovereignty of the state under the authority of Sultan Qaboos Government, comprising the highest degree of Arab and international recognition that Sultan Qaboos was, the sole sovereign ruler of Oman.

5.3: The Fourth “Emergency” Conference in 1974 and the Rebels’ Defeat in 1975

Every year, during the rainy season of Al Kharif (June to September), the forces of the Front had been able to dominate all of the mountain areas in Dhofar province. The rebel troops forced the Sultan’s troops and their allies to withdraw from all mountain areas before the rainy season to avoid attacks. However, in 1973, there was a huge change in the balance of power, since the troops of the Sultan and their allies were able to stay throughout the Al Kharif season in some mountain areas, such as JibJat, Al Haq city, and Tawi Ateer. The powerful Iranian intervention brought about a shift in the balance of power in favour of the allied troops. The *Oman newspaper* referred to these developments in its analysis of the words given by Sultan Qaboos and Shah of Iran during the Sultan’s visit to Tehran on 8th March 1974 (*Oman Newspaper*, Speech of the two Leaders, 8th March 1974, p. 1). In addition, they benefitted from British military, intelligence, political support and experience in guerrilla war, as well as from the involvement of Jordan, and the financial assistance provided by Saudi Arabia. As a result, the rebel forces were driven back to the western areas along the Yemeni borders and declined in the mountains during the rainy season that year. At the beginning



Fig. 44: Two rebels during operation, 1973.
(Source: RAO Archives, Dhofar Rebels 21)

of this phase, the rebels also failed militarily, such as in the Murbat attack in 1972 and their failed coup attempt in north Oman. Many of the activists and leaders of the movement were also arrested in both north Oman and in the Emirates (Al Amri, 2012, p. 206), which was compounded by the decision of ten important political leaders to join the Sultan's troops in 1972, including well known figures like Mohammad Al Amri, Sahal Al Hafeez and Salem BaOmar, who were Lenin team members (Interview with ex-Omani officer involved in Dhofar War, 3rd June 2017, RA10). These events led the rebellion leaders to hold a conference in an attempt to recoup what had been lost, to maintain their success and sovereignty, and to attempt to find solutions to prevent the situation from worsening.

5.3.1: The Emergency Fourth Conference (August 1974)

In an attempt to overcome the numerous emergent challenges that marked the beginning of the defeat of the rebels in their battle against the Sultan's forces, the leaders of the Front decided to hold an emergency conference in Aden, the capital city of South Yemen. The fourth "emergency" conference statement was issued, containing the provisions agreed at the meeting, the most important of which was a commitment to continue the war in Oman, against the "reactionary system" that was being helped by the Iranians. The rebels were focused on fighting against Iran considering it as the agent of imperialism in the area, which had assigned itself to police the Middle East. They perceived that Iran planned to control the Arabian Gulf. The rebels also stated a commitment to continue the war against Saudi Arabia, considering it a tool of American imperialism and enemy of the nationalism and national progressive movements in the area. They also accused Saudi Arabia of being cooperative with the colonial tendency of Iran (Al Rayes, 1974, p. 108). The tasks and goals of the Front for the next phase were also determined in 17 provisions (see appendix 18: the Front emergency fourth conference provisions). The most important decisions of the conference were to reduce the aim of the rebellion to the liberation of Oman, in order to focus on the Arab character of the area and confront Iranian expansion (PFLO Emergency Conference Decisions, p. 19), as well as a commitment to stand with the Palestinians and to follow an independent, neutral foreign policy (Fayyad, 1974, pp. 277-292).

It is clear that the purpose of this fourth conference was, wherever possible, to remedy the rapidly changing situation in favour of the rebels. The conference changed the name of the Front

from PFLOAG to PFLO which clearly illustrated the limitation of the Front's ambition to bringing about a change in the ruling system in Oman. The Front leaders realised that their dream of "liberating" the Arabian Gulf had become impossible to achieve after the dramatic changes that accompanied the coronation of Sultan Qaboos and the decline in support from countries like Yemen, China, and Egypt (*Oman Newspaper*, 'Chinese and Communist support for the rebels stopped', 15th September 1973, Issue 5, p. 5). The ambition of the revolution leaders declined geographically, returning to the comparatively humble aims of the rebellion, when it began in 1965, namely to secure Dhofar's independence from Sultan Said's rule. In addition, the rebels issued a policy of neutral foreign independence, as part of the decisions of the emergency conference intended to deliver a message to the most influential powers in the area, especially Britain, America, Iran and Saudi Arabia. These signs indicated that if the rebels succeeded in controlling Oman, it would be a non-aligned country, rather than under the influence of the international communist camp (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 216, 223, 226, 236). The rebels made the same mistake as their original enemy, Sultan Said, namely inflexibility and an inability to change in response to current circumstances.

5.3.2: The Military Progress of the Sultan's armed Forces and the Allied forces

On the fourth National Day on 18th November 1974, Sultan Qaboos delivered a speech expressing his determination to beat the rebels (see appendix 19), Iranian troops and those of the Sultan, supported by British troops, moved to the western area in Dhofar in December 1974. These troops fought through many battles to fix military centres in areas under rebel influence, which would provide a launch point for military campaigns against the other areas controlled by the rebels. Iranian troops also formed military lines to isolate the rebels' areas of influence from each other in an attempt to cut the lines of transport and military supplies from the rebels. One of these lines is the line that the British call Hornim, which is a strategic path area that separates east and west Dhofar. This line was 85 km long and was built of barbed electric wires and land mines. The Iranian troops formed a line from Salalah to Thumrait (Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 62).

On 5th January 1975, the Iranian forces succeeded in dominating Rakhuot with the help of the Sultan and British forces. After this success, a third line was formed from the military centres to the north, known as the Deyfind line. The Sultan's forces then took control of the headquarters of

the rebel leadership, located in the Shanshiti caves. Military operations had occurred in the lines north of Hornim, where government forces took control of the military equipment centres of the rebels and massive stockpiles of arms and ammunitions. At the end of February 1975, focused campaigns were waged against the rebel locations and other operations in the Al Wusta and Al Sharquia Middle and Southern provinces. In addition, government troops were able to enter Rasham valley west of the Middle Road for the first time, which was an important and powerful area of influence for the rebels (Clements, 1980, p. 100).

This campaign proved the inability of the rebels to face combined Iranian, Omani and British troops in other military operations in the future. The expeditions then stopped until the end of the rainy season, as the weather profoundly affected transportation and vision in the difficult terrain of the mountain regions. After the success of the second campaign against the rebels, military preparations were commenced to undertake a third campaign to stop the continued attacks against the locations of the Iranian and Sultan's forces. This campaign began on 6th October 1975 and it consisted of British, Iranian and Jordanian troops, working in collaboration with the soldiers of the Sultan. It took place in the west of Dhofar, which aligned with the Yemeni borders. The Iranian and British forces initiated support with aircraft and artillery, attacking Hoof Port in South Yemen, which is close to the Omani borders (*Al Hadaf magazine*, 1976). This is the port at which the rebels imported foreign support and the supplies that they needed in their operations against the Sultan troops and his allies. In the western area, the Iranian troops carried out a full-scale attack in four directions and achieved important successes (*9th of June magazine*, 1976)

The Iranian troops launched another sustained attack at the western area in Dhofar province that attempted to sever the remaining supply roads for the rebels travelling from Yemen (*National leadership of the Al Ba'ath Socialist Party*, 1975, pp. 221-222). The Sultan's forces mounted an attack on the rebel bases and their leading centres in the Shanshiti caves. They succeeded in controlling this area on the third attempt, seizing a massive cache of supplies and arms. After the Iranian forces managed to tighten the blockade on the rebels who withdrew to Yemen through valleys, the military operations in this phase were close to an end. The rebels' areas of influence had been completely controlled by November 1975 after the government forces moved from Sarfait to the east in order to rendezvous with the Iranian forces that were attacking from the west.

By 1st December 1975, the rebels had been expelled from the coastal town of Dhalkut without resistance, which signalled most Dhofari areas coming under the control of the Sultan and

Iranian forces (Clements, 1980, pp. 100-101). The huge success of this operation was illustrated by the large number of rebels who surrendered themselves to the governmental forces. However, shelling operations continued against Omani and Iranian troops along the border areas in Yemen, especially in Sarfait. The effect of this was insignificant and the combing operations continued in east and middle Dhofar until March 1976 (Clements, 1980, p. 101). On both sides, thousands of people were wounded and killed. On the National Team Force side, which had split from the rebels and joined the government force, Mohammad Al Amri and Ahmad Al Amri were killed. Mahad Al Mashani was also killed while he was calling the rebels through speakers in an attempt to convince them to stop fighting and join the government forces. On the rebel side, Amer Al Amri, leader of the Eastern area; Ahmed Kattan, leader of the Western area; and Said Kattan, one of the main team leaders were also killed. The Iranian forces killed Muslim Gabob and Omar Jameda, who were part of the upper leadership of the rebels at that time (Interview Rebel Leaders, 9th December, RA7).

5.3.3: Announcement the victory, 11th December 1975

Sultan Qaboos praised the troops that allied with him in many informational statements. In his fifth National Day speech in 1975 (see appendix 20), less than a month before declaring victory, he stated,

we also celebrate constant victories achieved by our heroic Armed Forces and National teams supported by friendly forces which have achieved real victories for our beloved Oman in the history of their battles and record... They are the protectors of our noble Islamic faith (Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 4).

In a speech called The Victory Speech on 11th December 1975 (see appendix 21). Sultan Qaboos pronounced that Oman's achievement "is the first to be achieved by an Arab country over world communism in the battlefield in a war which lasted many years, and the second victory by an international state" (ibid, p. 4). He added that this victory was not only beneficial for Oman, but had been carried out "for the good and welfare of our neighbours also" (ibid, p. 4). He then expressed his disapproval for those countries that had given support to the rebels, saying,

...we made them perceive the truth and liberated them from their delusions in supporting evil people who commit acts of terror, killings and destruction in a part of a peaceful country. They kill their brothers, plunder their properties and destroy their homes for nothing but simply in order to terrorize, plunder and destroy (Sultan Qaboos, 1975, p. 8).

With Sultan Qaboos' declaration of triumph, the revolution in Dhofar was officially over. Many of the rebels returned to Oman from abroad in 1975, after Sultan Qaboos renewed the 1970 amnesty law to include all rebels without exception. By the end of November 1975, 222 rebels had returned to Oman. The good treatment that the returners received from the government motivated others to return home, ultimately leading to the unification of Oman for the first time in the 20th century.

After Sultan Qaboos announced victory in Dhofar, the rebellion operations were confined and the revolutionary action oriented towards the provision of political opposition to the Omani government from abroad. The revolution leadership in exile focused on the educational side of their mission, with envoys sent to a number of international universities and countries that supported the rebellion, as well as donating scholarships. Several years later, in the 1980s, after the extensive development of Oman, the rest of the rebels returned to Oman. In addition, many were employed in the government sector in order to make best use of their experiences. The political opposition waged by the rebellion abroad ended gradually and the rebels eventually merged into Omani society without discrimination.



Fig.45: Sultan Qaboos (centre) celebrating the winning of the war with some Omani and Jordanian troops, 1975. (Source: RAO ArchivesSultan Oaboos 1546)

In order to enhance the security and stability of Oman in the long term, Sultan Qaboos decided to allow US forces to utilise some of the Omani air bases in logistics operations in 1980. In the same year, Jimmy Carter, the President of the United States, met with Minister Zawawi, the Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. President Carter stated that:

The United States welcomed the defeat of the rebels, as the President Jimmy Carter expressed his deeply felt gratitude and strong feelings about and admiration of the courage exhibited by the Sultan in standing firm against the very serious communist and Soviet threat to the region. The U.S. shares the concerns of Oman and looks forward to a close relationship. We appreciate the Omani decision to permit U.S. forces to use facilities in Oman. This will send a clear signal to Oman's neighbours and the Soviets not to interfere in the internal affairs of the nations of the region. He added the geographical placement of Oman is of great strategic

importance (Summary of the President's Meeting with Minister Zawawi, Oman Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, 1980).

After the end of the Dhofar War, Oman was governed by national unity under Sultan Qaboos, in which the government and the citizens joined hands in developing the country and improving its relations with other bodies, whether countries or organisations, around the world. A wealth of literature discussed the great developmental renaissance experienced by Oman after the Dhofar war. For example, the Russian politician and historian Sergei Plekhanov(2004), the Egyptian writer and journalist Asem Rashwan(2015), the Irish and Omani writers, Vincent McBrierty and Muhammad Al Zubayr (McBrierty & Al Zubayr, 2004), and the Egyptian politician and writer, Emad Al Blak (Al Blak, 2011). As a result of the respect that Sultan Qaboos showed for the five distinguishing factors of the political relations in Oman during the Dhofar War, Oman has always been among the most stable and most rapidly progressing countries in the Middle East. For example, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) categorises Oman as the forefront of peace and stability in the Middle East (The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), 2016, p. 46).

5.3.4: Reasons behind the failure of the rebellion

It is important here to describe the reasons that led to failure of the decade long revolution in Dhofar, which was one of the longest conflicts in the history of the region. The instrumental factors are believed to be the coup, Sultan Qaboos' new policy, the depth of foreign military support, and the end of Yemeni support for the rebels. In all, the failure of the rebels began after Sultan Qaboos came to power in 1970, although their military failure came in late 1973, due to the wide and powerful coalition that the Sultan had brought to bear against them (Al Nafisi, 1976, p. 126). At this point, it became increasingly difficult for the rebel forces to confront the situation militarily. Before this date, they had moved freely in the Dhofari countryside. In the beginning of 1970, they had even begun to threaten Salalah, yet this movement had become impossible by 1974, after the rebels were expelled from the eastern and middle areas of Dhofar and much of the west. This decline happened due to the presence of huge forces, especially the Iranian military, which had more sophisticated arms than the rebels. Hassan (1975, pp. 30-31) asserts that the Iranian presence profoundly shifted the balance of power. For example, Iranian helicopters made an essential contribution in transporting equipment and soldiers to locations in rough terrain. The effectiveness of Iranian air forces had a profound impact on the course of the war.

Others emphasise the importance of British military support for the Sultan to help him confront the rebels (Peterson, 2007; Worrall, 2014, pp. 97,161). Hassan (1975, pp. 30-31) adds another factor that concluded the other in favour of government forces, namely British experience in guerrilla wars, which gave them numerous effective methods to confront the rebels. Structuring the military buffer lines was a similar strategy to that the British used against rebels in South-east Asia. These lines were then used as a launch site against the rebels in order to build strong defensive fortifications, some of which extended from the coast to the north and divided the area into small parts that could more easily be controlled (ibid, p. 30). The Iranian troops, according to British experience and advice, formed three main parallel lines of Hornhim, Deyfind and Sarfai. They also applied a search and destroy policy, hunting and destroying the rebels between the buffer lines. This policy achieved remarkable success in the Iranian campaigns against the Front (Hensel, 1982, p. 31).

In addition to the military element that shifted the balance of power to the governmental forces' favour, Al Nifisi (1976, pp. 126-128) opines that the defeat of the rebels could be partially attributed to the declining relationship between the Front and Omani citizens. He offers that the rebels made to the tribal leaders and the local population could no longer match the propositions made by the government. As a result, the front lost its popular base. Internal disputes also erupted between the rebel staff, after the application of communist teachings in Dhofari society. This led some of the front leaders to collaborate with the new government, while others continued the armed struggle.

Some historians have focused on the importance of the coup as one of the essential factors in ending the rebellion and by which Sultan Qaboos came to power in 1970, as these events effectively opened the Omani government to the world (Al Tikriti, 2013, p.140; Kareem, 1972; Rabia, 2011, p.76). Gabob (2010) indicates that the winning people's hearts and minds programme that Sultan Qaboos launched was able to end the rebellion. Al Hamdani (2010) agrees with this proposition, adding that this programme alleviated poverty, enabling the new government to gain the trust of locals.

A secret British document entitled "*Oman: Annual Review*" on 3rd 1971, sent to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs by the British Ambassador in Muscat, noted that the Arab League recognition of Oman also played an important role in ending the war in favour of the government (UKNA, NBM 4/1, 1972). It proves the opposite of the point argued by Al Amri (2012, p. 233-234),

who suggests that the Arab League had completely failed to solve the Dhofari problem. The recognition of the Arab League by Oman as a member on 29th September 1971, resulted in many Arab withdrawing support for the revolutionaries. Oman's admission to the Arab League was the key to its acceptance as a member of the United Nations, which led to lessened international support for the rebels from parties like Egypt and Algeria. It was accepted by 117 votes at the UN General Assembly, with only one vote against, which was cast by the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. This led to Oman being accepted as a member on 7th October 1971. Saudi Arabia abstained from voting because of its support for the issues of the imamate, and the border claims that Sultan Qaboos eventually resolved (UKNA, NBM 4/1, 1972).

Experts who discuss the war in Dhofar typically attribute the failure of the rebels to a number of important factors, the most important of which include external military and financial support, the recognition of Oman by the Arab League and the United Nations, the policy of amnesty and development, and the emphasis on the sanctity of the war and the threat to all neighbouring countries. In addition, the change in Egyptian policy after the death of Nasser and the change in Chinese policy with the Cultural Revolution both adversely affected levels of support for the rebels. These circumstances were all in the interest of the new Omani government. It is clear that the rebel leaders did not try to negotiate with the Sultan and achieve political gains in response to new conditions, instead relying on continued military aggression and resulting ultimately in the failure of the rebellion after a decade-long conflict.

The military, financial and political support that the government of Sultan Qaboos received from regional countries was also an important factor in military victory due to the new approach taken in his diplomacy, which involved solving arguments with other countries and establishing close ties with them. This diplomacy propagandised that the rebellion targeted the government, people and religion of all countries in the region. The realisation of this threat posed by a successful revolution seems to have contributed to the wealth of support that the Sultan received.

In 1973, the balance of power had shifted in favour of the government forces and their allies. The rebels had exercised control over all the mountain areas in Dhofar and most of the coastal areas from the first years of the rebellion until 1972. However, with the support of the Iranian, British, and Jordanian forces, in addition to Saudi financial support, the army of the Sultan was able to shift the balance of power in favour of the Omani government. In fact these developments threatened to eliminate the revolution for the first time. This led the revolution leaders to hold the fourth

“emergency” conference in Yemen in 1974. This location was significant, since the preceding three meetings had been held in Dhofar, which strongly suggests that the rebel strongholds were no longer believed to be safe from strikes. In essence, the location was an indication that the rebels had lost their military lead and even been pushed back into their strongholds in the mountains. An important decision of the fourth conference was to change the front’s name from the PFLOAG to the PFLO. The Front shifted focus to a non-aligned policy with a particular international faction, in a time in which the world was divided into two sides: the west, led by the US, and the east, led by the Soviet Union or the People’s Republic of China was also an indication of defeat.

It is clear that most of the provisions of the fourth conference focused on sending a message to neighbouring countries, especially those that supported the Sultan. They made it clear that the revolution had confined itself to exclusively targeting the Omani ruling system. The conference also indicated that this popular rebellion aimed to ensure that the Omani people would have the right to choose its leadership. The conference also clarified that the rebels no longer considered themselves a part of the communist eastern camp that the USSR or China controlled, in opposition to the west. The Front also warned the Arab people and governments against both Iran and Saudi Arabia, since the conference stated the ambitions of Iran to control Arab nations and named Saudi Arabia as the biggest accomplice to western imperialism. It seems these those decisions aimed to isolate regional countries from Oman, as it had been during the rule of Sultan Said, as well as to help the rebels obtain support from the countries that opposed the Iranian presence in the Arab region.

Overall, historians have discussed the reasons for the rebels defeat, typically focusing on one of two factors. The first is foreign military support, which is emphasised by academics like Al Nafisi (1976), Hensel (1982), Peterson(2007), and Worrall(2014). The second factor is Sultan Qaboos’ new domestic and external policies which led the rebels to lose the support of the Omani people and Yemen, as discussed by Al Hamdani (2010), Al Nafisi (1976), Ja'boub (2010), and Kechichian (2013), Rabi(2011, p. 76), Takrit(2013, p. 140). Above all, they emphasise the success of Sultan Qaboos in isolating Yemen politically and economically by improving Oman's relations with the Gulf States and convincing them that the revolution in Dhofar also threatened them, and that Yemen was responsible for supporting the rebels.

Most of the reasons that experts have provided for the defeat of the rebels are important, including foreign military support, the coup, Sultan Qaboos’ new domestic policy and the loss of support from Yemen. However, the main factor in the rebels defeat was an inability to adapt quickly

to new developments. Moreover, the revolution leaders did not negotiate their ambitions with the new Sultan, instead continuing to fight as though in a continuation of their conflict from the era of Sultan Said, following the same ambition to (liberate) the Arabian Gulf. They failed to understand that the new government had a wider domestic and diplomatic perspective, which granted it access to extensive military support, in addition to a wide range of non-military policies that took the rebels by surprise. For example, the comprehensive enhancement programmes in the areas from which the rebels were expelled, the amnesty policy, openness to regional countries, and the recognition from official organisations like the Arab League and United Nations. Most notably the Sultan also moved away from British influence and embarked upon a period of focused self-rule and independence of British pressure, demonstrating that he was a global regional agent, who was in sovereign command of his own governance.

5.4: Chapter V Conclusion

The timing of the coup that overthrew Said bin Taimur, the strongest Sultan of Oman since the mid-nineteenth century, was planned and undertaken very carefully. This was intended to make people consider it as a corrective revolution that was being carried out to ensure a better life for the people, in the same way that Nasser's coup had been conducted against the monarchy in Egypt. Although most of the planners and executors of the coup were Omanis, it is evident that there was a great deal of support provided by British contracted officers who were working in the military and intelligence services of Oman and who had very good relations with Sultan Qaboos. It was also British oil company staff that enabled much of the communication with Sultan Qaboos before he took office. British documentary evidence indicates that those few British officials who supported the coup had received no official instructions from their government, instead operating on their own initiative. The British government had been concerned that the action may have resulted in a dangerous loss of confidence in the British secondment officers serving in the forces of a number of countries, by opening them to accusations of interfering in the internal affairs of states (UKNA, M.O. 5/49 (F 55) DS11/2/7/2, 1970). Historians have argued a number of reasons for the coup against Sultan Said. Peterson (2007, pp. 201-202) highlights the important role played by Sayyid Tariq in persuading the British government to help organise a coup support the Sultan. Others place greater importance on the fear of British diplomats regarding increasing rebel threats to the Strait of Hormuz (Clements, 1980; Peterson, 2007). Wilkinson (2006) agrees that oil had a decisive role in

the change of political system in Oman. Meanwhile, Qasem (2000) argues that an important reason for the coup was that Sultan Said had isolated Oman politically. Whichever reason is proposed, it included the importance British policy of eliminating the Dhofar revolution, especially once its activities started increasing in the north of Oman, threatening its nascent oil industry. This oil was invaluable to the British and they needed to defeat the rebels and achieve stability and peace in Oman before their planned withdrawal from the region at the end of 1971. Ultimately, however Britain was part of a wider alliance of force which Sultan Qaboos constructed rather than an informal imperial government determining policy.

After assuming power Sultan Qaboos pursued a number of integrated external and internal measures to control the rebels in Dhofar in contrast to his father who had solely focused on military solutions. The external measures began when the British government advised Sultan Qaboos of the importance of improving relationships with neighbouring countries, leading to his historic visits to Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Jordan. During these visits, he sought to convince the other countries of the region, that they should think of the war in Dhofar as their own war, as well as urging those supporting the rebels to cease their support. Because it is a religious state, the Sultan was able to convince Saudi Arabia to support Oman on the grounds that the Dhofar War was also a holy war against the anti-Islamic Marxist ideology that had been adopted. He convinced Iran, a more secular state at that time, that the rebels would pose a direct threat to Iran if they controlled the Strait of Hormuz. He argued that Oman was only the beginning of the communist tide in the region, given that the revolution had been renamed “The Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf”. This approach enabled the Sultan to gain military support from Iran and Jordan, as well as financial support from Saudi Arabia. Iran’s support was especially valuable, as their comprehensive military assistance involved the participation of more than 20,000 Iranian combatants, as well as sophisticated air and naval forces. Despite their faith in the same religion, Islam, Sultan Qaboos recognised the sensitivities of the historical, religious and political relations between the Shah of Iran and other Arab nations. Therefore, he asked the Iranians to use the Kuria Muria Islands, near the coast of Dhofar, as a base for their troops, keeping them away from the locals and the media. The Omani leadership adopted a media policy designed to calm the fears of the Arab peoples and governments regarding Iranian support, stressing that this support was to defeat the enemies of Islam and their communist servants. Importantly, Qaboos pushed to ensure that the Iranian presence was known to be temporary and that it would end once the war was resolved. Overall, it can be clearly seen that the Sultan succeeded in attracting the support of the most important regional

powers, with Iran's military and Saudi Arabia's financial support and this support allowed him to defeat the Dhofar Liberation Front. His diplomacy was testimony to his sovereign control over Oman.

With regard to the internal procedures carried out by Sultan Qaboos to deal with the rebels, probably his most important and successful policy was to invest the funds obtained from oil exportation in economic development. Unlike his father, Sultan Qaboos took British government advice regarding the necessity of starting a comprehensive development programme in Dhofar as an important part of a rebel resistance program. Therefore a programme for “winning hearts and minds” was launched in Dhofar, involving several major development projects. This was supported by the steep rise in oil prices at that time, as a result of the Arab war with Israel in 1973. Official Oman statistics (*Oman Economy in Ten years*, 1980, p. 20) indicate that, since its inception in 1970, the development process had made great strides in many areas, including construction, transportation, electricity, water sectors, internal trade, and the banking sector. As a result, there was an increase in home construction projects and a sharp rise in employment in the Sultanate. All of these contributing factors helped the new government to win the war in Dhofar (Ja'boub, 2010). It can be argued that the amnesty decision issued by the government, another internal policy brought in by Sultan Qaboos, was an especially important factor in resolving the war in favour of the government troops (Al Rayes, 1973; Kally, 1972; Qasem, 2000). These actions had a direct impact on the support previously enjoyed by the Front, as locals welcomed the new Sultan and found in this his a means to achieve social gains, enabling them to secure a better life for themselves and their children (Worrall, 2014). Sultan Qaboos also used the media effectively in the war against the rebels, employing sophisticated tactics to convince sympathisers and revolutionaries that their demands had been answered, thereby making continuation of the war unnecessary. He utilised effective anti-revolutionary propaganda and strategies of psychological warfare, including publishing pictures of leaders who surrendered to the forces of the Sultan in influential regions of the rebels, renaming loyalist forces after influential and popular figures like Nasser, and even financially rewarding the rebels who joined the government. The aim of this “hearts and minds” policy was to remove the justifications for the revolution by treating its main causes, although it should also be noted that the new Sultan still invested heavily in the military aspect of his campaign (Al Nafisi, 1976; Buttenshaw, 2010; Dunsire, 2011; Fiennes, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Jeapes, 1996).

The rebels responded negatively to the new political change in Oman, which they portrayed as being planned by British policy. The leaders of the revolution did not show any change in their goal of overthrowing the government. Instead, in reaction to the coup, they held the third conference of the revolution at Ahleesh, in the west of Dhofar. One of the most important decisions of the conference was to change the name of the PFLOAG to the PFLO, which pointed to the diminished ambitions of the front. This move demonstrated that the rebels were still aiming at the overthrow of the new government and that none of their fundamental goals had changed with the coming of Sultan Qaboos. The conference also stressed the need to develop rebel foreign relations in response to the development of the new government's foreign relations. The portrayal of Sultan Qaboos as a puppet of an imperialist British government however began to sound false as he constructed a military and regional alliance with Iran, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

During this period, nonetheless the British government worked silently and efficiently in Dhofar in support of Sultan Qaboos militarily and through the provision of expert consultants. It also oversaw the formation of national teams, using defecting rebels to fight against their former colleagues in the revolution through their knowledge of key locations and fighting methods. In addition, the British armed forces carried out a number of successful military operations, in coordination with the Omani and Iranian forces. The US supported the new government in Oman indirectly, with perhaps the most prominent support being represented in its blessing for British policy of supporting the Omani government against the rebels. The US government also supported Iranian intervention on behalf of the Sultanate. It is likely that the US was counting on Iran to spread stability in the region, thereby removing the need for direct US military involvement. Wahem (1982) claims that Britain and the US were fighting over the opportunity to spread their influence in the region, but findings agree with Murad (1982) who argues that America and Britain were more diplomatically sharing their influence to a large degree.

After Sultan Qaboos came to power, he implemented external and internal measures to face the rebels in military, political, economical and social terms. In response, Yemen, the most important country supporting the rebels, stopped its limited provision of support in 1974. This decision has also been attributed to the arrival of Iranian forces in the borders of Yemen (Fayyad, 1974; Nakhla, 1982). Hensel (1982) argues that Yemen realised that gaining economic assistance and ending its political isolation was a safer option than supporting communist revolution, especially when victory had become unsure. The acceptance of Oman as a member of the Arab

League in 1971 may also have been an important factor in curbing Yemeni support for the rebels (Fayyad, 1974). The emergence of the Gulf States and Iran as global financial powers because of their oil wealth led many regional countries to pursue business relations with them and the emerging GCC stipulated that Yemen must stop its support for the rebels in order to receive economic aid. It should be noted the headquarters of the Arab League were in Cairo, which was highly influential on League decisions. Egypt had blessed the arrival of Sultan Qaboos to power, not only cutting off aid for the rebels, but also expelling of all the representatives of the rebels from Cairo in 1970. In addition, China changed its policies after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), preferring economic cooperation with Gulf countries, rather than interference in their internal affairs. The consequence of these varied factors led Yemen to stop supporting the rebels and contributed to the success of Sultan Qaboos and his reassertion of Omani sovereignty over Dhofar.

Sultan Qaboos focused on improving relations between the government and the tribal leaders, as well as realising the importance of Islamic values in the struggle. The Sultan improved his government relations with the royal family of Oman as well as regional countries. Sultan Qaboos maintained special diplomatic and military relations with Britain. From analysing the events of the war, it becomes clear that the Omani government was far more independent than much of the literature argues (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Beasant, 2002, pp. 200-201; Fadel, 1995, p.212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332). The Omani government was not only autonomous, but also exercised independent and sovereign autonomy, rather operating as a direct or informal colony.

Dhofar War 1965 – 1975

CHAPTER 6:

Thesis Conclusion

This chapter seeks to highlight the main objectives and summarise the findings of this study in order to provide a cogent answer to the issue of Omani independence and sovereignty under investigation in this study of the Dhofar War.

Sultan Said (1932-1970) assumed the throne of Oman from his father in 1932. At that time, Oman was divided between the Sultanate of Muscat, governed by the Sultan, and Imam of Oman, governed by the Imam. As a consequence of the political complexity of the region, the rulers prior to Said had been dependent on the support of British experts in operating their governments. However, during his rule, Said managed to wrest power from British officials, culminating in the removal of many informal supervisors and foreign experts who had been recruited into the country since 1889. He placed heavier reliance on local Arabs, many of whom had anti-British feelings (Shdad, 1989, p. 122). The policy followed by the Sultan reflected his general desire to preserve his legitimate rights and his determination to be independent, with the freedom to act as he wished. The reaction of the British in the face of these moves by Sultan Said proves his policies were successful in the longer term (Ateeqi, 2007, p. 54). These actions are likely to have been at least partially attributable to Said's realisation that many of the problems facing his predecessors could be attributed to high debt and the threat of British subsidies being withheld for non-compliance with British interests. In an attempt to free Oman from this onerous situation, the Sultan leveraged the resources of the country to repay the national debt. Striving to attain a greater independence than his father had enjoyed, Said also confronted the British through the purchase of weapons from other countries (Shdad, 1989, p. 123), which reflected his desire to ensure his legitimate rights, independence, and freedom to act. In this way, Sultan Said developed and negotiated his independence, and that of his country as a whole.

Causes of the Revolution

The evidence in this thesis indicates that the revolution in Dhofar (1965-1975) against the rule of Sultan Said (1932-1970) began as a result of internal factors that were reinforced by external circumstances. Some of these internal reasons for the revolution were poverty, limited job opportunities, and a general lack of educational and health services in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, especially in the Dhofar region. In addition, the Sultan adopted a heavy-handed, legalistic approach to rule, and isolated Oman from the rest of the world. In response, poorer Omanis, and

especially the people of Dhofar, sought work in other Gulf countries, which had grown rich from oil exports. When these people experienced the lifestyles in neighbouring countries, they developed a strong desire to enact change in Oman (Abdul Redha, 1972, p. 58; Al Khasibi, 1994, p. 157; Al Rayes, 2000, p. 2; Al Sa'adi, 1976, pp. 84-85; Al Zaidi, 2000, p. 310; Kechichian, 2013, p. 157; Landen, 1983, pp. 480-481; Rabi, 2011, p. 24). This internal realisation of the need for revolt was exacerbated by external circumstances, perhaps the most important of which were the conditions that dominated the Arab World in the 1950s and 1960s. These were best characterised in the Arab Nationalist Movement against western imperialism, which was led by Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser. His perspectives were reinforced by the victory of Egypt against Britain, France and Israel in the Suez War in 1956. The ideals of Arab nationalism were promoted by Egypt's most popular media (Arab Voice Radio), which exhorted people to take down 'despotic' leaders who cooperated with imperialist nations (Bahbahani, 1984, pp. 144-145; Barut, 1996, p. 395; Haglawi, 2003, pp. 310-311; Ja'aboob, 2010, p. 248; Saleem, 1980, p. 45). It is clear that these internal and external factors, especially the poor living conditions in comparison with neighbouring countries and the spread of Arab nationalism, played an important role in igniting the revolution against Sultan Said.

The findings of this thesis clearly illustrate that one of the most important reasons for the war in Dhofar was Sultan Said's lack of respect for the tribal leaders. This factor has not been addressed in the previous literature, yet it distinguished the political relations of the nation, with the Sultan's imprisonment of one of the tribal leaders, Musalim bin Nafal, serving to ignite the war. Another important factor was the bad relationship between the government of Oman and the other countries in the region, where the support given to bin Nafal by Saudi Arabia, and later Kuwait, Iraq and Egypt, played a major role in the inception of the revolution. These sources afforded the fighters with the necessary military training and weapons required to challenge the Omani rulers, as well as offering safe haven from which the rebel plans could be coordinated. The religious orientation of the Dhofar Charitable Association, whose leaders led the revolution during the first phase (1965-1967), played a key role in securing the support of Saudi Arabia and the leaders of the Imamate, as well as the local people in Dhofar mountains.

It is also clear from the analysis in this thesis that the policy adopted by Sultan Said policy sought to distance Oman from any potential threats to his rule. These included opposing pressure from Saudi Arabia to restore the state of the Imamate in Oman; stopping the influence of Arab

nationalism, which incited the peoples of the Gulf to overthrow their 'autocratic' rulers; and distancing Oman from the influence of the imperialist powers. Ultimately, the Sultan sought to ensure that he would have the independence to implement the policies he desired, but his regional isolationism aggravated internal problems leading to the Dhofar War.

The Policy of Sultan Said, Sultan Qaboos and the British

Sultan Said consciously isolated Oman from the rest of the world in an attempt to prevent the ideas of Arab nationalism from affecting his citizens. His financial policy neglected the development of national infrastructure, because his priority was to repay his father's debts and thereby ensure independence for the Sultanate from the influence of creditors, including Britain. Researchers (e.g. Ateeqi, 2007, pp. 211-212; Mansy, 1996, p. 245) have shown that some aspects of the policy adopted by Sultan Said were theoretically sound, albeit unsuitable for the critical period of the region's history. Analysis suggests that the Sultan sought to regulate his financial affairs in order to fulfil the important aim of limiting the ability of the British to use Omani debt as a lever by which to exert diplomatic pressure over the Sultanate. As an independent decision-maker, Sultan Said was known to be very sensitive to this issue of British control. This is best exemplified by his reluctance to begin national development until the receipt of oil export revenue, in order to limit his reliance on foreign powers (UKNA, BC1052/3, 1965), which he believed was necessary to preserve the unity and national identity of Oman (UKNA, FCO 8/569, FR: BC1/2, 1966). As part of this move to minimise British influence and increase his freedom, the Sultan also transferred the capital from Muscat to Dhofar and established a new security force that was independent of the official armed forces, which were managed by British officers (Interview Ahmed Al Harthi, 2016; Mansy, 1996, p. 282). This strategy was partially in response to a failure to use the Americans to limit British influence. The Sultan realised that this tactic would not be viable during his visit to the US in 1939, where he became aware of an understanding between Britain and the United States regarding their interests in the region. Sultan Said's policy aimed to limit formal or informal British restriction of his sovereignty.

However, the beginning of oil exports quickly offered change of living conditions and relations with neighbouring countries in the region, beginning the process of opening the Sultanate up to the world and joining international organizations. Furthermore, the ideas of Arab nationalism,

led by the inspirational character of Nasser, sparked changes and comparisons across the Arab world. During this period, communism moreover began a period of aggressive expansion in the region, in recognition of the latter's increased importance due to the discovery of oil. These conditions made a volatile, rapidly changing political climate that was ultimately unsuited to Sultan Said, given his preference for developing a policy of gradual change and isolationism. Nonetheless in this first period of the revolution (1965-1967), the British did not place significant pressure on the Sultan to improve the living conditions of his citizens or to address the numerous reasons for the outbreak of rebellion. In fact, British officials considered the revolution to be an internal issue. This policy changed when the threat of revolutionaries increased against British's oil interests in Oman. The British sought to end the conflict by helping to develop the military forces of the government, as well as by offering civil assistance and military intelligence. At this stage, largely as a result of the embarrassment suffered during the Suez War in 1965, the British endeavoured to minimise their involvement. Instead, they concentrated on oil discoveries and investments, as well as eliminating their competitors in Oman and protecting British interests, such as their air bases and the port in Dhofar.

The leaders of the rebellion during the first phase, namely the Dhofar Charitable Association, were mature, experienced and Islamic in orientation. They were overturned by younger, nationalistic leaders of the Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement. The new leadership radically changed the policy and orientation of the front, as embodied by the decisions of the second conference held in Hamrin in September 1968, where communism was adopted as the foundation of the revolution. The leaders of the conference also decided to expand the scope of the revolution from Dhofar to the entirety of the region. Therefore, the name of the Front was changed from the The Dhofar Liberation Front to The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf. The goal of the new leaders was to get more support of communist countries like China and Yemen, after Egypt's support declined consequent to their defeat by Israel in 1967. The new leaders applied communist principles to the people in the areas that they controlled: tribal leaders were stripped of their privileges and given equal rank to their communities; women were given the right to make their own decisions and made equal to men; and the people were barred from practicing religious rites. This resulted in some of the more conservative residents becoming resentful, as in the case of the leaders of charitable societies in Oman who could not show their anger in fear that this might put their lives at risk. They found the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction in the reign of Sultan Qaboos bin Said. The findings in this thesis have clearly illustrated that conversion

to communism was a significant error by the revolutionary leaders, because these ideas were alien to the simple and staunchly tribal environment of Dhofar. The profound difference between the communist ideology and the indigenous culture offered the Sultan an excellent opportunity to incite internal and regional Muslim opinions against the communist rebels, as well as allowing him to market the war as a holy endeavour that enabled the inclusion of foreign Muslims, like Iran and the Gulf countries. Sultan Qaboos sought to re-establish his sovereignty over Dhofar by this indigenous appeal to Dhofar and the wider region.

In 1968, when Oman started to export oil to other countries with the assistance of British companies and under the supervision of British diplomacy, the government of Oman gained an incredibly lucrative revenue stream. As a consequence, the British recommended heavy investment the development of Oman, in order to placate the populace. However, regardless of the diplomatic pressure that they exerted, Sultan Said declined to follow their advice, as he had no wish to rush the distribution of these funds. The Sultan also ignored British advice on improving the infrastructure and operation of his government, as well as forging strong relationships with other countries in the region. As a consequence of these policies, the British government developed a growing dissatisfaction with the rule of Sultan Said. Sultan Said was nonetheless keen to maintain the independence of Oman and to make the decisions that he deemed appropriate, even when they were contrary to the wishes of the British government. Most notably, he made the decision to refuse to commence regional development, despite the availability of the necessary financial resources after the beginning of oil exports, which from the perspective of his subject and the British government generated growing opposition to his rule. Maintenance of his sovereign against external pressure led to domestic decline in his sovereignty in Dhofar.

Another important and closely related consideration in the analysis of this period, which is not present in the literature, is the opposition that Said faced from his family. Initially, this opposition was led by the Sultan's brother, Tariq, who sought to establish a government in exile. Tariq incited the British government and tribal leaders, as well as many members of his family, to help overthrow the Sultan. It is important to note that Tariq had been one of the most prominent aides of Sultan Said in the war of the Al Jabal Al Akhdhar (1957-1959). However, when he was not rewarded with an important position, Tariq responded with hostility (see section 2.4.6 for more details). The unity of leadership in Oman was also an important factor that undermined Sultan Said's sovereignty.

Sultan Said was convinced that the British would intervene in Dhofar, as they had done in the earlier Al Jabel Al Akhdhar War (1957-1959). In effect, he expected to have the conflict solved at no personal cost. Indeed, due to threats to their strategic assets, particular their air base and port, the British were inexorably dragged into the conflict. In response, British diplomats asked the Sultan to transfer the British Royal Air Force base to their second air base in Oman, which is located far from Dhofar, on Masirah Island. The Sultan refused this request, stating that they could either station troops in both bases or neither, as per their formal agreement. In this way, he sought to oblige the British to enter the war. This manipulation to ensure their involvement illustrates that Sultan Said exerted a profound influence over British actions. Despite the relative weakness of Oman, he succeeded in ensuring the involvement of one of the most powerful countries in the world as a direct party in the Dhofar conflict to his own advantage, manipulating them to establish to the purpose of his own independence and sovereignty.

On one side, the discussion of the British government about the potential sudden death of Sultan Said, acknowledging the power and authority vacuum that this would cause in Oman (Al Harthi, pp. 539-540), illustrates that the Sultan was in power and running his, 2007 country On the other side, Sultan Said realised that the British government would not allow the revolutionaries to overthrow the regime in Oman, because this would end its influence in the area. However, events proved the misjudgement of Sultan Said about support for his specific government. In early 1970, military operations extended to northern Oman, threatening the oil pipeline connecting the oil fields to the port of export in Muscat, which the British and Omani relied on heavily for their financial revenues. At this critical time, Sultan Said was displaced by his only son, Sultan Qaboos, who ascended to power on 23rd July 1970. This event marked the beginning of the third phase (1970-1972) of the revolution. Many consider this to be a turning point in the contemporary history of Oman. The coup was the direct cause of a radical shift in the internal and external policies of the Omani government and the Omani people. British national interests coincided with the national interests of the Omani people in replacing Sultan Said, who had not given development momentum in line with the aspirations of the people. Sultan Qaboos hastened to devise a plan to contain the revolution on both the local and regional levels. In the formulation of this plan, he paid special attention to the five distinguishing factors of the political relations in Oman during the Dhofar War, which this thesis is unusual in the literature for noting these five factors: the relationships with tribal leaders; the role of Islam; the unity of the leadership; the relations with other regional countries; and

the diplomatic and military relations between Oman and Britain. It was his attention to these factors which consolidated his sovereignty over Oman.

At the local level, he sought to meet the demands of the people through socio-economic reforms and shifting the military balance of power especially through a general amnesty and the good treatment of all revolutionaries. The amnesty initiative launched by Sultan Qaboos profoundly affected the revolution, with rebellions and schisms emerging as a direct consequence of his policy. Some of the pro-revolutionary tribes declared that their main objective was to bring about social change for a better life, although they alienated many through the administration of death sentences carried out on revolutionaries who were accused of being loyal to the new government. However, many revolutionaries decided to take advantage of the amnesty offered by Sultan Qaboos, which provided an opportunity to compromise and negotiate for some revolutionaries among the communist rebels, especially those from the initial stage of the revolution (1965-1968) who had split from the rebels and resorted to areas controlled by the government. Since assuming power in Oman in 1970, such internal policies implemented by Sultan Qaboos, as well as procedures for winning the war in Dhofar, showed that he acted as an independent ruler. In effect, this transformation supports the argument that Oman was a fully sovereign state.

At the regional level, Sultan Qaboos constructed a supportive alliance of states, Britain sided with the ruling power in Oman, defending the regime in order to maintain historical ties with the Sultanate and ensure the protection of its strategic interests and its market in the region, especially after its withdrawal from southern Yemen in 1967. In recognition of Chinese and Soviet intervention, the US supported British policy in the Gulf because of its anti-communist policy during the Cold War. The Sultan undertook concerted efforts to persuade other regional powers like Iran, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to cooperate to halt the spread of communism by opposing the rebels. Finally, since its independence from Britain in 1967, South Yemen had been the main supporter of the revolutionaries. However, it amended its policy after the Arab League and the United Nations recognised the Sultanate in 1971, shifting its attention to development of its economic interests through contact with other Gulf countries instead of supporting the revolution. This may also have been a reaction to the land losses that occurred after the intervention of Iranian forces along the Yemeni border with the Oman. These actions illustrate how Sultan Qaboos negotiated to maintain his sovereignty and independence leading to the defeat of the rebels on 11 December 1975.

Existing Literature: The Role of the British Government in the Dhofar War

Many earlier studies and articles discussing the Dhofar War have tended to examine the conflict from primarily a military perspective (e.g. Buttenshaw, 2010; Dunsire, 2011; Fiennes, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Jeapes, 1996; Ladwig, 2008; Medhi, 1995; Peterson, 2007). These western authors have focused on the importance of the role of the military in winning the war. However, other studies have examined the conflict from different angles. For example, a number of investigations have examined the war from regional and international perspectives, as well as from countries supporting one of the major parties in the conflict (e.g. Al Amri, 2012; Trabulsy, 2004; Haglawi, 2003). Others have focused on local events and aspects, examining the approaches applied by Sultan Said and then Sultan Qaboos in treating their people (e.g. Al Hamdani, 2010; Ghobash, 1997; Ja'boub, 2010; Kechichian, 2013; Landen, 1983; Rabi, 2011). Finally, some books have also taken an ideological approach (e.g. Karam, 1971; Philips, 1974); economic perspective (e.g. Lunt, 1981; Wilkinson, 2006) or models of colonisation and imperialism in the discussion of the war (Abdalsatar, 1989; Geraghty, 1982; Lunt, 1981; Murad, 1989; Philips, 2012; Shdad, 1989). Many previous books focus on the dominance of the British role.

This study has identified that the nature of the relationship between the sultans of Oman and the British government is only one of a number of factors affecting events in Oman. Another particularly important factor affecting the events in Oman was the relationship between the Sultan and the tribal leaders, which is intimately connected with the role of Islam in the struggle. This study argues that the relationship between the Sultan and the tribal leaders was mirrored by the relation between the leaders of the revolution with the tribal leaders. This relationship is important in tribal societies, such as in Oman, particularly in more rural areas like Dhofar. Citizens in the Dhofari community usually follow the leaders of their tribes, meaning that securing the loyalty of tribal leaders typically guarantees the loyalty of its members. In the causes of the Dhofar War, it is apparent that Sultan Said ignored tribal leaders and failed to ensure the development of deprived tribal areas. In contrast, during the first phase of the war, the commanders of the Front took good care of tribal leaders and strengthened the role of the tribe, leading to widespread support for the movement, with the tribes serving as popular incubators for the revolutionaries and a source of fierce fighters. When the revolutionaries changed to the adoption of communist ideals, calling for an end to the role of the tribe and the complete emancipation of women, this angered tribal leaders who harboured a hidden antagonism towards the new leaders of the revolution. Instead, they turned

towards Sultan Qaboos, recognising that he respected the tribal system (Agwani, 1978, p. 71). They used this as an opportunity to publicise their animosity, fight the revolutionaries, maintain the influence of their tribes, and ensure the continuation of tribal customs and traditions. Development projects and the policy of winning minds and hearts helped to encourage tribal leaders to choose Sultan Qaboos. This was supported by the value that he placed upon Islam, which was influential for the tribes who followed and applied its teachings. Sultan Qaboos realised this value and sought to confront the communist principles that the revolutionaries adopted at the second (Hamrin) conference. He launched a relentless media campaign to focus upon the fact that these principles contravened the ideology of Islam, which was deeply rooted in Omani society. His message was that facing the revolutionaries was part of a war to protect Islam, which enabled him to secure the support of traditionalist tribal groups that had previously fought the government. In addition, this approach wider ensured support from a number of Muslim countries in the region.

The second factor is reflected in the unity of leadership on the side of the Omani government and rebels. Again, the relationship between the Sultan and his family is mirrored in the relationship between those who led the revolution before the Hamrin Conference and those who had assumed leadership afterwards. The findings in this thesis show that Sultan Said took a harsh stance in dealing with his family, declining to give them important positions in the government hierarchy, and this decision backfired on him. Like other Omanis, many of Said's family moved abroad. They were led by Sayyed Tariq, the younger brother of Sultan Said, who hastened the overthrow of his brother by establishing a strong Omani opposition run by the government in exile. When Sultan Qaboos came to power, he recognised the importance of rewarding his family and gave many of them high positions in the government. On the other hand, while the relationship between the leaders of the revolution during the first phase was very good, it later became strained during the second and third phases. This is because the later phases were characterised by the replacement of the leaders of the Dhofar branch of the Arab National Movement, excluding the leaders of the Dhofar Charitable Association who had dominated the leadership during the first stage. United leadership was an important factor in winning the war, a fact that was recognised by Sultan Qaboos, who endeavoured to strengthen his ties with his family and especially to obtain the support of his influential uncle, Tariq.

Relations between the Sultans and other countries in the region were an extremely important factor in the Dhofar War. The relationship between the Sultan and the Gulf nations, namely Saudi

Arabia, Iran, Yemen and Egypt, is mirrored in the relationship of the revolutionaries with these countries. Studying the Dhofar War illustrates the importance of the relations between the Sultanate and neighbouring countries, with the isolation brought about by Sultan Said serving to worsen relations with many influential regional countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, or even severing ties with them completely, as in the case of Iran and Yemen. Despite the involvement of the communist revolutionaries in the second phase of the war and the opposition of influential countries in the region to the tenets of communism, the Sultan Said did not receive any support. This severely undermined the position of Sultan Said in the face of the revolutionaries, which hastened his removal in response to the gains being made by the revolutionaries in the region. On the other hand, the improvement that Sultan Qaboos made to the relationship with influential countries of the region enabled him to obtain important support from Iran, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, in addition to political support from Egypt. The assistance provided by regional powers was instrumental in Qaboos winning the war in Dhofar. In contrast, the revolutionaries strengthened their relations with Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states during the first phase. However, the decision by the rebels to adopt communism resulted in Saudi Arabia and Egypt severing relations with the revolutionaries, making them completely dependent on Yemen to compensate for their loss of regional support.

An important value, factor not the most important, in understanding the Dhofar conflict and the political relations in Oman was nonetheless the diplomatic and military relations between the Sultanate and Britain. This study has illustrated how the relationship between Sultan Said and Sultan Qaboos with Britain was mirrored by the relationship between the revolutionaries and Britain. When relations between Sultan Said and the British were good in the first phase of the revolution, the British government offered help to combat the revolution. However, after the Sultan rejected their advice about the development of Oman and the relations with other regional powers, the British side realised that Said was a deterrent instead of an inability issue for their national interests in the region, which inevitably strained their relationship. This ultimately resulted in the British government blessing the new government led by Sultan Qaboos, which served their interests as the new ruler hastened to develop his country, lift restrictions and develop his government in response to their advice.

These factors can be considered the distinguishing values of political relations in Oman during the Dhofar War and perhaps the most important in the recent history of Oman in general. Although the existing literature has placed a great deal of emphasis on the relationship with the

British as a key factor, this study suggests that it was not the most important variable in the conflict. Instead, this study argues that the values of the tribe, Islam and unity of leadership were of greatest importance, as reflected in government policies that secured victory in the conflict and demonstrated that the Sultanate of Oman had the sovereignty and independence to focus on its national interest, as perceived by the sultans.

Reasons for the Failure of the Revolution: The Importance of Indigenous Factors

Historians have discussed the reasons for the rebels defeat, typically focusing on one of two factors. The first is foreign military support, which is emphasised by academics like Al Nafisi (1976), Hensel (1982), Peterson (2007), and Worrall (2014). The second factor is Sultan Qaboos' new regional policy, which led the rebels to lose the support of Yemen, as discussed by Al Hamdani (2010), Al Nafisi (1976), Ja'boub (2010), Kechichian (2013), Rabi (2011) and Takrit (2013). The findings in this study clearly indicate that there are also two primary indigenous explanations for the failure of the revolution in Dhofar. The first reason for the failure of the rebellion is the significant contradiction that arose between a secessionist movement that had not yet been able to control the territory of Dhofar and its ambition to simultaneously 'liberate' the entire Arabian Gulf, rather than focusing on Dhofar before expanding the scope to include the other countries in the Gulf. This issue arose with the change in the leadership of the revolutionaries and the movement's adoption of communist ideology after the decisions of the Hamrin Conference (second conference) in 1968.

The ambition of the leadership of the revolution can be recognised as unrealistic, given that the Gulf region, as the largest repository of oil in the world, constituted one of the most vital areas for the world economy. It meant that Britain was not prepared to leave Oman, to face upheaval alone. In simple terms, the overthrow of the regime and the rise of communism in the region would inevitably destroy British interests in Oman. Moreover other countries of the Arab Gulf saw that the fall of Oman could lead to communist countries gaining influence over the region during the Cold War, which would result in other Arab nations quickly falling to communism (Al Harthi, 2007, p. 374). In consequence, the last three years of the revolution saw a pronounced decline in the military strength and ambition of the revolution, especially as its leaders failed to bring about wider real political change.

The second reason for the failure of the revolution was that the leadership of the revolution proved unable to adjust to the great change in political leadership, namely, the end of the reign of Sultan Said, who they had sought to dethrone. The leaders of the revolution lost control over key factors in Omani political relations during the Dhofar War, which they had previously enjoyed, such as: tribal loyalty, respect for Islam, and a strong relationship with other regional powers. Most importantly, when the revolutionary leaders lost these values, they were gained by the new Sultan. When Sultan Qaboos took power, it stimulated a lack of consensus between the leaders of the conservative and nationalist revolution and increased division between supporters of the revolutionaries. This difference contributed strongly to the defeat of the rebels. Ordinary citizens in Dhofar were simply interested in the removal of Sultan Said, whose authority was linked to suffering from hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance. Once those needs were met, they decided that Sultan Qaboos differed from his father in important ways and that there was therefore no need for further conflict. Instead, they perceived that revolutionaries were seeking power, rather than to improve the situation of the common people of Dhofar as they had claimed. There was no interest from the leadership of the revolution to marry political action with military action, with the sources showing no intention to enter discussions with the new Sultan. In contrast, the policy of Sultan Qaboos was clearly to win the hearts of those involved and to convince them to end the conflict. This tactic was undertaken with the aim of ensuring their collaboration in the building of the new Oman, which he publicised through the media and the distribution of publications in the areas held by the revolutionaries. In effect, this policy suggests that Sultan Qaboos realised that many of the revolutionaries loved their country and wanted it to flourish, but that they had seen the former Sultan as an obstacle to that goal. By cleverly demonstrating his patriotism, Sultan Qaboos managed to persuade many of the first phase leaders to abandon the revolution. In general, it can be said that the leadership of the revolution failed to distinguish effectively and accurately between the value of military action and political negotiation with the ruling authority. Importantly, as noted above, the leadership of the revolution was also unable to adapt to the completely new situation that rapidly unfurled after the coronation of Sultan Qaboos. It is clear that the new situation could not be managed through armed conflict, especially after the overwhelming Iranian military intervention in favour of the forces of the British, Jordan, and the Sultan. In other words, the revolution was based on armed struggle and showed an inability to respond, despite signs that the armed conflict was no longer successful, after the failure of the coup at the end of 1972 and the intervention of Iran in 1973. The revolutionary leaders lacked fast adjustment to the new circumstances that came with the

reign of Sultan Qaboos in Oman, and they failed due to the inability to negotiate, rather than continue to fight. Interestingly, the reasons for the defeat of rebels are extremely similar to those that caused the collapse of their enemy, Sultan Said. Essentially, both failed due to an inability to adjust to changes in the prevailing conditions. It is clear that the reasons for the victory of Sultan Qaboos were not limited to the new policies that he implemented or the foreign support he received, as the literature argues. Instead, the reasons are deeper and, based on the Sultan using indigenous values and factors required for success in Oman and the Gulf region.

The Nature of the Relationship between the Omani Sultans and the British Government

This study has also examined the Dhofar war in relation to British diplomatic policy, with particular reference to the political interactions during that period. The findings demonstrate that the main focus of the British government during this conflict was the suppression of the rebellion and halting the spread of communism in Oman at the lowest possible political, human, and material cost. In addition, the British sought to minimise any potential embarrassment in the wake of the disastrous Suez War in 1956. Britain opposed the independence of Dhofar, as well as demarcating the border between Oman and Yemen before its withdrawal in 1967. These actions were undertaken to serve far-reaching, British political and economic interests in Oman and across the entirety of the Gulf, suggesting that any assistance provided to Oman was self-serving in nature. Britain also encouraged the development of Oman and contributed expertise to structure governmental units and build the national armed forces, all of which were important contributions in the construction of modern Oman to preserve the unity and stability of the country. The British government realised that their far-reaching interests in the region depended upon the stability of Oman's status and ensuring the continuation of the independent power of the Sultans over the area. In effect, this thesis argues that the national interests of both countries have been historically linked and that Oman managed to preserve its unity through British support, because the protection of British national interests also required the protection of Oman against both internal and external threats.

In consequence, the British government reacted swiftly and effectively. British interventions were limited during the early years of war (1965-1967), due to their perception that the conflict was as an internal affair that did not require military intervention or pressure to be placed on the ruler to resolve its causes, such as the living conditions of the people. In the later period (1968-1970),

Sultan Said succeeded in involving the British into the Dhofar War through his refusal of their request to withdraw their forces from Salalah air base, ensuring that they retained soldiers at Salalah and Masirah. The Sultan realised that the British government would ensure the defence of Oman as it had done in the Al Jabal Al Akhdher (the Green Mountain) war (1957-1959), thereby maintaining his control over the country. The British government therefore became more involved, offering military support and exerting pressure for necessary change to be made to policies, especially improving living conditions, developing the government, and enhancing relations with other countries in the region. However, Sultan Said elected to ignore this advice, maintaining full sovereignty in decision-making and therefore deciding to follow the path that he believed appropriate, namely to stall the implementation of development plans while creating economic independence for the Sultanate. The majority of extant studies conceptualise the British-Omani relationship in terms of British imperial control and corresponding Omani subservience, lack of autonomy, and formal or informal colonisation (e.g. Abdalsatar, 1989, p. 46; Fadel, 1995, p. 212; Halliday, 2008, p. 331; Miles, 1920, pp. 222-230; Omar, 2008, pp. 6-7; Owtram, 2004, p. 16; Samah, 2016, p. 273; Sultan & Naqeeb, 2008, p. 26; Wilson, 2012, pp. 331-332;). However, it should be noted that other studies have recognised that the Omani government was at times both autonomous and sovereign (e.g. Geraghty, 1982, pp. 98-100; Lunt, 1981, p. 32; Murad, 1989, p. 463; Philips, 2012, pp. 352-353; Shdad, 1989, pp. 220-221). This thesis has demonstrated that both Omani governments had a developing and negotiable autonomy, rather than existing as a direct colony or an informal colony as commonly argued in the literature.

This study shows that the Omani sultans limited and controlled British intervention, although the manner of this refusal differed from one sultan to another according to the circumstances and their specific potential. Their disapproval was sometimes expressed indirectly, such as through excuses of illness, travel or abdication, as in the case of Sultan Taimur, Sultan Said's father. Other times, the refusal was more direct, as in the case of Sultan Said, who refused to take any British advice in regards to his development policy or in terms of cooperation with other countries in the region. Some Arab historians consider the coup that put Sultan Qaboos on the throne to be part of Britain's arrangement to ensure their 'strategic, economic and security' interests before the withdrawal of British forces from the regions east of Suez (e.g. Agwani, 1978, p. 71; Al Takriti, 2013, p. 140; Dhiab, 1984, p. 109). This thesis argues with the proposition that the coup primarily arose from the desires of an elite group of Omanis, rather than the British, led by Sultan Qaboos and the support of his uncle Tariq (Al Amri, 2012, pp. 153-152; Bahbahani, 1984, p. 155;

Jeapes, 1996, p. 27; Muqaihl, 2002, p.285).Sultan Qaboos did his best to learn from the mistakes that his father had made. He strengthened the relationship with the British government, and reaped the benefits of its military, economic, and diplomatic expertise in fighting the rebellion (Mowafi, 1994). The findings of this study suggest that it was clear to Sultan Qaboos that the British were operating a primarily self-serving strategy. Nevertheless, Qaboos was able to distance Oman from any forms of informal imperialism, domination, or unipolar stances. Instead, he utilised the military might of Iran and Jordan, as well as relying on financial support from Saudi Arabia. This bold step also demonstrated that he was, the ultimate decision maker in Oman and that Oman was become a sovereign country.

The most important of the allies that the Sultan was able to secure was Iran, which provided instrumental support in the military defeat of the rebels through the extensive involvement of Iranian forces in Dhofar at the end of 1973. This action was assisted by the ambition of the Shah of Iran to limit British influence of the region, as well as to counter the infiltration of communism in the Gulf, which could threaten the global shipping corridor in the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranian scholar Muhammad Jawad stated that the Iranian who participated in the Dhofar war were the elite Iranian troops and therefore the most effective soldiers that could be sent (Jawad,2014). Although the Iranian intervention upset many Arab countries, such as Libya and Iraq, their military assistance was invaluable due to the relative weakness of the armies of Oman and many other Arab nations, as well as the unwillingness of Britain to contribute more troops. Recognising that Iranian influence made them nervous, Sultan Qaboos sent messages to the other Arab countries, reassuring them that the military intervention would end with the end of the war. The other major player in the region, Egypt, also supported Sultan Qaboos after policy changes made after the decline of Arab nationalism in the wake of its military defeat by Israel in 1967 and the death of Nasser. These changes also precipitated the deterioration in relations between Egypt and the revolution leaders. Thus, since the beginning of the era of Sultan Qaboos, Oman has interacted closely with the regional states, rather than restricting its relations exclusively to Britain. After 1970, the Dhofar War rapidly hastened this interaction. In general, the nature of the relationship which Omani rulers and the British was closer to the description provided by some writers (e.g. Geraghty, 1982, pp. 98-100; Lunt, 1981, p. 32; Murad, 1989, p. 463; p. 46; Philips, 2012, 352-353; Shdad, 1989, pp. 122-123), namely a relationship of friendship, cooperation, and exchange of interests Omani rulers have generally taken advantage of this relationship to meet the long-term needs of an independent. As Sir William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf stated:

The plain fact is that, even in our own service, only those officers who have actually dealt with Arabian peninsula affairs fully realise that the sultanate is independent (UKNA, BC 1052/6, 1965).

Likewise, Sultan Qaboos also answered accusations that the rebels had made about informal imperialism from Britain, noting instead that,

We are getting support from Saudi Arabia and Britain to perform Oman's internal reform project... We do not find difficulties in dealing with the British because they are here to work as experts for us and we take advantage of their experiences in reforming the country and building the army soldiers (Sultan Qaboos, 1973, p. 1).

Regardless of whether or not the decisions made by Sultan Said and Sultan Qaboos were correct, they insisted on the implementation of policies that they deemed were appropriate, which indicates an ability to act independently despite British diplomatic pressure. The relationship with the British was an important value in the events of the Dhofar War, in addition to the key role played by tribal unity, Islam, the unity of leadership, and the relations between the leadership of the sultanate and the countries in the region, but the British role should not be over-stated as informal imperialism.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

The status of the Sultanate under the leadership of Said

A British report from J.S.R Duncan, a British diplomat to Sir William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf, dated 15th July 1965, shows the status of the Sultanate under the leadership of Said (UKNA, F.O., BC 1015/13)

The Sultan's main problems were: firstly the creation of an administration more suited to the times; secondly the consolidation and development of his armed forces; thirdly, improvement of his international relations (which must include coming to terms with the rebels abroad); fourthly, a measure of constitutional devolution... first the primitive nature of administration in the Sultanate... the Sultanate is a large country by Gulf standards; 82,000 square miles in area, with a population of about 750,000. The Sultan succeeded his father in 1932 when he was twenty-two years old, lived alone at Salalah for the past seven years. He ruled, feared and unloved by means of a mass of decrees (covering the smallest matters) inflexibly applied by his personal adviser, military secretary (both British), his Minister of Interior and Governor of Muscat (both Omanis). The Military Secretariat has an efficient and reasonably well staffed department but the others have only a few Pakistani and Indian clerks twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. Each of these four persons speak with the Sultan from Muscat by means of a radio-telephone, raising any matter which has deviated or may deviate, from true doctrine. The Minister of Interior passes on by radio-telephone or letter, any relevant information to the Walis who control the Interior. The system is tight, feudal, very personal and takes little or no account of the outside world. System is adequate, ... routine military matters... civil administration will be quite inadequate to meet the mounting pressures.

Appendix 2

Sultan Said's relationships with international organizations and regional countries

A confidential report from J.S.R Duncan, a British diplomat to Sir William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain, dated 15th July 1965 (BC 1015/13)

“He feels reluctant joining international organizations because he is deeply embittered by his experiences with some of the organizations. He applied to join the World Health Organization and was black-balled. The issue of his own postage stamps and the taking over of his postal services may provide an opportunity for him to join the postal union. If this were successful, other organizations could then be joined. ... his independent image in the outside world would grow in strength. But as long as he declines to come into an accommodation with the four or five key rebels presently in Iraq or Egypt or Saudi Arabia, so will there be likelihood of their continued lobbying against him; claiming that he is a lackey of Her Majesty's Government and does not truly represent the people of the Sultanate. The fourth problem is that of constitutional development; When the Sultan succeeded his father, a form of regency council was in being. This gradually withered away through the years and, since 1958 when the sultan repaired to Salalah, it ceased to exist altogether. Now there is a straightforward, remote control, dictatorship which is very unlikely to last for long. What is needed ... a council, advisory if need be at the beginning, ... the Sultan's son might play a key part. But I can see neither chance of this being done, ... as long as the Sultan (and his well-educated but untried son) live their hermit-like, insulated, lives at Salalah. ... to persuade the Sultan to return to Muscat. ... his own mental well- being, to the continuing stability of the Sultanate and the rejuvenation of his moribund administration. ... the Sultan said ... that he will return in the coming winter... less positive about this timing and ... even though his palace in Muscat is presently being redecorated internally. He may delay ... if he delays ... we may see the disintegration and overthrow of his regime”.

Appendix 3

The reasons for the British government to support Sultan Said's regime

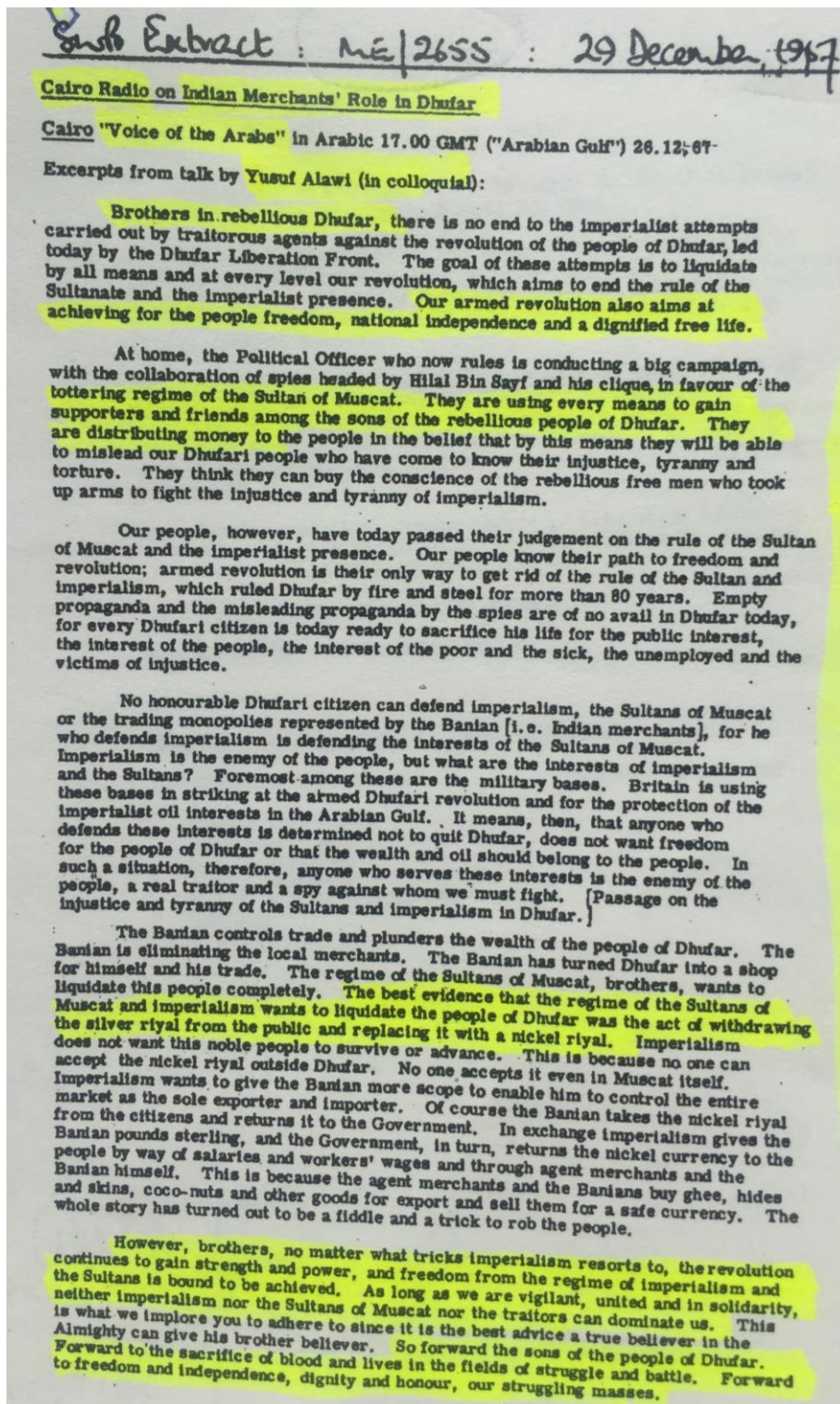
A confidential British document From T. F. Brenchley to Foreign Office, dated 1st March 1965, entitled "Philosophy" shows reasons that led the British government to support Sultan Said's regime (UKNA, BC1051/10, 1965)

"The philosophy behind the Muscat civil development subsidy has been as follows. A friendly and stable regime in Muscat is important to our political position in the Arabian peninsula and affords us essential military facilities, we have in the past had to intervene militarily to support the sultan against rebellion in the interior; this has caused us considerable international embarrassment; to avoid a repetition of this we pay the sultan a substantial military subsidy to maintain armed forces to deter future rebellion; at the same time we provide assistance for civil development, which is intended to remove the inclination of further rebellion by spreading social benefits among the population on a scale which the sultan has not hitherto been able to afford. The sultan has never been fully convinced of the efficacy of this policy in comparison to our military assistance, and has also been hunted by the fear that we might cut off our aid leaving him unable to support projects that begun with our assistance and on our advice. Consequently it has taken constant pressure and encouragement to persuade the sultan to allow development... civil development subsidy has so far been outweighed in size and priority by military expenditure; and has provided us with useful material for rebutting charges that we are interested in the sultanate only for its bases and oil,... provided the sultan of impressing upon international opinion that his country is making some progress away from the Middle Ages. ...provision... minor but thoroughly practical projects, ... wide an area as possible to increase loyalty to the sultan's government,...foundation for further development... and blunt the attacks of hostile propaganda both on us and on the sultan.

Appendix 4

Arab voice radio support for the revolutionaries

A British report, "Cairo radio on Indian merchants' role in Dhofar", dated 29th December 1967, provides valuable insights into how the Egyptian (Arab voice) radio supported the revolutionists in Dhofar. This was the most famous and significant radio station in the Arab world at this time (UKNA, F.C.O., ME2655, 1967).



Appendix 5

Declaration of Armed Struggle document

Reference: *DLF (1974, January 12). National Struggle documents, 1965-1974, Statement about 12th of December division's movement by resistant forces in the area, popular front to liberate the occupied Oman and the Arabian Gulf.*

Dhofar Liberation Front, Declaration of Armed Struggle (June 9, 1965)

Dear Arab people in Dhofar,

A revolutionary vanguard from among you who believe in Allah have made the freedom of this country a principle and to liberate it from Britain and the ruling regime.

This nation, my brothers, has tasted the bitterness of living for a long period of time, leading it to homelessness, unemployment, poverty, ignorance and disease. These deadly weapons were used by the pangs of colonialism and carried out by the regime.

Dear Arab people in Dhofar,

You have seen and understood this particular situation and we all have tasted the bitterness of living under this clumsy policy. Allah wants us to live, but they want us to die and the will of God is a right that must prevail in this part of the great Arab nation. Dear people of Dhofar who are fighting in the name of the brave martyrs who lost their lives in the arena of dignity and honor, and on behalf of all the bereaved and those who are emaciated by this abnormal and corrupt situation. In the name of the Arab nation, whose sons are fighting in every inch of their land, we agitate the authentic Arab spirit in you to stand united against this corrupt situation and demand all of you to stand with the men of Dhofar Liberation Front to form a dam against this tyranny.

The Government of Sultan Sa'id bin Taymour has hired an army of mercenaries to eradicate the Arab liberation goals in this country, but the Dhofar Liberation Front will stand against them as a raging fire in every inch of this country. This mercenary army was able to hinder the goals of the revolution in Oman, but the free will that draws its strength from the will of Allah will triumph over this despicable populist army. And we promise you in the name of Allah and this country, to teach this army a lesson that will not be forgotten similar to what was inflicted on the colonial armies in Egypt, Algeria, Iraq and Yemen.

Dear Arab people in the south and the Gulf and in every inch of the Arab land, today you are called for material and moral support for the armed struggle in Dhofar. This armed revolution derives its strength from the goals of Arab nationalism, which the Arab Liberation Army in Dhofar has believed on and is now using these principles to achieve the nationalism goals with arm force. The Liberation Front in Dhofar chose the armed struggle as a means to eliminate the regime and the

British colonization because the colonization and its agents who enslaved and humiliated these people by means of force and oppression will not recognize their demands except by arm force.

Dear Brothers, this corrupt situation has forced the people in Dhofar to live on subsistence, sow discord and weakness among them. Such situation was the inevitable reason behind the revolution of dignity and freedom. My dear brothers in Dhofar, the front, which now bears the responsibility of liberating your country, calls upon you to meet the appeal in these difficult circumstances.

Dear people in the cities, mountains and deserts, you are now requested to take a united stand against colonialism and its traitor agents to achieve freedom, unity, social justice and dignity. People who are helping this tyrannous regime and the British colonization will receive their fair punishment inevitably and the Dhofar Liberation Front will impose this penalty.

Dear brothers,

The Dhofar Liberation Front calls upon you in the name of this dear country and Arabism to bear your weapon and stand with it against the colonial forces and its mercenaries until the flag of freedom rises up in the sky of our dear Dhofar.

Dear Arab freedom strive, Dhofar Liberation Front, which is leading the struggle against colonialism and its agents in Dhofar, firmly believes in the unity of the Arab nation and the unity of the struggle for Arabism from the ocean to the Gulf. And this belief must lead it to the fusion with Arab revolutionary organizations in the Gulf and the South. Derived from this belief, the Dhofar Liberation Front call upon the revolutionary fronts and organizations that are fighting today in this arena to stand with it in its fair struggle and to support it with material and moral capabilities in order to achieve its objectives and defeat their enemy, the enemies of Arabism.

Victory will always be for the free fighters, while defeat and shame is for traitors and colonizers.

Long live a free and proud Dhofar and long live the front of the Arab nation.

(9 June 1965)

Appendix 6

The reaction of Sultan Said at the beginning of the revolution

A confidential letter from J.S.R Duncan, British diplomat to Major Chauncy, The British Consulate General in Muscat, dated 29th May 1965. This letter illustrates the stance and reaction of Sultan Said at the beginning of the revolution(UKNA, BC1015/7, 1965)

The sultan ordered Operation Rainbow (increased to two full companies) to try to exercise the threat presented by the two rebel groups of Ali Shulfan and Mussalem. They were all sixty persons in number. They appear to be well supplied and are presently on the north face of Jabel Qarra. This threat is at present the real one to the sultanate. The rebels (trained with the help of the Iraqi intelligence) should have decided by now that operations against S.A.F in Oman are unlikely to be successful. Operations there will (a) likely cause S.A.F to relax its grip in Oman... and send units to deal with them and (b) could well bog down these units in Dhofar in classical guerrilla warfare terms in wild country. The position will be serious indeed particularly perhaps in terms of serviceability of ageing aircraft. S.A.F's orders are to destroy the band and to do so within a month before the monsoon breaks.

Appendix 7

Sultan said Armed Forces current situation at the beginning of the revolution

A confidential report from J.S.R Duncan, a British diplomat to Sir William Luce, the Political Agent in the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain, shows Sultan said Armed Forces current situation at the beginning of the revolution, 15 July 1965 (UKNA, BC1015/13, 1965)

The sultan relied on British financial assistance (1.5 million pounds annually) and on seconded officers and equipment. Financial burden on her majesty's government will cease with the advent of oil revenue but providing seconded officers is likely to continue. British officered force (some 33 seconded and some 25 on contract) with 15 seconded Pakistani officers in the junior ranks. 50% of the rank and file are Baluchi mercenaries from Gwandur and Omani representation is relatively small, reflecting the sultan's distrust of his own kind. If British and Pakistani ... reduced ...the force would be most seriously affected. The Ministry of Defence is finding increasing difficulty in supplying the necessary number of officers. The Pakistani government might find an unaccepted embarrassment. Anti-British sentiment is bound to grow among the young Omanis. ... start planning for a national army, if this is not to be formed in a haste with disastrous results.

Appendix 8

The temporary national constitution

The temporary national constitution that Tariq the Sultan's brother broadcasted (Omani Kingdom constitution). Reference: A confidential letter sent to British embassy in Muscat from Mr. J.A.N. Graham, A British diplomat in Kuwait on 25th November 1967 (UKNA, FCO BC1/1).

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Statement by Tariq bin Taymour

To all Sheikhs, Ulama (1), leading personalities, civil servants, soldiers and Omani citizens.

You all know that since my leaving our beloved Fatherland Oman I have been thinking about the plight that has befallen it at a time when nations stand up and peoples in many parts of the world arise. I therefore considered it the duty of us all to work for the liberation of our Fatherland and to remove (the present state of) injustice from its people and lift our people up, guided (as we are) by the precepts of the Holy Law that God has imposed on us "Man only has that which he strives for and (the result of) his effort will become apparent".

I have on a previous occasion explained to you these things in a pamphlet that I distributed in Omani towns in which I gave the text of a statement made by me to 'The Sunday Times' who published it last year.

Since I have become aware of the strong desire of all to have a true knowledge of the aims that I seek to achieve in the interest of our beloved Fatherland, I therefore - God willing - herewith give you the following true facts so that you may have indisputable evidence about the common aim which we all endeavour to achieve.

The circumstances which our country has for a long time been passing through and the backwardness that has been its lot have indeed our Fatherland and its people from enjoying its (natural) resources. have compelled many people to emigrate in search of a living which is available in abundance in their own country. After noticing the sufferings (of people) inside (our country) and the hardships that those living abroad are exposed to, I found I had the great responsibility to bring about the emergence of our country and to remove injustice from its people and to consult with them concerning the administration of its affairs by enlisting the help of those of the sons of our country who are able to participate in the Government and by preparing the way before every Omani to play his role in the service of his country and to make an effort on behalf of the country of which the Noble Hadith (2) says "The Love of your Country is (an article of) Faith". In this way our country will be rid of the mighty chains that are now imposed on it and its people will be saved from this strangling atmosphere in which they now live as if they were in a state of war, especially so during the last few years.

You are aware of the fact that the prevailing Rule in our country is primarily responsible for the condition of poverty, underdevelopment and chaos that are the cause of our backwardness. Our citizens know that Government business is conducted by way of orders given on the telephones all of which are against the interests of the citizen who does not practise any of his legal rights and who is ignorant of the affairs of his country all of which God has summed up in His words to His Prophet (upon whom be the peace and blessing of God) "and consult with them in the matter".

(1) Scholars of Muslim theology and Canon law usually including the Qadis (Muslim magistrates or judges).

(2) Collection of acts or sayings attributed to Muhammad, and in a wider sense to any one of his immediate Companions.

Perhaps there are some who believe that the Movement I am in charge of and which with the help of God I will lead to success is in the pay of foreign circles. I therefore barely wish to assure all people - Sheikhs, Ulama, leading personalities and all citizens - that this rumour is not correct and that this Movement of ours is none other than a pure national Movement working for the interest of our country and its people, a Movement which makes no demands other than that we may all be delivered from the evil conditions that have befallen our country so that our national hopes may come true and that we may achieve progress in all spheres of political, economic and sociological endeavour and exploit all the country's potential (resources) to raise the standing of our Fatherland and of its people in the shadow of the Holy Law of Islam which stipulates that he who has a right be given his right, be the ruler or ruled. This will not be realised unless (we) all stand together heart and tongue and I have great hope in you that you will support me in what we aim to achieve.

It has indeed become apparent to us that our Fatherland will not see these requests (as true) unless it be that one condition is fulfilled: this is the abdication of the present Sultan and his final withdrawal from our country as a whole. In case he should insist on continuing to ruin our country and its people, and should he refuse to abdicate, then we have made all the necessary arrangements to use every possible means to ensure that this goal is achieved. And we find great support in God's help and in His granting us success, for all we aim at is the deliverance of the sons of our Fatherland from the injustice that they have fallen under.

I therefore appeal to all my Omani brethren to co-operate with me to achieve this aim which will open up to all of us the road to honour, respect and freedom so that we may walk in our country towards horizons of progress, and exploit and develop its potential (resources) at the head of which is oil and other mineral wealth. We will make every effort to improve agriculture, build schools and open hospitals so that Oman may take its place among the progressive countries and that we may not (have to) look at others from the slopes of mountains and beds of wadis while they (the other people) walk on mountain summits making prosperity come true. All will find stability and peace and we will abolish the martial decrees and laws which bring suffering to our citizens because of the prevailing Rule.

In accordance with these goals that I have outlined to you, we have completed the draft of a temporary Constitution to prepare the way to give the people every opportunity to choose the kind of government that accords with the traditions and customs of our country and which lays down the method whereby our country will be governed, for there shall no longer be injustice nor compulsory orders but the interest of our Fatherland and its people (shall rule supreme).

Now I hereby appeal to you to support me in my endeavours. We pray to God that He may grant us success in all things good and righteous, for everything is possible with the Lord Almighty. Peace be upon you all oh ye Sheikhs of Oman, its Ulama, its leading personalities and all its sons without distinction.

11 Jamad al Thani 1387
15th September 1967

(Signed) TARIQ BIN TAYMOUR

In the Name of God, etc

1. Once again Britain has shown us that she is an imperialist under a new guise after the decisive defeat inflicted on her aggressive forces in Oman, after world opinion in the United Nations has condemned her flagrant aggression against the Omani people in violation of the United Nations Charter and after United Nations decisions calling on Britain to withdraw its forces immediately from Oman and to recognise the right of the Omani people to self-determination.

2. After all this we find Britain today looking for a new way out of her difficulty. The only way out that she has found is to change her agents, hoping thereby to destroy the gains which the Omani people have achieved by their struggles and at the same time to show world opinion that she is diligent in implementing the decisions of the United Nations. So Britain has made this attempt at a time when the United Nations is once again studying the Omani problem because she fears that the world body will condemn her for not implementing the decisions of the United Nations - forgetting that this policy has been disclosed to the world. When the Omani people rebelled and took to arms they knew very well that Britain would do her best to weaken the revolution and its gains. This renewed and evil effort will therefore have no effect and will not lessen their determination or deceive them. The Omani people know TARIQ, whom Britain tries to make another of its lackeys, and they know his family and its evil intentions and its cruelty during its long period of black rule, and its direct connection with imperialism.

3. How can a people, after rebelling against imperialism, sacrificing its men, making great strides forward and striking advances in political and military fields, and obtaining revolutionary gains through bloody struggle, accept that there should come a day when it has to throw its achievements into the sea and allow itself to be deceived by honeyed imperialist propaganda? All of us know who TARIQ is and he, too, is known by the mountains of Oman and its valleys, in the houses and the mosques and by its children, its women and its sheikhs. For TARIQ left his mark on the souls of the Omanis when he was a leader with the imperialist forces and took part in the suppression of the revolution. Yes, TARIQ has killed the innocent, violated, raped, demolished houses over the heads of their occupants, destroyed irrigation canals and terrified women and children. After these original deeds, TARIQ now comes along to be king over this people to whom he has brought tragedy and who continue to suffer from the wounds he inflicted. All who know the history of TARIQ can judge for themselves that he is a war criminal and no leader of the people. We do not believe that those who know this will help him to obtain the throne and to rule over the people with iron and fire and the weapons of the colonialists.

4. O Omanis, publications have appeared recently bearing the name of TARIQ bin TAINUR and calling upon the people to co-operate with him in overthrowing his brother, removing oppression, bringing freedom, building and developing and so on! But all who have read these publications carefully know that this is a new imperialist plot against the people. TARIQ has not made clear his policy towards the Arab States, of which the Omani people are one. Nor has he criticised imperialism and its

/interference

Preamble

This Provisional Constitution has been prepared in fulfilment of the desire of the Omani people to reconcile constitutional Government with present-day requirements without affecting the traditional values of the country.

This Constitution will remain in force for a time sufficient to allow the Omani people to lay down the necessary conditions to determine a final Constitution in accordance with their requirements. The object of this Constitution is the unification of the Omani people in the achievement of their joint aspirations.

First Section: The State (al-dawla)

Article 1.

Oman forms one independent, indivisible kingdom. No part of its lands may be relinquished or detached.

Article 2.

Oman is an inseparable part of the Arab nation and of its heritage.

Article 3.

Islam is deemed to be the State religion and Arabic the national language.

Article 4.

The laws of the state are based on Islamic law.

Article 5.

The flag of Oman is two vertical stripes of equal size, one white and one red.

/Article 6.

interference in the affairs of the people. Far from it, for he has tied his policies to the imperialists!

5. With regard to these events and these imperialist plots, the Omani Revolutionary Command, with the backing of the entire Omani people, announce that it will not allow any lackey or interloper to make himself ruler of the people. It rejects all imperialist attempts aimed at interfering with the rights of the Omani people and throwing away its revolutionary gains. This represents the viewpoint of all Omanis, whether inside or outside the country. The rebellion will continue with determination against all malicious attempts like this and will continue the struggle until it achieves for the Omani people their full aims and restores freedom, honour and plundered rights. At the same time the leadership calls upon all Omani people - the educated classes, students, workers and peasants - to close ranks around the leadership and bear arms against this imperialist plot and to extend the field of battle to the plains and the mountains and to deny any opportunity to the colonialists and their lackeys.

The Omani Revolutionary Command in Dhaman

Article 6.

The capital of the state is the town of Masqat (until such time as the Council chooses the capital.

Article 7.

Omani citizens are :

- (a) all those permanently resident in Oman at the time when this Constitution comes into effect and who are not nationals of a foreign state and
- (b) all those resident abroad who are descended from an Omani father or grandfather. The nationality of other residents will be determined by the law of the land.

Article 8.

The State will ensure the protection of religion and of moral and cultural values. All other religious denominations will enjoy the protection of the State, which will guarantee their religious beliefs as long as this practice does not conflict with Article 4 of the Constitution.

Article 9.

The freedom of the individual is guaranteed to all within the limits of the law and accordingly all those citizens who have left the country for political or religious reasons may return in freedom and security. All political prisoners will be released.

Second Section: The Sovereign (al - malik)

Article 10

The sovereign is Supreme head of the State and his office is hereditary and confined to the Ruling Family.

Article 11

Appendix 9

Hamrin Conference decisions

The decisions of the Hamrin Conference, September 1968 and the formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Arab Gulf, September 1968, issued by the General Command of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf. Reference: DLF. (1974, January 12). *National Struggle documents, 1965-1974, Statement about 12th of December division's movement by resistant forces in the area, popular front to liberate the occupied Oman and the Arabian Gulf.*

The revolution in Dhofar, through its historic struggle, faced countless difficulties and suffered from numerous problems that made the revolution secluded and a captive of its painful reality. In addition to the bad conditions of the Arab reality, differences and fuzzy logic that accompanied the Arab revolution during its liberation process, and the Bourgeois class which dominated the Arab national democratic liberation movements, and what this group represents, by virtue of its ideological and class structure, through creating oscillatory policies, which serves primarily its own interests, objectives and class distinctions. This bitter reality reflected itself on the revolution in Dhofar. Although the revolution in Dhofar carried revolutionary goals and principles, this deteriorating reality made the revolution exposed to unhealthy climates and atmosphere. All of these factors, difficult conditions and unhealthy atmosphere formed the causes of closure and recession for the revolution. In addition to the criminal role played by the colonization, Arab reactionary authorities and the traditional political forces of the Imamah in Oman, in desperate attempts to strike the revolution and surround it at all levels. It tried its best to obscure the news of the armed struggle and to spread rumors and raise doubts about the great revolutionary struggle led by the Liberation Front in Dhofar and our dear hardworking people who spared no effort in the battle of liberation, the battle of honor and dignity, to eliminate the reactionary feudal colonial existence.

The Liberation Front of Dhofar, the leader of the armed struggle and the promoter of the revolution of the ninth of June in 1965 from the top of Dhofar lofty mountains, took a brave stand at the second conference held from September 1 to September 20, 1968 in the central region of (Hamrin) valley to rescue the front from the closure and recession it suffered and to set a strategy at all ideological, strategic and organizational levels. The second Front conference took a long and serious pause before the stage that the revolution underwent, and provided critical analytical studies of the revolution reality and the negative and positive factors affecting it. The conference had positive outcomes, the most important of which were:

1. Election of a new leadership.
2. Development of a national charter for the front.

The second conference of the Dhofar Liberation Front had resulted in historic decisions that pushed the revolutionary arm struggle progressively to great strides on the external and internal levels as well as on the ideological and strategic levels.

1. On the strategic level:

- A. There was the Commitment to organized revolutionary arm struggle, as the only way to defeat imperialism, backward-looking, bourgeois, and feudalism.
- B. Changing the name of the Front from Dhofar Liberation Front to the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Arab Gulf, and adopting a revolutionary strategy with comprehensive dimensions at the level of the occupied Arabian Gulf region to link the struggle of Dhofar with the struggle of the masses in the Arabian Gulf in order for the revolution to achieve its true meaning.
- C. Working to unify the revolutionary popular mass tool in the occupied Arab Gulf being the healthy revolutionary entrance for the unity of the organization.

2. On the ideological level:

Scientific socialism was adopted as the historical framework through which the poor masses struggled to eradicate colonialism, imperialism, bourgeoisie and feudalism, and as it is considered the scientific method of analyzing reality and understanding the contradictions among the people. The conference discussed at length all the plans and conferences organized by the global imperialist circles to suppress the national liberation movement in the occupied Arab Gulf and the Arab world in general. The Conference strongly condemned:

- A. federation of fake emirates of the Gulf (currently the United Arab Emirates).
- B. The Imamah in Oman and all the traditional political forces in the region that manipulate with the cause of the masses and raise false revolutionary slogans.

The Conference firmly supported the struggle of the people in Palestine represented by the armed Palestinian resistance. The Conference also supported the fair struggle of the people around the world against imperialist, feudalism and bourgeois regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Conference strongly condemned:

- A. The racist rule in Rhodesia.
- B. The racism in America.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Arab Gulf calls upon all revolutionary factions in the occupied Arab Gulf to bear their historic responsibilities and to abide by the decisions of the Second Conference and to implement them. It also urged all progressive Arab countries and friendly

socialist countries to support the fair struggle of their people, and to support it at all material, military, media and moral levels.

Victory will always be for struggling peoples, while defeat and shame for imperialists and reactionaries.

Long live the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf and long live the struggle of all peoples around the world to defeat imperialism and colonialism, bourgeoisie and feudalism.

Appendix 10

The support for the rebellion given by other less relevant countries (Iraq, Palestine and Syria)

Reference: Fayyad (1975). *People's war in Oman, the barefoot victory*. Beirut: General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, p. 139.

In Iraq, the apathy in relations was caused by the support provided to the Imam Ghalib Al Hinai, who had been named as an enemy by the new policy of the Front and had been accused of being a traditional political power that trades with public issues. As a consequence of this stance, the relationship between the rebels and the Iraqi government was completely severed (Dhiab, 1984, p. 165).

PFLOAG sought to establish relations with the governments of those Arab regimes described as progressive, such as Syria. The relationship that the Front enjoyed with Syria was limited to holding joint meetings between the officials of the two parties. The most important of these took place during the visit of the Front's delegation to Syria on 30th October 1969, under the leadership of Majeed Nasser, Chairman of the Front Political Committee (Dhiab, 1984, p. 165).

The attention given to the Palestinian cause and its inclusion in the statement of the HCD in 1968 was one of the most important political developments (HCD: Appendix 2). The reason for that was to get the front to support the Arab people. This support resulted in a close relationship with the Palestinian organisations that contributed to the transfer of expertise to the rebels

Appendix 11

Sultan Said's Speech, January 1968

Sultan Said reviewed the poor financial situation of the Sultanate when he took power in 1932. This outlines his achievements and his plans in organising and developing the country after the oil exportation. Reference: Beasant, J. (2002). *Oman: The True-life Drama and Intrigue of an Arab State*. London: Mainstream. pp. 209-214.

We consider the first period to run from pre-1914 to 1920. The Government in the era of our grandfather, Sultan Faisal bin Turki, and in the era before him had only a simple way of despatching all the affairs of the country; no budget, no planning and no organisation. Improvisation was the basis of all that was done and said. This was the situation prevailing at that time in most Arab countries.

In 1913 (1331) our beloved father, Sultan Taimur bin Faisal succeeded to the throne on the death of Sultan Faisal bin Turki. He inherited a legacy of many debts and a Government burdened with loans due to be repaid to the merchants of the country. This situation continued and the debts increased until 1920, when, realising it was not easy to rule the country with its finances in such a state of weakness and disorganisation, he determined to improve the State finances by introducing modern methods. Finally it was clear that his Government could make little progress until it was freed of its burden of debts, which, as we have said, were to a number of merchants in the country. He realised that it would be best to negotiate one major loan which would enable him to liquidate the old debts and still leave a surplus which could be used to achieve the desired reforms. The only body able to meet his request was the Government of British India, which agreed to lend him the money necessary to free himself from his debts on the understanding that it would be repaid in ten years. He decided at the same time to ask the Egyptian Government for officials to reorganise the Customs. The Egyptian Government agreed and sent him three Customs experts who set about their work with a will. He also engaged an English official, Mr D.V. McCullum, to supervise the reorganisation of the Finance Department. Thereafter the finances of the Government slowly recovered; there were no deficits in the annual budget and the loan instalments were paid off regularly. The English official engaged in 1920 stayed for only six months, however, and, in the absence of a successor, Sultan Taimur appointed Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Ghashn, then Wali of Matrah, as his Minister responsible for financial affairs. This situation prevailed until the end of 1924, when there was a deficit due to the negligence of the responsible officer and the maladministration of the Treasury Officer, as a result of which, the State's finances were so shaken as to make it impossible to continue to repay the instalments of the loan at the proper time.

The second period begins in 1925 when, in view of the poor state of

Government finances, Sultan Taimur bin Faisal, decided to engage a new official to reorganise them. He selected an Englishman, Mr Bertram Thomas, whom he appointed as Finance Minister on a five-year contract, with a view to his improving the financial position of the Government. (Mr Thomas was the first Westerner to cross the Empty Quarter, doing so from Dhofar to Qatar in 54 days.) At the outset he exerted considerable efforts which produced a measure of improvement in financial affairs but unfortunately this improvement was not maintained for more than three years, after which the financial situation again deteriorated and the Government ceased to repay the instalments of the loan. This was due to the maladministration of the official referred to in the previous period for he allowed Government spending to exceed the approved Budget. This led to a deficit and disorder in the State's finances. The balance of payments was upset and unpaid instalments of the loan, and other expenditure, piled up, constituting a new debt, additional to the balance of the previous one.

In 1930 an economic slump struck the world. This affected the trade balance, resulting in a sharp fall in Customs revenues, which were virtually the Government's only source of revenue. While great hopes were pinned on Mr Thomas to repair what others had destroyed, he in fact brought the finances to ruin and left them in an even sorrier state.

Thereafter Sultan Taimur bin Faisal considered engaging a financial expert to put right what was wrong. In 1931 he engaged as his Financial Adviser, Mr Hedgecock, an Englishman and a senior official of the Iraqi Finance Ministry, who immediately set to work with great vigour and determination to rescue the finances from the state they were in as a result of Bertram Thomas' maladministration. He reduced salaries and cut expenditure and was eventually able to put the financial records in order and to organise proper Budgets. We reveal no secrets if we say that at that time the Government's Budget was no more than Rps. 700,000 (£50,000) from which the Sultanate had to pay the cost of the Government machine, repay the balance of the loan and meet various other items of expenditure, including the customary gifts and presents to the tribal Sheikhs and delegations, since, outwardly, the Government appeared very rich. Mr Hedgecock deserves admiration and respect for what he did to reorganise the finances of the Sultanate. Unfortunately, however, he did not stay long, resigning for private reasons after eight months.

At that time we were Prime Minister with oversight of the Sultanate's financial affairs. After the resignation of Mr Hedgecock it was decided to appoint Mr R.J. Alban, an Englishman, as Financial Adviser. And then, on 2 Shawal 1350 (11 February 1932), we succeeded to power upon the abdication, for reasons of health, of our beloved father, Sultan Taimur bin Faisal.

We gave our special attention to finance but found that because of the effects of economic pressure on world trade we were compelled to reduce expenditure in various sectors, our first economy being to halve the Sultan's Privy Purse. The reader may be surprised to learn that when we took over the reins of power the Sultanate's Treasury was completely empty. No doubt many of our contemporaries will recall what the financial situation was like in those days.

However, thanks to painstaking efforts and close supervision of finances signs of improvement became visible, and, as 1933 neared its end, debts had been liquidated and the sums due to the merchants paid off. At the end of 1933 the Financial Adviser resigned whereupon we assumed complete personal control of

the Sultanate's finances and the preparation of its annual Budgets. The improvement in Customs revenues continued (the Sultanate having no other income to speak of) enabling us to raise officials' salaries and to give attention to the welfare of the Sultanate. The financial position has continued to improve until the present day.

The third period runs from 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, until 1945. During this period prices rose and consequently so too did Customs revenues. We further increased officials' salaries and undertook much needed reforms in various parts of the Sultanate. From 1933 to this day there has been no financial deficit in the Government's Budget and the Government has been able to build up reasonable financial reserves against emergencies, as well as meeting necessary expenditure in various fields, especially that of defence, which swallowed up about half the Budget. We were anxious to introduce various urgently needed reforms for the welfare of the country, but found that there was not enough leeway either in the Budget or in the reserves to support any sort of planning, for we did not want to overburden the Sultanate's finances and weigh them down with new debts, after having paid off all the old ones. Doubtless it would have been easy to obtain money in various ways, but this could only have been by a loan with interest set at a percentage rate. This amounts to usury, with which I completely disagree, and the religious prohibition of which is not unknown.

By now the financial position of the Sultanate will have been made plain to you by the facts we have set out for you, and which account for the inability of the Government of the time to bring the country up to date. We were fully aware of the many reforms which the country needed, but whilst the eyesight was long, the arm at that time was short. Despite all this, however, we were never at a loss to undertake any work which brought general benefit to the country whenever we found a way to do so. For example, when the opportunity occurred in 1940, during the war, we built the Saidiya School in Muscat, the first Government building constructed after getting over the difficult period. Similarly we made a number of improvements to Government centres and forts in various Wilayets.

In 1958 our friends, the British Government, offered us financial assistance to strengthen the Sultanate's Army; to introduce improvements in education; to set up Health Centres in some of the Wilayets along the coast and in the interior; to build Experimental Farms to raise the standard of farming in the country; to construct roads and other improvements. We accepted this with deep gratitude. There was a time limit to it in that it was to continue only until the finances of the Sultanate improved. It continued until the end of March last year, i.e., four months before oil exports began at the end of July 1967. During this interim period we depended upon such financial reserves as we had. Had it not been for our economy and for our reserves, we would not have been able to bear the burden of expenditure during these months. In particular the allocation to the Sultanate Army took up a large part of our resources until the Government obtained its share of oil revenues.

Now the oil flow from the fields at Fahud and Natih through the pipes to the tanks at Mina Al Fahl in Saih Al Maleh (which ought now to be called Saih al Huluw). Soon the product of another field at Jibal near Fahud will flow to join the output of the first two fields supplying the tanks at Saih Al Huluw whence the oil is pumped out to the tankers anchored at Mina Al Fahl to be carried away. Thus

We ask the Almighty whose works are great to inspire us to do that which is right, to crown our efforts with success, bring us success in our enterprises and grant us victory in our desires. We are humble towards him whose power is sublime and brings us success in what is for the good of our Omani people and our country.

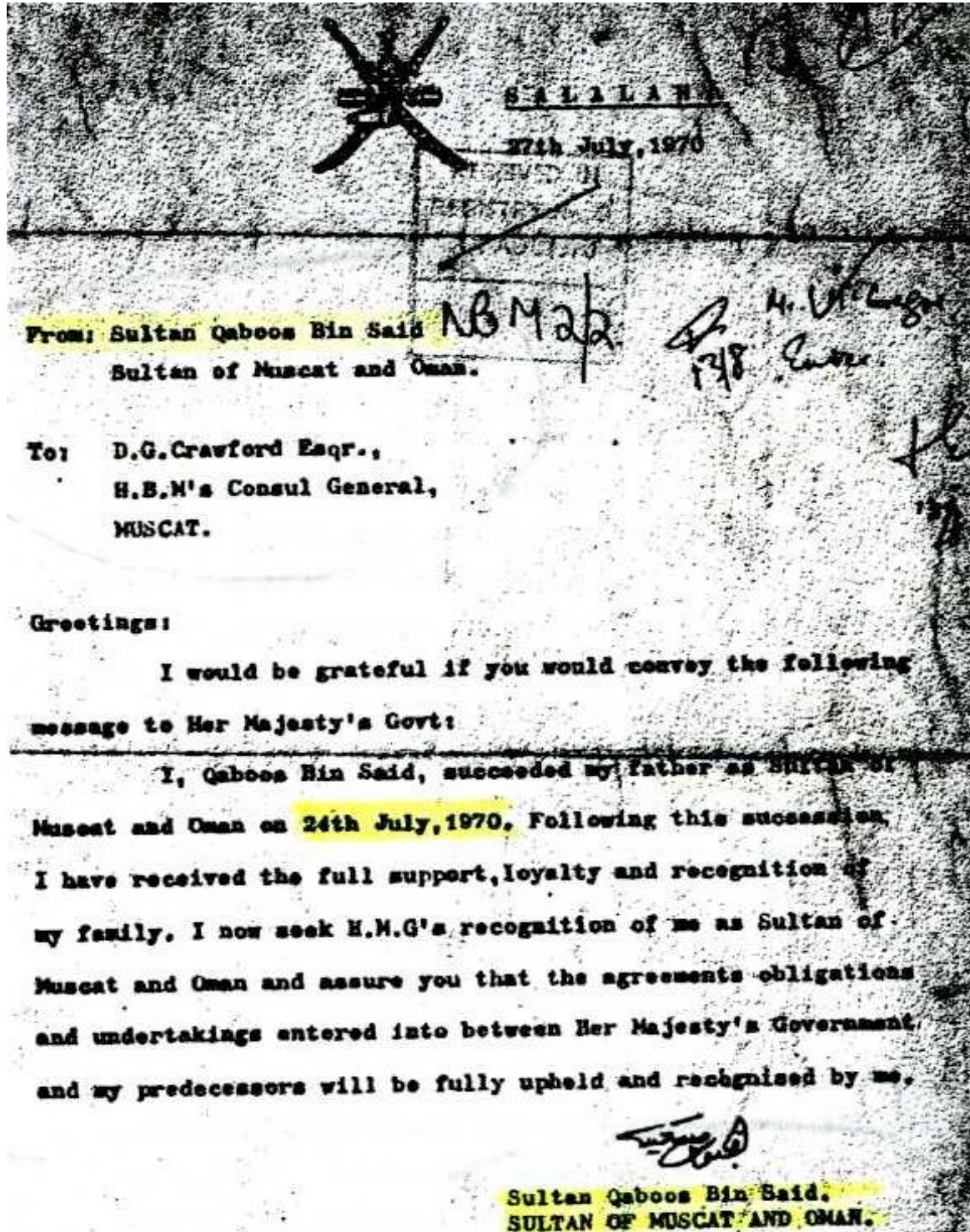
The statement issued by Sultan Said bin Taimour on 1 January 1968, explaining to his people the country's past financial condition and clearly setting out his plans for natural development when Oman is in receipt of revenue from oil.

Opposite Page: The Foreign Office Minute illustrating Britain's involvement in the forced removal of Sultan Said bin Taimour from his throne. The Minute refers to the 'coup . . . last night', and is dated 23 July 1970. Yet the coup did not take place until the afternoon of that day. The minute was actually written before the palace coup had been staged.

Appendix 12

Sultan Qaboos letter to the British government requesting recognition

Reference: UKNA, NBM 2/2, A Letter from Sultan Qaboos to HMG, Dated 27 July 1970



From: Sultan Qaboos Bin Said

Sultan of Muscat and Oman

TO: D.G. Crawford Fsqa.

H.B.M's Consul General,

Muscat

Greetings:

I would be grateful if you convey the following message to Her Majesty's Govt:

I, Qaboos Bin Said, succeeded my father as Muscat and Oman on 24th July, 1970. Following this succession, I have received the full support loyalty and recognition of my family. I now seek H.M.G'S recognition of as Sultan of Muscat and Oman and assure you that the agreements obligations and undertakings entered into between Her Majesty's Government and my predecessors will be fully upheld and recognised by me.

Sultan Qaboos Bin Said.

Sultan of Muscat And Oman

Appendix 13

Speech by Sultan Qaboos 23 July 1970

Speech given to his people on the day of his accession

Reference: *Sultan Qaboos Speech*. (1990). Muscat: Ministry of Media.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
I PROMISE you to proceed forthwith in the process of creating a modern government. My first act will be the immediate abolition of all the unnecessary restrictions on your lives and activities.

My people,

I will proceed as quickly as possible to transform your life into a prosperous one with a bright future. Every one of you must play his part towards this goal. Our country in the past was famous and strong. If we work in unity and co-operation, we will regenerate that glorious past and we will take a respectable place in the world.

I call upon you to continue living as usual. I will be arriving in Muscat in the coming few days and then I will let you know of my future plans.

My people,

I and my new government will work to achieve our general objective.

My people, my brothers,

Yesterday it was complete darkness and with the help of God, tomorrow will be a new dawn on Muscat, Oman and its people.

God bless us all, and may He grant our efforts success.

Appendix 14

Sultan Qaboos speech in 1973

Speech given on the occasion of opening the governmental ministries complex on the 3rd National Day, 18th November 1973. Reference: *Sultan Qaboos Speech*. (1990). Muscat: Ministry of Media.

Dear Countrymen

WE brothers are a nation which emerged three years ago, and which has, during this period, achieved gains which have a worthy place in Oman's history, signs which illuminate the future road towards our aims, and we are responsible for maintaining these gains so that our country will reach the peak of glory and dignity.

Your strong determination and genuine drive for the advancement of your country is the incentive of our blessed march.

Countrymen, strange winds are blowing in our region and strange, alien concepts which influence those who advocate these factions and parties which separate brothers and the father from his son. Those who advocated these alien concepts under misleading slogans have committed the most horrid crimes. They have sold themselves to the devil and they were deceived by delusions.

On this glorious day, our National Day, we express our thanks and gratitude to those heroes, men of our armed services and wish them a happy year. We also salute the men of our national firqats which were formed to fight on the side of our heroic forces against the terrorism of the communist gangs in the mountains of Dhofar. The struggle we are waging against atheism is a sacred duty which our religion imposes upon us.

Our attitude in relation to the so-called Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf is the same attitude in which we began our new era. We said at the time "let bygones be forgotten ... return to your country and resume building and construction, for the darkness of the past shall be transformed to light and we all shall face an historical responsibility before this Country. Those who are loyal to this country have responded, and they have hastened to us from every place, to participate in our efforts and to bear the responsibility to have the honor of contributing in serving their country and, until this day, we are still receiving individuals and groups, who have been misled to begin their life under the shadow of their Government; but those who insist on subversion and insurgence or try to threaten security, we shall hit them strongly and they shall bear the consequences of their action.

We stand strongly in the face of subversive operations and Communism thoughts to safeguard the honor of our country and do away with all obstacles and challenges.

In the field of Education, we have this year more than 100 schools and 1,300 teachers of both sexes and about 38,000 students. We have ordered the construction of a boarding school to teach the children of those who came to Salalah from the mountains of Dhofar and those who saved themselves and their children from terrorism and Communist teachings.

In the field of health, large hospitals, clinics and health centres are being built in various parts of the Sultanate to provide health services to the citizens. In addition to the sixteen hospitals, there are 55 clinics staffed by 67 doctors and ten specialists.

In order to facilitate communications, roads are being constructed. Following the completion of the Muscat-Sohar road, work has begun on constructing the Sohar-Khatmet-Malaha road and the Nizwa-Seeb road. At the same time, the road which links the Southern province with the North is being improved and an agreement has been concluded on the Muscat-Muttrah marine road to facilitate movement between the two towns and it is hoped that this project will be completed in 1975.

The last stage of the construction of Qaboos Port is nearing completion, and work has actively begun on Raysut harbour and on the improvement of Sur harbour.

Seeb International Airport is on a par with other large international airports in receiving aircraft and provides the necessary services to the passengers day and night.

This week the Central Laboratory for the General Committee for Development will be opened and the foundation stone for the Qaboos town complex will be laid, an agreement has also been reached for the construction of a cement factory which will produce one million tons of cement per year.

On our foreign policy, we have announced the lines of this policy on various occasions. We are part of the Arab nation and are linked to the unity of its aim and destiny. Our attitude on Arab issues is frank and clear. We have declared our solidarity with our Arab brothers, and the people of Oman have showed a genuine spirit in standing against Zionist aggression and in supporting the Arab fight in restoring all Arab territories which the enemy has occupied by force, treachery and terrorism. We shall always support the Arab fight with blood and money and back it with all our powers.

Oman continues in its efforts and heroic activities in the world community and contributes its share in resolving international problems and issues to prove its presence as a member of the United Nations and to expand its strong desire for maintaining peace and stability between the various countries of the world and the establishment of friendly and mutual relations with every country which extends a hand of friendship to us on the basis of mutual respect.

We have paid several visits to our brothers in the Arab countries to strengthen brotherly ties and exchange viewpoints with them on the issues which interest us all. We also attended the conference which was held in Algeria last September and have participated in its debates and recommendations. We drew the guidelines of our country's policy which is represented in non-interference in the affairs of others and in the rejection of any interference in the affairs of our country, the setting up of relations based on friendship and co-operation with all peace-loving countries, and supporting the struggle of our peoples in their endeavours to obtain freedom and independence.

I wish you a happy year and may Allah grant you success, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon you.

Appendix 15

Schedules illustrate the differences in Oman's economy after the ascension of Sultan Qaboos

Reference: Oman Ministry of Commerce and Industries (1980). *Oman economy in ten years, July 1970- July 1980*. Muscat: Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Table 1

Gross Domestic Product

(1974 1970)

R.O. million

1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	Sector
17,4	16,7	17,0	16,8	16,6	Agriculture and Fisheries
389,0	94,5	76,4	73,9	71,6	Mining (oil)
2,0	0,6	0,3	0,2	0,2	Industry
58,0	24,0	22,6	20,4	8,5	Construction
12,3	4,4	3,2	2,1	0,7	transportation
1,2	0,9	0,7	0,3	0,1	Electricity and water
27,2	8,3	3,8	2,8	1,6	Domestic Trade
3,5	0,9	0,8	0,7	0,6	Banks
4,8	2,9	2,5	2,1	1,5	Rents
46,7	13,1	11,0	4,1	2,3	Government defense
6,7	3,1	2,5	1,7	1,0	administration
					Other services
568,5	169,8	140,8	125.1	104.7	Total GDP

Table 2
Gross national income
(1974 1970)
R.O. million

1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	In use
246,8	103,6	76,8	47,4	33,9	Consumption
(49,6)	(40,6)	(35,1)	(21,4)	(20,2)	(Special) (governmental)
(197,2)	(63,0)	(41,7)	(26,0)	(13,7)	
<u>174,1</u>	<u>44,4</u>	<u>42,0</u>	<u>35,6</u>	<u>13,1</u>	Investment
(31,3)	(14,5)	(12,1)	(15,6)	(1,7)	(Privet)
(142,8)	(29,9)	(29,9)	(20,0)	(11,4)	(governmental)
<u>147,6</u>	<u>21,4</u>	<u>22,0</u>	<u>42,1</u>	<u>57,7</u>	Net exports of goods and services
(393,2)	(102,3)	(83,6)	(82,3)	(78,7)	Exports of goods and services
					Minus
(345,6_)	(80,9_)	(61,6_)	(40,2_)	(21,0_)	Imports of goods and services
568,5	169,4	140,8	125,1	104,7	GDP at market price
86,6_	41,0_	29,0_	20,0_	18,2_	Minus the net proceeds of factors of production transfers
481,9	128,4	111,8	105,1	86,5	GNP at market price
2,3_	1,7_	1,6_	1,1_	1,1_	Minus net indirect taxes
479,6	126,7	110,2	104,0	85,4	GDP at factor cost

Table 3**Employment in Oman in the years 1970 1975**

The private sector				Government				
Foreigners percentage	Total	Foreigners Number	Omanis percentage	Foreigners percentage	Total	Foreigners Number	Omanis	Year
–	–	–	–	%9,6	1750	120	1630	1970
–	–	–	–	%8,2	3112	255	2857	1971
%40,9	35000	14000	20500	%10,4	5318	553	4865	1972
%48,9	47000	23000	24000	%18,4	9073	1670	7403	1973
%61,5	65000	40000	25000	%24,9	12035	3000	9035	1974
%69,9	93000	28000	28000	%27,6	15147	4180	10967	1975

Comparison of the production of the oil sector and GDP

Percentage	Oil sector production	Total GDP	Year
%69,11	71,6	103,6	1970
%59,59	73,9	124,0	1971
%34,88	76,4	139,2	1972
%56,35	94,5	167,7	1973
%68,7	389,0	566,2	1974
%67,5	486,8	721,7	1975
%61,4	505,2	822,5	1976
%60,0	525,4	875,5	1977
%54,0	481,2	888,2	1978
%64,4	750,3	1164,4	1979

Oil production in Oman

The number of wells Produced	Daily production rate (Thousand barrels)	Annual output (Million barrels)	Year
21	57	20,9	1967
39	241	87,9	1967
58	382	119,7	1969
36	332	121,3	1970
79	294	107,4	1971
359	383	303,8	1972
143	293	107,0	1973
150	290	105,8	1974
207	341	124,6	1975
224	368	134,3	1976
238	340	124,1	1977
253	314	114,5	1978
308	295	107,6	1979

**Authority hometown of cash Omani Monetary Council of the evolution of foreign assets
during the past from 1970 to the end of March 1975**

End of March 1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	Year	the findings
0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,9		Gold Balances currencies
33,1	24,6	14,5	13,5	8,5	4,3		Foreign
							Special Drawing Rights
0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	–	–		Sultanate at the
							International Monetary
8,1	6,3	0,7	0,7	0,7	–		Fund Account
3,7	3,0	1,3	0,4	–	–		Other reserves
45,4	34,4	17,0	15,1	9,4	5,2		Other

Development of activity of commercial banks

(The number of bank, branches, regional distribution and the total assets and liabilities)

June 1980	1977	1975	1973	1970	The statement - Year
20	20	13	7	3	The number of banks (the main offices)
120	83	42	20	4	Number of bank branches
140	103	55	27	7	Total
73	58	44	18	7	The number of banks and branches in the Capital area
67	45	11	9	–	The number of banks and branches outside the Capital area
468,6	321,1	197,3	52,1	37,5	Total assets and liabilities O.R. million

The evolution of public debt during the years from 1972 to 1979

Total	Short terms loans	Medium terms loans	Long terms loans	Year
7,2	7,2	–	–	1972
10,9	7,7	3,2	–	1973
94,5	69,8	3,9	20,8	1974
144,0	84,3	26,9	32,8	1975
223,7	118,9	56,2	48,6	1976
200,8	59,5	79,3	62,0	1977
220,2	74,6	65,1	80,5	1978
168,2	14,7	43,8	109,7	1979

Distribution of Omani exports during the period from 1970 to 1979 (O.R. million)

1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	Year-Exports
745,7 4,7	521,8 3,3	545,9 5,1	543,8 1,4	488,1 1,1	418,7 0,4	114,3 0,6	88,2 0,4	87,6 0,4	91,6 0,4	Oil exports
										Non-oil exports
750,4	525,1	547,4	545,2	489,2	419,1	114,9	88,6	88,0	92,0	Total exports
37,0	26,9	12,0	6,0	–	–	–	–	–	–	Re-export
787,4	552,0	559,4	551,3	489,2	419,1	114,9	88,6	88,9	92,0	Total exports and re-exports

Appendix 16

Ahleesh conference decision

Reference: PFLO, P. S. (1975). *PFLO Political Statement of the Second Conference, 9th August 1974. 9th June magazine, issue 5. PFLO Emergency Conference Decisions (n.d.) The Emergency Conference Decisions*. Aden, pp. 39-44

Political statement and the National Action Program issued by the Front in December 1971

Political statement

based on the common convictions and positions and in response to all colonial and reactionary plans in Oman and the Arabian Gulf, and culmination of all previous meetings and practical steps, the leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Arab Gulf held a unified conference at the end of 1971 to mobilize all efforts and energies to escalate the struggle against British colonialism and its agents. It is an important step on the road to establishing the Broad People's Front in Oman and the Arabian Gulf.

The Conference had a long pause before the arrangements and amendments created by colonial circles in the recent past in light of the so-called British withdrawal and the wide-range of secret and public political and military movements of imperialism and reactionaries which aim to obstruct the march of the national revolution, falsify their imperialist slogans and objectives, and secure their interests and locations in the region.

Due to the increase in armed popular revolution in Dhofar, the growing popular resentment and revolutionary tide throughout the entire region, and the dangerous effect it will have on the complex of imperial interests and the vast backward tribal conditions in Oman and the Arabian Gulf, the British colonialism raised the issue of its fake withdrawal to be able to arrange the situation and conditions in the reign by assistance of American imperialism and its agents in Saudi Arabia and Iran to confront the whole revolutionary developments.

The colonialist and reactionary forces became significantly active. Meetings, delegations and suspicious visits by the imperialist agents to the region increased over the past period. The imperialists came up with many criminal projects to tighten their grip on our people and prevent them from taking control by all means. After the mutual understanding among imperialists powers and the distribution of the shares and roles between their agents, they announced the fake independence of Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, and continued to patch up the deteriorating situation in the northern part of the country.

The colonial circles not only divided the region and spoiled its resources while continuing the war of genocide against our people in Dhofar, but also worked to hand over parts of our land to the feudal rule of the Iranian military moments before the announcement of the Confederation of the suspicious agents, and before the official announcement of the fraudulent withdrawal of Britain from the region. The Imperialism aim was to provoke and deepen the chauvinistic hatreds, strike the

Arab and Iranian peoples against one another and falsify the nature of the battle in the region. It also aimed to achieve the expansionist ambitions of the Iran Shah rule and to create repressive bases in these islands (i.e. the Hallaniyat Islands where the Iranian forces were present) to use against our people, and the liberation movement.

Recent political events and developments have tangibly demonstrated not only the organic link between the ruling tribal families, colonialism, and Arab and Iranian reactionary, but also their total betrayal and constant willingness to sacrifice national interests and national territory to satisfy their imperialist masters and continue to exploit the people and plunder the resources.

The colonial circles paid great attention to the Sultanate due to its strategic location, the intensification of the armed revolution in Dhofar region and the progressive ideological and strategic dimensions it gained after the Hamrin Conference. Following the eruption of the armed struggle in Oman, the British departments rushed to implement their new plans in the area. They replaced Said bin Taymour with his son HM Sultan Qaboos, worked to gather agents and collaborators, and launched a wide misleading campaign to strike the revolution from within, and withdraw public support. However, the steadfastness of the armed revolution in Dhofar, its ability to thwart the divisive plot carried out by colonist agents on 12 September 1970, the victories of the People's Liberation Army and the popular militia and the rise of the mass movement throughout the Sultanate forced colonial circles to reveal more of their dirty schemes as they started sending increasing numbers of British soldiers to fight the revolution.

The imperialists are well aware of the depth of the political contradiction between them and the masses of our hardworking people. They are working in various ways to strengthen their front and ease the contradictions among their ranks by increasing the plundering of our wealth, opening the region's markets to more capitalist monopolies, and through formal concessions among them, and the wide common interests that they share. The whole of these criminal schemes is borne by the masses of our people, especially its national groups and hard-working classes which are increasingly suffering from national and class oppression.

The forces of the hardworking people and the national groups must stand together against the imperialists and reactionaries unity to confront their fierce schemes in our region, defend the national territory, liberate the region from old and modern colonialism and achieve the national objectives and democracy for which our masses have sacrificed thousands of martyrs. In face of the unity of the imperialists and reactionaries and their united front, the forces of the revolution must unite and consolidate to establish one national front against the imperialist and reactionary front and thwart their efforts.

As a result of this scientific and correct understanding of the nature of the contradictions existing in Oman and the Arabian Gulf and its primary and secondary forces, the conference was held in one of the liberated areas in the Dhofar region. The conference discussed these urgent matters as a whole and suggested the practical steps which must be taken.

In an atmosphere of positive and revolutionary spirit, the Conference concluded the following important decisions and achievements:

1. Integration of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the occupied Arabian Gulf and the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf in one front under the name of (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf).
2. Discussion and adoption of the National Democratic Action Program and the Internal Regulations submitted by the Preparatory Committee.
3. Election of a unified leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf.

These decisions and revolutionary steps that have been accomplished are undoubtedly a genuine and revolutionary entry point for the integration of all national forces and groups into a broad united front, to mobilize the energies and potentials of the masses to confront the colonial and reactionary enemy. The establishment of the broad frontline on the battlefield in Oman and the Arabian Gulf, extension of the armed struggle as a basic and strategic method, escalation of other mass struggles, and the rooting of their slogans are the primary tasks before the revolution at this critical stage.

The founding conference of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf salutes the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the popular Democratic uprisings of the poor peasants and fishermen. It also pays tribute to the heroic steadfast stance of the revolution inside and outside with the revolution in Oman and the Arabian Gulf, and declares its absolute stand against all imperialist and reactionary schemes aimed at disrupting the revolution and overthrowing its progressive regime. The conference also emphasizes the need to develop and strengthen the struggle and organizational relations between the two organizations, the National Front and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. The conference also salutes the struggle of the Yemeni people in the north to overthrow the reactionary feudal system and establish a united democratic Yemen.

The founding conference supports the struggle of the masses and their progressive forces in the Arabian Peninsula to overthrow the autocratic rule in the so-called Saudi Arabia and calls for consolidating and strengthening relations between the factions of the National Democratic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula.

The conference also salutes the struggle of the Iranian people against feudal military rule and declares its stand alongside with its progressive forces and the necessity of strengthening the fighting relations between the Arab and Iranian peoples to bring down all imperialist and reactionary plans aimed at destroying them and deepening their chauvinistic tendencies.

The Founding Conference of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf declares its absolute support to the Palestinian armed revolution and its national forces and believes that the unity of Palestinian action, adherence to the long-term popular war strategy and

mobilization of the Palestinian public's energies is the right way to respond to the total surrendering solutions and reactionary conferences aimed at the liquidation of the Palestinian revolution and the entrenchment of the Zionist entity.

The interdependence of the revolution in Oman, the Arabian Gulf and Palestine is a strong and organic bond which emphasizes the need to coordinate and mobilize efforts against the common enemy. The colonial rule in Palestine is a watchtower for the imperialist interests throughout the Arab world, including the massive oil revolution in Oman and the Arabian Gulf. The founding conference of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf emphasizes the need to establish a close relationship between the forces of the Palestinian revolution and the real armed revolution in Oman and the Arabian Gulf.

The Founding Conference affirms the necessity of establishing the Arab Progressive Front to mobilize energies and coordinate with the progressive revolutionary forces in the Arab world in face of the massive imperialist campaign aimed at liquidating the positions of the Arab revolution, establishing reactionary regimes and securing the global imperialism interests in the Arab region.

The Founding Conference declares its support to the national liberation movements on the three continents, and stands by the forces of progress and socialism in their fair struggle against the imperialist and global capitalist powers.

Foundational Conference of the Popular Front

To liberate Oman and the Arabian Gulf

Appendix 17

The mountain and the plain: the rebellion in Oman

Reference: Secret intelligence memorandum, U.S.A Directorate of Intelligence, No. 20 34/72, entitled "The mountain and the plain: the Rebellion in Oman", issued on 19th May, 1972.

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The mountain and the plain: the Rebellion in Oman

SECRET

19 May, 1972

No. 20 34/72

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Directorate of intelligence

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The mountain and the plain: the rebellion in Oman

The sultan of Oman, at the south-eastern end of the Arabian Peninsula, has been experiencing rebellion since 1963. The rebellion, which threatens to cut off Oman's western province of Dhofar, had its seeds in years of discontent over poor social and economic conditions and the authoritarian rule of the Omani sultans. This discontent has been exploited by leftist elements, assisted by the radical regime in neighbouring Yemen (Aden). The leftists have organized a political front with a guerrilla army that has fought for the last several years for control of Dhofar. Government forces have begun to strike back, and since late last year, they have recovered some areas of the province from rebel control. They are now engaged in an offensive that the government believes will turn the tides in its favour; the monsoon may bring the offensive to a halt before this happens.

NOTE: this memorandum was prepared by the office of current intelligence and coordinated within CIA.

The setting

1. Dhofar, which covers an area of approximately 30,000 square miles, has a population of about 35,000. It has few towns – the provincial capital of Salalah, Taqah and Mirbat being the most important-and a hand full of villages. Most of the other locations appearing on maps are water holes or vaguely defined areas associated with the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes which inhabit the mountains. The narrow 250-mile coastal plain benefits from the southwest monsoon from late May through September. As a result, the coastal plains and the seaward slopes of the 3000 to 4000 foot mountains are green and fertile. From the crest of the mountain, many Wadis run northward through a barren and arid landscape towards the sands of the Rub al Khali-the Empty Quarter. The Dhofar rebels have capitalized on both weather and terrain in their guerrilla war against the British-led forces of the sultan.

The beginning

2. The roots of the insurgency lie in the long-standing demand by the Dhofari traditionalists to be separated from Oman. For centuries the sultans of Oman have claimed authority in Dhofar, but the province has been troubled by almost constant dissidence and unrest as Dhofaris persistently resisted this outside rule. Separated from the more populous part of Oman by hundreds of miles of desert, Dhofar has been and is more closely linked religiously, tribally, economically and linguistically to the Hadhramaut area of Yemen (Aden) than to the rest of Oman.
3. Dhofaris as well as other Omanis, became increasingly restive in the early 1960s as a result of the social and political restrictions imposed upon them by the reactionary and authoritarian sultan Said bin Taymur Al Bu Said. The capricious sultan ruled the country from 1932 until 1970, when he was deposed by his son, sultan Qabus. The discovery of oil in the sultanate in 1963 made small difference to the Dhofaris; most of what little economic and social development was started by the government was undertaken in Oman itself. A growing number of sultan Said's Dhofari subjects came to resent this neglect, maladministration, and heavy-handed eccentricities.
4. The current rebellion is usually traced to an uprising in 1963 staged by members of the Bait Kathir tribe who had joined the Dhofar Benevolent Society, a religious and social welfare organization. This group was composed mostly of Dhofari nationalists favouring secession; they were soon joined by the members of the local branch of the leftists Arab Nationalist Movement and some Dhofaris returning from service in the British-sponsored Trucial Oman scouts (now the defense force of the United Arab Emirate). The merger resulted in the creation of the Dhofar Liberation Front, which pledged to detach Dhofar from Oman by armed force. By 1964 Iraq might have been providing military training for a few rebels; by mid-1965, the front was receiving limited financial and military aid from Egypt and Iraq. Its first anti-regime military action took place in June 1965.

5. The revolt was initially small and limited for the most part to sporadic attacks on traffic along the mountain road linking Salalah and Thamarit. The sultan of Oman took a complacent view of the rebellion, considering it little more than another expression of the tribal and religious enmity that had frequently plagued his regime. He preferred to keep his small British-led army near Muscat and ordered local security forces to deal with the rebels.
6. It was not long before the Dhofar Liberation Front began to move to the left. A left-wing faction – largely from the Qara tribe talked about Arab unity, socialism, anti-colonialism, and pan-Persian Gulf revolution, but the right wing Bait Kathir tribal faction in the front remained primarily concerned with Dhofari separation. The eventual triumph of the leftist element was ensured by events in neighbouring Yemen (Aden), where the radical national front came to power in late 1967 after the British had withdrawn. The new regime in Aden became an active patron of the Dhofar Liberation Front, providing arms, money, an outlet for rebel publicity and propaganda, and a safe haven for the guerrillas. The Yemen (Aden)port of Hawf and the interior town of Habarut became important supply depots for material being passed to the insurgents. By mid-1968, the rebels were able to make daylight raids on Salalah and Mirbat, and by the end of the year the rebels were fairly well-equipped and organized, and more aggressive.

The popular front

7. The growing strength of the radical wing was reflected at a 20-day meeting, since described as a turning point in the rebellion, which was held in September 1968 at Hamrin. The Dhofar Liberation Front was renamed the Popular Front for the liberation of the occupied Arab Gulf. A 40-member General command was elected to replace the old leaders, and a new statement of goals was promulgated. The new name signified the organization was no longer concentrating on Dhofari separatism, but was committed to a people's war throughout the Persian Gulf, which was described as a single historical, geographical, and ethnic entity. The Hamrin delegates adopted Marxism-Leninism as their ideology.
8. The popular front is run by a central committee, with sub-units responsible for Dhofar political affair, training, finance and supply. Its headquarters are in Aden; other offices are located in Cairo, Kuwait, Bagdad and Bahrain. The front has announced the "cult of leadership", and for this reason as well as for security, leaders are rarely mentioned. But it is believed that Muhammad Ahmad Salal al-Ghassani, a Chinese trained Dhofari of the Qara tribe, is the front's chief.
9. The size of the front's people's liberation army is a well-shrouded secret; estimates have been as high as several thousands. Nearly all the guerrillas in Dhofar are believed to be indigenous to that area; in fact, it is estimated that only about 10 percent of the People's Liberation Army is composed of non-Dhofaris, mostly Gulf Arab and Adenis. The front also supports the People's Militia, made up of less committed armed supporters in sympathetic villages; these number about 2,000. The front has no

permanent military bases in Dhofar, and rebel camps are moved every two weeks or so, in part because food and water are scarce in the mountains. The guerrillas operate in groups of 20-40 men. These groups have names such as the Ho Chi Minh unit and the Che Guevara unit. They avoid pitched battles with the sultan's armed forces, and as a result, losses have been low on both sides. The rebels favor tactics such as the mining of roads, the ambushing of patrols and the use of mortars to shell targets.

10. Basic military training and political education are conducted at Hawf and Jadhīb in Yemen (Aden). Recruits are reported given heavy doses of lectures on class struggle and wars of national liberation, with frequent references to Marx, Lenin and Mao; the goal is to prepare both "fighters and politicians".
11. Following the Hamrin conference, the front undertook new military initiatives in Dhofar, and the number of rebel attacks increased markedly. By mid-1970 the rebels controlled the coastline from the Aden border to within a few miles of Salalah and held many coastal villages such as Mirbat and Sādh, east of Salalah. They moved at will through the mountains and along numerous overland routes. The environs of Salalah were sporadically attacked.
12. In pressing their drive, the rebels enjoyed certain advantages; a sanctuary across the Aden border; admirable guerrilla terrain in the mountains and wadis; and the sympathy and cooperation of a substantial proportion of the Dhofaris. It is estimated that at one time, about two thirds of the population supported the rebels. The front looked to civilians to supply informers, messengers, lookouts and workers. Terrorist tactics have been used against Dhofaris who failed to cooperate.
13. Both for ideological reasons and in an attempt to destroy existing patterns of leadership, the front made an effort to reorder the society in the so-called "liberated" areas. In particular, it undertook to eliminate the traditional tribal and kingship system of Dhofar, which it saw as irrelevant to the needs of the revolution. Front leaders have claimed "dazzling success" in replacing tribal relations with "comrade relations".
14. Although the front is committed to "liberate" all of the Gulf, the organization has yet to get off the ground outside of Dhofar. Most front organizers appear to be primarily occupied with raising funds and with political indoctrination rather than with armed subversion. The Dhofaris have little interest in fighting for anything but Dhofar. For instance, large number of Dhofaris living in Abu Dhabi who had been active in the Dhofar Liberation Front lost interest and stopped their financial contributions when the leftists took control.

The New Popular Front

15. Last January, the popular front announced that it had merged with another left-wing organization that had been operating in northern Oman intermittently since early 1970. The new organization took as its name "The Popular Front for The Liberation of Oman and The Arab Gulf". The merger probably grew out of a conference held in June 1971 in Rakhyut. It was decided at this meeting that a second front elsewhere in Oman was essential if the rebellion in Dhofar was to succeed.

Foreign Assistance

16. The rebels' chief foreign baker is the radical government of Yemen (Aden). Aden's financial support has been estimated variously at between \$150,000 and \$600,000 per year.(the lesser figure is probably more nearly correct). The front's headquarters is in Aden, and the Adenis provide arms mostly of Soviet origin-logistic support, medical aid, broadcasting facilities and training sites for the guerrillas. Occasional tension has marked the relationship; the Adeni government frequently complains, with reasons, of being pestered for aid and is critical of the rebels' failure to gain victory. The Adenis also complain that too many front members prefer living in Aden to fighting in the mountains of Dhofar.
17. China has supplied limited quantity of arms ammunition and other equipment to the rebels. Thirty front members reportedly were trained in China in 1968, and a Chinese training and advisory mission may be based in Hawf. The New China News Agency disseminates rebel propaganda.
18. The Soviet Union has also provided modest amounts of war materiel to the rebels. Yemen(Aden)has tried to persuade Moscow, as well as eastern European nations, to give the Dhofar rebels more aid, but apparently without much success. North Korea sent a small quantity of arms and foodstuffs in 1970 and reportedly has given military training in North Korea to 20 Dhofaris.
19. For its part the front has concluded that, with the exception of Yemen (Aden) no Arab state will provide support. In fact, the front bitterly attacks the other Arab states. Limited Iraqi and Syrian aid channelled through Aden ended in 1970. The front does maintain close ties with Nayif Hawatmah's Popular Democratic Front for the liberation of Palestine, a Fedayeen group not responsive to the direction of any government.

Sultan's forces

Attacks on several northern Oman towns in June 1970, in the wake of a deteriorating situation in Dhofar, probably triggered the ... palace coup that ousted sultan Said ibn Taimur from office and replaced him with sultan Qabus ibn Said. Initially Sultan Qabus believed that the change in leadership and his promises of reform and development would encourage Dhofaris and rebellious Omanis to lay down their arms. Most rebels at first rejected the sultan's offer of amnesty. A trick of defectors began, and by late 1971 the number had increased to the point where they were being organized into small counter-insurgency units, called Firqats. These Firqats know the terrain but their enthusiasm is frequently fleeting, and some have redefected.

20. When it became obvious that these policies were not working, sultan Qabus and his British military advisers resolved to enlarge the army, acquire new weapons, and go on the offensive. Qabus increased the armed forces from fewer than 3,000 to over 7,000 by late last year. About half of this force are Omanis and half are expatriate

mercenaries, primarily Baluchis. The ground forces are led by 100 to 120 British officers; the air force of some 40 to 60 pilots is entirely a British operation.

Operation Jaguar

21. When the sultan's army launched "operation Jaguar" in Dhofar last October, he controlled only the Salalah plain, an area of approximately 80 square miles along the coast, and had military posts in the towns of Sath, Taqah, and Mirbat. The sultan forces had recaptured Taqah in February 1971 after it had been in rebel hands for about a year. Even these military posts, as well as Salalah, were subject to sporadic mortar attack and hit-and-run raids by the rebels.
22. "Operation Jaguar" was post-monsoon offensive designed to drive the rebels from the coastal plain and from the mountains that provide cover and sanctuary. The sultan's military advisers are pleased by the results of the offensive and recently expressed cautious optimism about their ability to handle the military aspects of the rebellion. The coastal area between Mughsayi and the Yemen (Aden) border is now one of the most active areas of conflict. Perhaps the main achievement of the offensive has been to cut two of the three important rebel supply routes originating in Yemen (Aden). More and more tribes men are cooperating with the government as its ability to protect them increases. The fighting has been fierce and casualties have been up but, for the first time since the rebellion began, the sultan's forces occupy outposts in the mountains. They hope to hold these positions during the coming summer rainy season. Although security checks in Salalah and other coastal towns remain tight, the almost nightly mortar attacks and mining of roads has been reduced. Areas considered clear and secure are still occasionally penetrated by guerrillas, and fighting in the difficult mountain terrain is expected to continue.
23. The success of "Operation Jaguar" is, in part, a result of increased mobility and the effective use of air power. The government prepared small airstrips near some of the mountain bases to ease the problems of supply and to accommodate reconnaissance planes. From these airstrips and from bases near Salalah, British-piloted Beaver spotter planes and helicopters seek out rebel camps and supply dumps. Defectors are used to help spot guerrilla hideouts. Airstrikes are then carried out by BAC-167 strike master jets. The skyvan transport, with its short take-off and landing capabilities, has been used effectively by the government to ferry troops and supplies.
24. Oman's offensive led to a border clash with Yemen (Aden) in early May. The four-day battle involved attacks by Popular Front insurgents as well as Adeni militia on Omani positions near Habarut. The attack, which was probably designed to ease pressure on other Popular Front units, was the first reported clash across the ill-defined border. When Omani attempts to arrange a cease-fire were successful, Omani fighter aircraft strafed the attackers across the border in Aden. Yemen (Aden) seized upon the incident to spotlight British military assistance to the sultan.

Outlook

25. When the summer monsoon pile thick rain clouds and heavy fog and mist against the Dhofar Mountains, helicopters and skyvans will be unable to bring supplies or evacuate wounded from the government's mountain outposts, and the jets will be forced to suspend most of their airstrikes. The government's ability to keep forces in the mountains under these circumstances and maintain security of overland routes will, in large measure, determine the future of the Dhofar rebellion. If the sultan's forces are compelled to retire to the Salalah plain during the monsoon, the rebels will have the opportunity to regroup and to receive new supplies. If on the other hand the government can retain its hard-won mountain posts, it will perhaps be able, during the dry season beginning in October, to deliver another heavy blow to the rebels in Dhofar. Nevertheless, as long as Yemen (Aden) provides a safe haven, Dhofar is likely to be subject, at a minimum, to cross-border attacks.
26. Should the front be able to prolong the rebellion in Dhofar, Sultan Qabus' social and economic development program will be retarded. Failure in Dhofar could open the gates for unrest and subversion elsewhere in Oman and the Persian Gulf. Oman, a primitive and very poor country, is spending between 40 to 60 percent of its annual \$125-million oil income- almost its only budgetary income-for defense. ... the sultan's intentions are good, but expectations of people who have been waiting for reforms for generations may outstrip his performance. The sultan cannot afford to get bogged down much longer in Dhofar.

Appendix 18

The Front emergency fourth conference statement

Reference: PFLO, P. S. (1975). *PFLO Political Statement of the Second Conference, 9th August 1974. 9th June magazine, issue 5. PFLO Emergency Conference Decisions (n.d.). The Emergency Conference Decisions*. Aden, pp. 19-21

Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman, National Program of Action (July 1974)

1. on the struggles of our people and the current situation

In its long history, our people have been subjected to many decisions and foreign occupation campaigns, but it constantly knew how to fight these invaders and defeat them to free the country from their evils. Omani people are known with their love and attachment to freedom, as well as their rejection for any foreign intervention. They have constantly confronted the invaders and foreign greed, and have made great sacrifices to defeat them and preserve the sovereignty and independence of the nation.

Through the insistence of our people to maintain its independence and sovereignty, they managed to preserve vast areas of our country, which was not defiled by the colonizers and invaders, making it a starting base to fight against the foreign occupiers and their agents in Muscat. The Omani people carried out great campaigns to liberate their country throughout the nineteenth century. The 20th century also witnessed an epic for our people in the years 1912 - 1920, and in the years following the British occupation of Al Jabal Al Akhdher (the Green Mountain), where the popular resistance continued for many years.

The ruling families showed willingness to sign the occupation instruments with the enemies of the country and to assist the British in their aggressive campaigns against the Omani people. They contributed to all British barbaric military campaigns against the Omani resistance led by Qawasim from 1805 to 1820 and proved to be an obedient ride for the invaders and a fundamental enemy to the people of Oman and their ambitions in the sovereignty of their land. Each time the people rise against them, and use the arms to dislodge them from the country, they turn to their British masters to protect them from the people's wrath. British greed met with one of the rulers interest to maintain their control over the people in the British-led campaign to occupy the Green Mountain in 1955.

Since the 1798 Treaty, signed by Muscat's rulers with the British, and since Britain had spread its influence over the Gulf region, it enslaved the Omani people and practiced the worst policies of oppression, persecution, and exploitation. It had also destroyed Oman's shipping, trade, domestic industries and the economy, and has kept Oman in a state of terrible underdevelopment at all levels.

Our Omani people have bravely resisted the invasion of the British imperialism, with the same valor they used to resist the Portuguese invasion, Dutch colonization, and the Iranian invasion in the 18th century. Thousands of martyrs have bravely sacrificed their lives in this long heroic resistance.

After a long series of militant experiences in resisting foreign occupation, and through the great historical lessons gained by the people from these experiences, including the great weaknesses and setbacks, our people in Oman have entered the long- term people's war in June 9 1965.

British colonialism is a fundamental enemy of our people. Oman has been the most dangerous ring in the Arabian Gulf region, which Britain sought to control to secure its trade paths to India. With the flow of oil in the Arabian Gulf region, British colonialism increased its domination over Oman, imposing more political and military agreements that made our country a complete British colony. The bases in Masirah, BeitFalaj, Salalah and elsewhere were a serious threat to our country and the general public of the Arabian Gulf.

British colonialism made the rulers a front-end for all its schemes and a local tool to control all the country's internal and external affairs and carry out criminal policies against our people.

With the flow of oil, the ambitions of imperialist countries, led by the United States of America, increased. The Americans worked to sweep the British positions one after the other. America set plans to control this region and create strong regional repression systems such as Iran to use it to hit the national liberation movement and spread imperialists influence on our people.

Britain did its best to maintain its political, military and economic control over Oman. In view of the major developments in the region, the increasing activity of the National Liberation Movement and the armed revolution in the southern region of Oman, Britain announced its intention to withdraw from the Arabian Gulf region to consolidate and maintain its presence in Oman. It reached an agreement with the Americans to maintain the British control over the region, develop aggressive common plans to face the revolution of the people in Oman, and ensure the common interests of the imperialists.

Since the coup in 1970 in which Sultan Qaboos came to throne, their circles set a plan after a plan to help the British resist the revolution and make certain reforms in the country with the aim of pulling the popular support from the revolution and end it justification for continuing. Thus, our country under the direct British control and the Qaboos government witnessed more foreign interference in the issues of our people, and more violation to exploit and control the country. The British forces and mercenary armies rushed to Oman to suppress the armed revolution and the mass movement, and impose the peace of the imperialists on the Omani people by force. When all these methods and containment and misdirection means of failed to achieve its objectives, the Iranian army entered Oman territories on the basis of a plan developed by the *Cento* alliance and supervised by American and British experts to suppress the revolution of our people, impose imperial control over Oman and annex it to the Iranian throne.

The British colonists are the cause of the tragedies our people are suffering now. They still maintain the military bases that carry out their aggressive campaigns against our people in the liberated areas. They also retain many advisers on all military, political and economic facilities in the country. They secure the interests of all the other imperialists in our country.

American imperialism, the first and most basic enemy of the people, is now working to increase its intervention in Oman. It works under the guise of the British presence and in full coordination with it, to develop criminal plans to suppress the armed revolution and control Omani territories completely. After it became clear to the American imperialists that Britain was unable to confront the armed revolution and put an end to it, and the futility of its methods in face of the Omani nationalists, they began to create their foundations in the country to inherit the British presence. They fear that the flames of revolution would destroy their interests in the Arabian Gulf, and they work to enable Iran to impose its control over the entire Arabian Gulf region and to turn Oman into an annex to the Shahnashan Empire. Thus, they provide all sophisticated weapons in large quantities to their customers in Tehran to serve as guards in the region.

The Iran reactionary, the American imperialist puppet and its first foundation stone in the region, wants to control our homeland, and use our land to protect the interests of its imperial masters and implement their plans. Over the past years, Iranian reactionary provided evidence of its expansion ambitions in the region. They occupied Omani islands Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs in 1971. It also occupied other Omani islands at the Gulf entrance.

They sent many experts, officers and military equipment to the system in Muscat. It now invaded the territory of Oman in the open and in large numbers of Iranian forces reinforced by the latest weapons in order to hit the revolution in a preparation to control more Arab lands.

The danger of Iranian expansion threatens not only the identity of our people and Arab nation in Oman, but also threatens the entire Gulf region and threatens the future of the Arab national liberation movement in both the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq.

Iran is not playing the police role of the US imperialist interests in the Arabian Gulf region, but it wants to achieve its expansionist ambitions and extend its influence over the entire region and annex more Arab lands to the Shah Empire.

At the same time, the regime of the Shah, in its internal policy, oppresses and persecute the Iranian people and withdraws its national democratic rights on a daily basis, their foreign policy is now occupying the lands of Omani people, killing the Omani patriots, destroying and burning the Omani villages and farms in the southern region. This policy will not hesitate to do the same and intervene at any time in any part of Oman and the Arabian Gulf or the Arabian Peninsula to achieve the expansionist ambitions of the Shahnashahi system or to implement the wishes of its imperialist masters in suppressing the Arab national liberation movement and protecting their interests in this part of the region.

This traitor regime has surrendered entire areas to the Iranian invaders and now offers them all privileges and facilities, and hands them more lands and more freedom to tamper with the people's capabilities.

This regime has culminated all its long persecution of our people and its continuous betrayal of national issues by its betrayal to the extent of abandoning the homeland, handing over parts of it to the Shahnashahi throne, and approving the invasion of Omani territory by Iranian forces.

2. on the necessity to expand the United National Front

The issue of liberating Oman from the imperialists, the Iranian invaders and their ally regime is the responsibility of every Omani who loves his country and fights for the dignity and interest of the Omani people.

All honorable Omani citizens, inside and abroad, elders, men, women are all required today to unite more than ever before to face the menace that threatens them all, to save Oman from the hands of the occupiers, foreign invaders and their agents.

The defense of our Omani land and our Omani people against the British colonizers, the Iranian invaders and their puppet regime in Muscat is not only a right for all Omanis but also a sacred duty. All the Omani people must unite to carry out this holy duty and save their homeland from occupation, tearing and destruction, and build an independent, democratic and united Oman.

In order to expel the British colonists, defeat the Iranian invaders and topple the regime, the Omani people must be mobilized and the efforts of all national forces, personalities, national classes, and all those who have an interest in overthrowing the rule of the occupiers and their agents should stand against the enemies of the people and the country.

The United National Front, which is required in this stage, is a front of struggle alliance among all the national classes, forces, national figures and people.

The establishment of such a front is now an urgent historical task that lies in the hands of the entire people more than ever, and a necessity that must be accomplished in order to defeat the enemies of the people and to save the dignity of the nation.

3. On the methods and means of national struggle

In the face of British imperialism, the Iranian invaders and the regime, the revolution in Oman must be a mass popular revolution, using people as main tool, as they are the makers of the civilization and history of any society and the iron fortress of any true revolution.

In the face of such enemies and in order to achieve their defeat to the end and save the country, the revolution must be a long-term revolution, thus strategic and military political tactics must be adopted on this basis.

In the face of such enemies, and in order to bring them to an end, Oman must have an armed revolution and use the revolutionary violence of the masses to defeat the violence of the imperialists, the invaders and their local agents.

Without such violence and without working to destroy enemy forces and their oppressing tools, the people will not be able to wrest the political power from their enemies and save the country.

The enemies are undoubtedly advanced in the repression tools they use against our backward, oppressed and defenseless people, but this superiority is undoubtedly a temporary superiority that we will gradually be able to neutralize and dispel thanks to the efforts of the masses and their perseverance in the long struggle.

A long-term popular war is the way by which we can neutralize the power of the enemies and transform their temporary strength into a gradual weakness, and our temporary weakness into an ever-increasing force.

Our emphasis on armed struggle as a basic and strategic form of national struggle, and the use of violence to neutralize enemy violence and to wrest political power by all means does not mean that we should not use other forms of struggles.

The armed struggle, if not supported by struggles in many other forms, cannot accomplish success. The struggle of our Omani masses must take all forms of struggle at the same time to enter the course of the armed struggle and achieve national salvation.

4. The revolution tasks and objectives:

Our people struggle for legitimate national goals of self-determination and sovereignty over their land and country. They strive for a true democracy that serves the overwhelming majority of the Omani people, not the fake democracy of the regime and the British which is the democracy of dictatorship, terrorism and persecution of the vast majority of the people.

Our Omani people have struggled for many years and will continue to struggle, by all means, to achieve the following objectives:

First: To liberate Oman from all forms of occupation and colonial existence and to achieve independence:

1. Abolish all treaties and agreements of public and private subordination with Britain or other imperialist countries.

2. Remove all British, American and Iranian bases from all occupied territories and islands of Oman.
3. Expel all British and Iranian forces, mercenaries, and all foreign advisers and officers from Oman.

Second: Establishing a democratic national government by:

1. Elimination of tribal rule, which is based on the inheritance rule.
2. To establish a democratic and popular republic based on the authority and alliance of the national and democratic forces of the Omani people.
3. To establish an elected legislative council of young people on a sound democratic basis. This Council shall establish a progressive constitution for the country.

Third: To provide all political and democratic freedoms to the people by:

1. Release all political detainees and liquidate the British, American and Iranian intelligence services from the country and provide security for citizens.
2. Abolishing martial law imposed on most parts of the country and the city walls system. Allowing citizens to move freely between the countryside and cities, and across the entire country.
3. To allow all national elements expelled from the country as a result of their anti-occupation and anti-regime activity to return and exercise all their political rights.
4. Providing the freedom of opinion to all Omani national masses and to the press.

Fourth: follow a sound economic policy that ensures the people's control over its wealth to harness it for national development goals. Therefore, the following must be implemented:

1. Nationalization of oil companies to achieve full control over them and the abolition of all unfair privileges signed by the rulers in this regard. Harness the national wealth to build an independent national economy to achieve our people and our nation best interest away from the custody and manipulation of oil companies that reap huge profits and manipulate prices at the expense of our people.
2. Establish strong national authorities that benefit from all the great national wealth in our country without selling it to foreign companies.
3. Establish a national bank.

4. To pay attention to young people and allow them to establish gatherings and unions, to encourage them, invest their interests and harness their enormous potential to serve the people and the homeland.
5. Provide free health services to all citizens, and establish hospitals and clinics in all Oman areas, including rural and remote areas.
6. Building rural cities and providing facilities for citizens to build decent and healthy housing. Abolishing all laws that prohibit citizens from building in some areas of Oman and to deliver water and electricity to cities, villages and rural areas.
7. Encouraging social movements and abolishing all arbitrary laws established by the colonizers and the regime on clubs and associations and allowing the people to exercise their social activities freely.
8. Development of transportation all over the countries including rural, mountainous areas, remote areas and valleys.
9. Pay attention to the conditions of herders and fishermen and provide all services and facilities for them.

Fifth: Combating ignorance and colonial culture and building a national culture. To accomplish this, the following must be achieved:

1. Abolish all the current and backward educational curricula in Oman and develop culture for education derived from the history of our people and our glorious Arab nation. Development of progressive approaches of education aimed at building a national educated generation who are linked to the issues of people, struggles and future aspirations.
2. Achieving compulsory education by making it free for everyone in all fields.
3. Establishing schools and industrial institutes to ensure the graduation of technical manpower within a comprehensive plan to develop the human and material capacities in the country.
4. Work to combat illiteracy, which includes the overwhelming majority of the people of Oman, and actively seek a plan to eradicate this disease.

5. Allow students to form their student unions to defend their rights and to develop their roles in serving the issues of the people and the country.

Sixth: Building a strong national army based on respect and cohesion between soldiers and officers, equipped with sophisticated weapons and good training, filled with national culture and national spirit and attached to the issues and interests of the masses.

Seventh: Enable the people to play their actual role in the defense of the country by establishing armed popular forces capable of cooperating with the army to defend the interests and sovereignty of the country against any conspiracies or expansionist foreign ambitions.

Eighth: Respect all religious beliefs and doctrines, and non-discrimination in treatment between different sects and Islamic sects.

Ninth: Protect and guarantee the rights of all minorities, communities and foreigners that respect the independence of Oman and the sovereignty of its people.

Tenth: work to restore the natural unity of Oman from Dhofar to Abu Dhabi and strive to achieve this cherished hope for our people by peaceful means, away from any interference or foreign presence.

Eleventh: Putting all of Oman's potential to contribute to the protection of the Arab Gulf region in face of the greedy Shahnashahi ambitions, stand by the national and democratic forces in this region and contribute effectively to achieving the unity of Oman and the Arabian Gulf as a hope of the Arab people in this region.

Twelfth: Stand firmly by the Palestinian people and its armed revolution and make all the possibilities to support it in restoring their homeland and eliminating the Zionist entity.

Thirteenth: strengthening the solidarity relations between the Omani people and the peoples of the Arab nations, and to contribute effectively to the movement of the Arab revolutions to achieve their goals of liberation, progress, socialism and unity.

Fourteenth: Follow an independent and neutral foreign policy based on the following principles:

1. To refrain from participating in military alliances and not to allow any state to establish military bases on Oman territories or to use its territory to attack the peoples of other countries.
2. Recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations with all States that respect the independence and sovereignty of Oman and do not interfere in its internal affairs.

3. Accept unconditional assistance from all countries that respect the independence of Oman and in accordance with the principles of equality and peace in the world.
4. Stand firmly with national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America and with all the forces fighting for justice and social progress for the peoples of the world.

Appendix 19

The Fourth National Day delivered by Sultan Qaboos

Speech of Sultan Qaboos on the occasion of the 4th National Day, 18th November 1974

Reference: *Sultan Qaboos Speech*. (1990). Muscat: Ministry of Media, pp.

Thanks be to God, and praise be to the Prophet, His Messenger.

My brother Citizens, The Sons of Our Dear Oman,

IT is a source of pleasure to be amongst you on this great historic occasion, so as to speak to you on this significant event, and glorious historic anniversary of 18th November – our fourth National Anniversary. To begin with, I would say many happy returns on this occasion to all of us.

The commemoration of National Days is a tradition of all peoples to landmark glorious events in their history. For events are not counted by the time factor itself, but on the basis of the scope they reveal, the ideas they inspire and the aspiration they aim at so as to take a place among the vanguard of the marching nation onwards to Progress, Peace and Prosperity.

On this immortal landmark day, four years ago, a new sun shone in our beloved land to light the flame of the national spirit and zeal of our citizens, who plunged into building this renaissance and to regain the glories of the ancient past by asserting that it is not the time factor that counts, but the achievements themselves on the path of civilized progress, the all-out development of the country, the extent of the role it can play in international affairs, and the effect of such events on the course of its progress.

Our people have achieved successful results in all fields of life, under hard and abnormal circumstances. It was by the help of Almighty God and His belief in the people that such achievements were possible.

My brother Citizens,

The power for change, and the stimulus for progress, were inherent in our people, and were just waiting for the time to unleash. The enthusiasm was so strong among our people to put things in their right order. They have, therefore, spontaneously responded, supported and exerted their utmost so as to make possible this fourth and dear anniversary which we celebrate today.

By the Grace of God and your strong and indomitable have realized many achievements on the soil of our land. In spite of the fact that this country has undergone such hardship as was never experienced by any people before, we have faced many challenges, but by the Grace of God and His help we have achieved glorious triumphs against all these challenges.

From every battle we emerge stronger, to recontinue our march with greater will and stronger belief.

My Brethren,

Our people participated in the battle of the Arab nation in its struggle against the common Zionist enemy. They did this by the sheer belief in the oneness of the Arab nation to whom we also belong and share its destiny and battles and also in the solution of its problems and causes. This was unequivocally demonstrated in the war of 6th October (10th Ramadan) when our Arab forces humbled the arrogance of the Zionist enemy, and the Arab forces crossed the barriers into Victory.

Such participation has since materialized into real common action – epitomizing Arab unity in its real sense. This caused immense disappointments to sceptics. Victory has been obtained – “If you support God, He will support you and strengthen your position”.

Citizens,

At the time when we were participating in the Arab battle, we were engaged in a more ferocious battle against the enemies of God – the enemy on this front is the same enemy in the other, but our enemy is more savage. Here we challenge and face communist infiltration – a more subversive and dangerous international movement which works to undermine our religion, our wealth and our national prestige.

On the southern borders of this land, there is a mobilized community of subversive groups, with secret organizations scattered in countries of this area working in league with international communism. This fact asserts itself, and is undeniable. In spite of this, we stand firm and have succeeded in breaking their backbone, as a result of which our brethren in the mountains now enjoy protection and security from their terrorism. The terrorists have, however, begun to lose faith in their masters, who drove them into launching their terrorism against the innocent people. “They resemble fire which burns itself when there is nothing to burn”.

In these days, new slogans are raised and new names are mentioned. Some look with indifference at such tactics. I have warned that the safety of the region is indivisible. Its stability is the responsibility of all states and people of the area. Communism has no faith. It recognizes no other doctrine. Should it retreat on one front for one or the other reason, it does so just for its interest. It is one of their principles to withdraw one step backwards so as to advance two steps forward. I frankly declare that any negligence in defending the faith of God will lead to a disastrous result. There is no two opinions that communism is dedicated to crush all religion.

We are, however, resolved to confront this armed and subversive danger and all that it stands for which is in contravention to our Holy Islamic religion, our belief, and the freedom of dignity of our Nation.

Citizens,

I, for myself, and in your name, – salute our armed forces symbol of sacrifice, heroism and loyalty to our cause. They fight to defend the banner of right, the banner of Islam. They stand alert and heroically in the face of the enemy of God and the people.

Our heroes, I share life with you – I strive to make out of you a strong army, loyal to the soil of this dear land. A striking force among the armies of our Arab nation, so as to defend the cause of truth against the forces of evil. I also salute the young pioneers of the national contingent now engaged in the fighting against subversive communist terrorists side by side with our heroic regular armed forces. Because “God is the truth, and all that they stand for is evil and false, God is Great”.

My Brethren,

The second challenge, which is no less important, is the challenge of reconstruction and development. We have drawn an ambitious plan – the target of which is the Omani citizen. The main criterion of the plan is the human individual. It is man who performs development and its

objective is to ensure happiness for the individual and his reformation so as to give the best of his talent and production.

We made a start in this way by providing medical treatment, housing and food for the Omani citizen – the main capital of our various battles to enhance the cause of our country and its ascension to the highest rank among the progressive nations of the world.

Thanks to Almighty God, we passed through the critical stage successfully. Co-operation between the individuals and the Government has led our country to attain a degree of social progress, thus enabling us to assimilate and create with the result that we were able to make a positive contribution in the building work of our society.

Citizens,

Let us make a pause here, and revert to the beginning of July 1970 to find out where we were and where we stand today.

In the field of education:

In 1970, we started from scratch. All of you know and we can say for sure that we have succeeded in this field. The educational plan, both in quality and quantity, has succeeded in all the primary stages.

We have now moved to a higher as well as vocational education. Our object in providing both the vocational and higher education is to enable our children to receive their education in its various stages in their mother country. We would, however, wish to draw the attention of our students studying abroad, to beware of being seduced by foreign ideas. We should make it clear that these elements are jealous of our achievements and progress, and they plan to retard the pace of our progress.

Oh my sons, you witness the vast progress which education in our country has achieved, and the expansion of the numbers of schools, students, teachers and scholarships.

It is enough to declare that the education sanctions for this year amount to

RO 9,458,368 compared to RO 1,031,879 for the year 1970/71.

This in itself is proof of the extent of our interest in the advancement of the people of our country and our insistence to make as rapid a progress as possible.

We give all our energy and potential to the welfare of our student's abroad. For this reason we have decided to form a Permanent Committee to look after them and fulfil their needs. This Committee will make periodical visits to the countries where they study to examine their problems and make solutions for them. We pray God for their success.

In the health sector:

The Government gives priority to the health care of our citizens and does all that lies in its power to provide medical services for them. Many hospitals have been built, the number of which has now risen to 79 hospitals and health units with 1,200 beds as compared with 12 beds in the year 1970.

In the communications and public services sector:

A considerable number of large projects have been established in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for such projects. A contract has been concluded to extend telephone services and connect all villages with the cities with telephone lines. With regard to foreign communications, we have the satellite communication programme and the first satellite station will be installed in the Sultanate,

using the most modern technological methods in wireless communications. With the erection of this station, our communication with the outside world will rise to the level of the 20th Century.

In the road sector, the Government is doing its utmost in opening new roads. Some of the newly launched projects in this field are the Bidbid-Sur road, Musanah-Rostaq road, and Sohar-Al Buraimi road. Electricity is being expanded rapidly and it is expected to extend it to 36 towns in the Sultanate in the near future. It is recognized that electricity not only provides light, but it includes many other services.

This is in addition to the water generator required to face the huge development projects, and the population growth. The biggest project so far accomplished in the communication and public services sector is Qaboos Port, which is being declared open during these days of our national celebrations. It is a pioneer project. We have also decided to reduce customs duties on consumer commodities in order to meet the rising cost of living in the world as a result of international changes.

We have previously decided to form a committee to make studies of this problem, and as a result of this, we decided to abolish customs duties on consumer commodities, the difference in the price being borne by the Government.

We have taken this decision at a time when other governments have been imposing new taxes and new burdens on their peoples.

We are trying our level best to raise the standard of living of the Omani citizen, who is equal to other Omani citizens in rights and obligations. He must take as much as he gives of his efforts, sweat, sincerity and loyalty to his dear land. Oman loves her sons equally and the Omanis all are sons of their merciful Motherland. She expects them to be loyal and obedient to her cause, but the love of country differs from one citizen to another, but Oman loves all her sons, and the principle we have declared is to forget the past. We shall adhere to this code.

Omanis are a nation bound together by the Islamic fundamental ideology, by the friendly social ties and loyalty to the country. We are mobilizing all our resources in order to raise the standard of the individual and to develop his resources and his conscience economically. Towards this end, we are taking into consideration the exploration of all economic resources of our country in the future stage of the development plans. We have laid down a very ambitious, balanced, and studied plan based on utilizing the various resources of society in order to reach the target of the economic development in the light of the society. Also, a thorough study of the mineral and human resources, the making of statistical studies on the various economic and social activities of the population, agricultural activities, and the cost of living are being made, so as not to leave social and economic progress at the mercy of improvised conditions. In order to fulfil this plan of economic growth, to raise the living standard of the individual, we have decided to form a higher council of economic development under our president ship, and the membership of the concerned ministries such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries, Oil and Minerals, which were recently formed on our orders, so as to play their roles in fulfilling this plan with the co-ordination of other Ministries.

Brother citizens,

The most debated subject of the hour is oil, the main source of energy in the entire world. As far as we are concerned oil is the main source of our wealth, with the revenues from which we have been

able to develop our country, and fulfil our achievements. As the consumer seeks to buy oil, so do we need to install our local oil industry and to sell our oil in the international markets so that we may be able to fulfil our development plans.

It is therefore necessary to follow a sound oil policy in conjunction with a united Arab oil policy with strong consciousness which realizes the importance of oil ... makes the best use of it, so this national wealth can play its role as a source of energy and as an important economic source. It is our hope that consumer countries will realize the real wishes of the producing states and that the world may understand that we are not merely seeking profits but that we work for peace and the welfare of humanity.

Information:

Information is the mirror of reality. Its duty is to reflect the various fields of activities which our country is witnessing in its modern age.

In the information sector Oman has launched many successful projects, and the Information City stands as a landmark in the achievements fulfilled. It houses the newly expanded broadcasting station from which the voice of Oman carries over long distances; and the colour television which was inaugurated as a prominent achievement which reflects our keen interest in the truthful word, free opinion, true information.

Our press is also playing its role in serving the cause of the nation. The Omani Museum, also, in which the citizen will see the heritage of his forefathers, and the civilization they achieved.

Our beloved Oman lives today in the dawn of a great and comprehensive renaissance. In our foreword march, we have inaugurated the police sports ground, and held our fourth national day celebration there. For the present stage, this ground will serve our purpose until the Sports City is constructed which will be provided with the most modern sports equipment and playgrounds.

These are but a few examples of our achievements in the internal sector. However, details of these achievements are the responsibilities of the Ministries concerned.

Insofar as our foreign policy is concerned, we have often made clear in various international assemblages, that we are part and parcel of the Arab nation. Our policy emanates from our higher interests. The picture is very clear before us. Through the last four years of our progress we have known where we stand, and we are directing our energies from the point of our own national interest. Our attitude towards every country is decided on the basis of the attitude of such a country towards our national causes, and its respect of our sovereignty. We shall not let any country interfere in our affairs, or exercise any influence on our policies, irrespective of the source of such interference.

We are exercising our role in international society, and in its various aspects as positively as we can in solving the just causes. As an Islamic nation, we take full views of our noble and sublime ideals of Islam and adhere to the precepts of our sacred religion, in full realization of our role insofar as our region is concerned in particular and the Arab world in general. On this basis, we have participated so far in all international activities such as the non-alignment conference in Lahore and the "Arab Summit held last month in Rabat where I took part with my brother Arab Kings and Presidents in discussing and reviewing Arab and international problems.

Citizens,

All that has so far been achieved in our beloved land is higher and more powerful than any talk; we shall continue our march for the sake of our great people, for the sake of dear Oman and by the grace of God we will achieve more and more progress. We are continuing our steps in the light of the teaching of our Prophet.

We fully realize that our work is bound by the targets we aim at. The success we see today in the sectors of both our local and international policies, is the true reflection of the efforts of our people, the sacredness of our soil and the respect and understanding of the world towards our aims and us. The values of our society, our relations with the outside world. All these are but one part of our progress.

Thus our view of history is sound and continuous. Our present historical attitude is yielding the finest results and rises to the highest peak of success.

I wish you a happy year and may Allah's Peace and Blessings be with you.

Appendix 20

The Fifth National Day delivered by Sultan Qaboos

Speech of Sultan Qaboos on the occasion of the 5th National Day, 18th November 1975

Reference: *Sultan Qaboos Speech*. (1990). Muscat: Ministry of Media, pp.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God Almighty, Who directs us to the right path. Who said in His Holy Book: "This is my right path, ye follow it and do not follow other paths that will drive you from it." This is His advice for you to heed and follow. Prayers and Peace be on His Prophet.

Countrymen,

I WISH you a Happy Year and many happy returns. Every year our dear country continues its progress with unfailing confidence and its prosperity with zest, determination and hope, represented in your joint efforts, the great achievements, your goodwill and solidarity in standing in our rank like a solid edifice in the face of all challenges and difficulties.

Brothers,

On this dear occasion in which we celebrate our 5th National Day, the anniversary of a new era on our good land to which we are bound, this dear country on whose surface we all have seen the light.

Brothers,

Our glorification of our National Days which we honor emerges from a true expression of our gratitude to our dear country and its heroic people. As we have always been, still are, and shall always remain working for it; we watch over the interests of our country and struggle for its glory and die for its sake. We struggle for our faith and Arabism to always remain true Arab Moslems.

Countrymen,

We are today celebrating the 5th Anniversary of our National Day amid the joys and splendours the Eid has carried to us. It has carried to us Aids made by our heroic Armed Forces and National Firqats.

Brothers,

We also celebrate constant victories achieved by our heroic Armed Forces and National Firqats supported by friendly forces which have achieved real victories for our beloved Oman in the history of their battles and recorded with honor and pride true heroism and sacrifice. They are the protectors of our noble Islamic faith in which we strongly believe and have the honor to defend. We appreciate the results of our will and determination to continue to defend this true and tolerant faith.

Countrymen,

You are all aware of the strike which our heroic soldiers have directed against the agents of Communism, that strike which made them realize that for every aggression and aggressor there is a deterrent.

We declare to the whole world that we shall never desist from defending the security of this dear country against any aggression with all possible means. We put before the whole world a truth which accepts no argument. We are continuing our policy against this hateful and subversive

principle in gratification of our faith, motivated by our patriotism to preserve the sanctity of our soil and protect the gains of our people and our eagerness to maintain the independence of our decision and our adherence to Arabism and Islam. Our people do not accept that virtue be replaced by evil and righteousness by falsehood.

We are not prepared to put our hand in the hand of a treacherous ally and time has shown the deterioration of the situation in the countries where the Communism element exists. Those who entered into an alliance with this evil principle have paid the cost dearly in terms of the security of their people and the stability of the situation in their country. They have lost control over their resources and could not exploit them according to the conditions of their people. Their decisions did not emanate from the supreme interest of their country but from complete subordination to this subversive principle.

Communism knows no religion and we do not know those who are unbelievers and we shall not adopt a negative attitude towards them. We fight the enemies of God because they deny the existence of God and do not recognise His teachings which call for brotherhood, love and peace.

Countrymen,

The members of our heroic Armed Forces and National Firqats, supported by friendly forces are able to protect the faith because they are protected by its light which illuminates the road in front of them and achieve in their battles against the enemies of God, victory, because God promised to help those who believe in Him.

The downfall of communist elements and their empty slogans in the many communities which fell into their trap is an indication of the failure of their plots. Events show that the star of their subversive movement has faded in those parts of our Arab and Moslem community which fell under its influence.

The crimes which the communists have committed in the Arab and Moslem area on the internal and external levels recently are liable to increase the enmity of the Arab and Moslem nation towards them.

Has not our Arab area seen troubles and disorders in the last years, unprecedented in its modern history because of communist presence and subversion of nationalist elements?

Has not our area itself seen troubles and disorders this year, which we have warned against on such an occasion last year?

The Communists spread hardship among their citizens. They open prisons and detention camps while we build schools and hospitals. They lay obstacles, so thorns and choke the freedom of the people, while we remove obstacles and make the hardships of life easy, and we encourage public freedom provided that they do not impair the security of the State because the security of the State means, at the same time, the security of the citizen.

Their information media is used to launch attacks and fabricate false accusations while our information media is used to serve the citizen, educate and entertain him, relying on the true word and genuine report.

That is their policy and they are free to do whatever they wish within.

The people of the southern district today are enjoying colour television as a sign of development, growth and stability and a natural result of the efforts of our people who were the supporters of

these young potentials in their blessed movement and prosperous era. They are continuing their march carrying the torch of knowledge and liberty, the foundations of which they had laid. They appreciate the value of their gains and know how to safeguard them, and by doing so they reap the fruit of hard work and taste the sweetness of tomorrow and see its brightness. There is nothing greater to man than achieving a bright future.

Our bright future has descended with the Grace of God on every location and appeared on every face. A hope which disperses the clouds of darkness to illuminate with its light the road of civilisation, progress and prosperity, which we see today on the land of our beloved Oman.

Welcome to the Enid. We promise to double our efforts and continue the hard work for a new tomorrow which shines with every morning in each day of the sixth year in our glorious march towards a happy future.

May God grant you success and bless your steps towards a better future. Concluding, it interests me to say: Beware the hypocrites who are in the bottom

of hell, whom God had described in His Holy Book. "When they met those who believe, they say, 'We do believe', but when they retire privately to their devils they say, 'we really hold with you and only mock at those people'".

I wish you a Happy Year and may God's Grace and blessings be with you.

Appendix 21

The speech of victory delivered by Sultan Qaboos

Speech of Sultan Qaboos at the Police Stadium (victory Speech) 11th December 1975

Reference: *Sultan Qaboos Speech*. (1990). Muscat: Ministry of Media, pp.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful' Countrymen

I GREET your ardent gathering here today and congratulate you with pride and dignity on the defeat of the agents of Communism who were driven away from the soil of our dear country. It is God's wish that this victory be the crowning achievement of our National Day celebrations, during which we have, with the grace of God, launched several development projects. It was also the will of God that our victory be a happy start for celebrating two glorious Eids. The Eid of Victory and the Eid al Adha (Feast of Immolation). I, therefore, offer you my greetings and best wishes on these two occasions.

Countrymen,

A blessed greeting which heralds peace and tranquillity on the Eid al Adha accompanied by a felicitation crowned with pride and dignity on our glorious victory. Countrymen,

The Eid al Adha is the commemoration of our father Abraham, peace be on him, when he decided to sacrifice Ismail his son in obedience to his Lord, but God redeemed him.

The Eid of Victory is the result of the sacrifices of our soldiers and National Firqas (irregular troops) and every one of the friends who have helped and contributed in achieving this victory. They sacrificed their lives in order to save their country and protect their Islam, and redeem peace and security from the evils of Communism, the propagator of terror and corruption in the land. We thank God for accepting the sacrifice and for granting us victory and driving away the evil aggressors.

O Heroic Sons of Oman, while I hail your celebrations today and bless your victory over the evil gang in a part of our dear country, I bless this victory not only because you have driven away the aggressors from our country but also because you have defeated the plots of world communism and bowed the heads of those atheists who thought that they would never be defeated.

Our victory, therefore, is the first to be achieved by an Arab country over world Communism in the battlefield in a war which lasted long years, and the second victory by an international state.

It is for our own good and welfare that our country be purged from communism corruption and is probably for the good and welfare of our neighbours also. For we made them perceive the truth and liberated them from their delusions in supporting evil people who commit acts of terror, killings and destruction in a part of a peaceful country. They kill their brothers, plunder their properties and destroy their homes for nothing but simply in order to terrorise, plunder and destroy.

I wish our neighbours to realise that what we have said is the truth and that we are always true in what we say. It is for the good of our neighbours to sacrifice their follies and wrong beliefs, their disturbed thoughts and imported ideologies. Perhaps God will accept their sacrifice and compensate

them with peace in their country, a blessing on their crops and good health so that their people will no longer suffer from vagrancy, hunger, disease and total ignorance.

Countrymen,

The chasing away of communist gangs and their remnants from the mountains of Dhofar does not only mean a victory over a few evil gangs, but it is also a clear revelation of an established truth that our dear Oman is a pure land that rejects the seeds of the communist movement. Our victory is an indication of the failure of the world communist movement in Oman and that is a favour from God, whom we thank.

O Sons of Oman. Although we have achieved a great victory which has great value and effect in political circles, this does not mean that we should rest and lay down our arms. No We now have to be more careful because world communism, whose pride has been hit will regard Oman as the axe which shattered the rock of communism and the spear which stabbed it in the heart, and will harbour feelings of hatred and hostility and will invent new methods and concoct new plots for exploiting people who are weak-minded and sick in their hearts, people if you see them like their bodies and when they speak, listen to them as if they were blocks of wood.

Those are the cancer of the nations. God save us from them. So beware of them.

Countrymen,

While I bear the great responsibility, I urge every citizen, whether he be a soldier, farmer, or worker, student or teacher to keep his eyes open and be always vigilant. I warn in particular the responsible officials in the Government, clerks, directors, advisers and Ministers. Each one of these has a responsibility to bear and a duty to perform.

O Sons of Oman, while I am confident of God's support, I pray God Almighty to guard and protect Oman. But we should not ignore God's orders which call for resoluteness and determination. I thank God I am certain of your sincere devotion and proud of your alertness.

Keep on marching with God's blessing and be diligent and industrious in order to lead this country on the road towards progress and prosperity.

My hearty greetings to our heroic soldiers and irregular troops and my deep thanks and appreciation to our noble friends and everyone who contributed in achieving this great victory.

I pray God to lend us his help and support. On God I rely for my success and

I resign myself to His will.

A Happy Year to you all and peace and the grace and blessings of God be with you.